



THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS: Rosemarie Eller, *President*; Cayne Letizia, *Vice President*; Sheryl Brady, Jessica Buck, Valerie Daniele, Craig Mondschein, Charlie Norris

May 11, 2026

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Elise J. Martin**, Elementary Teacher at Mamaroneck Avenue School for 27 years until retiring in 2012.

TEACHER TENURE: Dr. Ricca introduced Acting Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Dr. Tammy Cosgrove who presented 38 teachers to be awarded tenure. She spoke about this milestone in their careers and introduced a video produced by the Communications Department. Dr. Ricca thanked her and also Dr. Debbie Hand, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, who worked with tenure candidates to finalize their portfolios.

Candidates who received tenure are: Yanell Andujar, Camila Arredondo, Jennifer Ayub, Kristin Bellinzoni, Yokasta Betancourt, Judith Bravo, Orval Crawford, Katrina Cullen, Christina DePaola, Halpaa Duarte Erazo, Samantha Escobar, Isabel Everett, Eric Gaccione, Sara Gonzalez, Vanessa Gonzalves, Michelle Gutierrez, Alisa Kolenovic, Carmen Lopez, Isabel Marrero, Thomas Martorello, Lindsay McLaughlin, Cristina Oliveira, Briyit Orellana, Paul Paradis, Sonia Pena, Elisa Pugliese, Erika Richardson, Tonianne Rigano, Morgan Roessler, Harry Romero, Samantha Russo, Rosaria Sagnibene, Robin Stieglitz, Jeta Tahiri, Melissa Velez, Antoinetta Viczian, Jessica Wissmann, Christopher Wong,

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED 2026-27 BUDGET: Board President Rosemarie Eller opened the Public Hearing on this budget of \$284,932,300 with a tax levy percentage increase of 1.60% over last year. Dr. Ricca said this budget supports the entire program with no reductions and stays within the tax cap. He thanked the Board, the Finance & Audit Committee, Dr Vaccaro-Teich and her Department, and everyone in the organization. It's a team effort to provide a sustainable, fiscally conservative budget. There were no questions or comments, and Mrs. Eller closed the Public Hearing. She noted that Dr. Ricca and Dr. Vaccaro-Teich are available by email and phone to answer questions. Dr. Ricca reminded everyone to vote on May 19th. All budget material is posted on the district website: <https://www.whiteplainspublicschools.org/districtoffices/businesssoffice/budget/2026-2027budget>.

BOARD COMMENT: Board Members attended the Loucks Meet this past weekend which saw 3,400 participants – the second largest national high school track meet. Board Member Jessica Buck thanked Principal Emerly Martinez for Learning in Action Day honoring the High School for its high performance, house-based model, where every student is known. Board Member Sheryl Brady attended various webinars of Westchester-Putnam and New York State School Boards Associations.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Ricca introduced Student Liaisons Charis Choi and Afrozah Hossain who presented their reports on recent activities in the schools. Recognition during the past month included Teachers Appreciation Day, School Nurses Day, Food Service Heroes Day and

Mother's Day. Dr. Ricca also thanked **Rocco Varuolo**, Director of Instructional Technology, for facilitating the Business Olympics sponsored by the African American Men of Westchester. The White Plains team won this event this year. Three colleagues were also honored by **Legislator Shelley Mayer** who is a great supporter of White Plains Schools.

PERSONNEL: **Lori Graham** was appointed Director of Secondary Special Education replacing Ybelize Pilarte. She comes to White Plains from South Orangetown where she was Supervisor of Special Education.

The resignation for the purpose of retirement was accepted from **David Roher**, Special Education Teacher at the High School. Probationary appointments were given to **Korie Capobianco**, Special Education teacher at Mamaroneck Avenue School, **Angel Garcia**, English Teacher at the High School, and **Steven Gil**, Social Studies Teacher at the High School.

DONATIONS: Dr. Ricca thanked the following for their generous donations:

Oakland Trading Corp. for \$50,000 for the Rafaello Pantanelli Scholarship

Robert Kurtz for \$8,000 for the Margaret L. Kurtz Memorial Scholarship

The WPHS Music Department Booster Association for \$1,900 for the WPHS Band and Orchestra trip to Maine

Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Brown for \$1,000 for the Brown Family Memorial Scholarship

Peter Barrego for \$1,000 for the James A. Barrego Scholarship

Victoria Hochman Shelby for \$1,000 for the Richard Liebson Journalism Scholarship

Diane Maudsley for \$700 for the Frederick J. Maudsley GRIT Scholarship

Jason Bayuk for \$500 donation for the Barbara O'Garro Memorial Scholarship

Jacob Gelles for \$500 for the Mary Jane Bayuk Love of Nursing Scholarship

Tom Osbeck for \$300 for the White Plains Council of Neighborhood Association Scholarship

Michael Goldman for \$200 for Church Street School for WPBF outdoor gardening

Peter Khouri for \$35 donation for the Lois Epps Scholarship

The following donations were made for the Ed Furtick Class of 1957 Scholarship:

Henry Hamburger, \$500; **Linda Walters**, \$250; **Edward Sonn**, \$200; **Judith O'Gorman**, \$200; **Keith Bronitt**, \$100; **Carl E. Ziebe**, \$100; **Jacqueline C. Protano**, \$50

The following donations were made for the Dr. Dan Arnon Memorial Scholarship:

Benjamin Arnon, \$500; **Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Crowe**, \$200; **Jeremy Arnon**, \$200

The following donations were made for the Sara Miller Arnon Memorial Scholarship:

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Crowe, \$200; **Benjamin Arnon**, \$200; **Jeremy Arnon**, \$200

Alan Kramer for a Field Hockey stick and pads for the High School

Noreen Gosden for a cello for the Eastview Music Department

The Friends of White Plains Public Schools approved two new grants:

\$3,000 for a visit to White Plains Public Library by all 6th grade Eastview students

\$2,500 for a trip and tour of the United Nations by 50 Rochambeau students

The WPHS PTA Grants Committee has approved the following grants:

\$3,000 for the Senior Class Trip to Six Flags New England

\$1,000 for the Academic Symposium with Roberto Quesada

Wells Fargo for bags filled with snacks for each school for Teacher Appreciation Week

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld