

THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

January 8, 2007

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools **Timothy Connors** asked for a moment of silence in memory of two retired staff members who passed away recently. **Ernest Pacini** was a Custodian at Mamaroneck Avenue School, with the district for 17 years; and **Beatrice Parker** was an Office Manager at the High School, on the staff for 23 years.

MUSICIANS RECOGNIZED: Coordinator of Music & Art **Teresa Niss** congratulated four High School students selected as participants and alternate in the All State Music Festival held recently in Rochester. This is the largest representation the district has ever had at the event. Junior **Alex Cantatore** thanked the Board and the community for its support of this wonderful experience which, he said, “gave music a new meaning” for him. Other students honored were **Kirk Jackson, Helen Hess and Rebecca Riss**. Ms. Niss congratulated the students’ teachers for their important role in the development of these youngsters’ talent.

TENURE: Three teachers were awarded tenure: **Prsicilla Lacerra**, Elementary Education Teacher at Ridgeway School and a graduate of White Plains High School, was described by Principal **Evette Avila** as “passionate about children, teaching and learning.” Mamaroneck Avenue School Principal **Gail Epstein** presented **Gwen Kaebnick**, Elementary Education Teacher there. She said Ms. Kaebnick “instills a love of learning in her students.” Finally, **Edward Drach**, Industrial Arts Teacher at the High School, was introduced by Assistant Principal **Leroy Dixon**, who said Mr Drach is a “most dedicated, enthusiastic and creative teacher.”

STRATEGIC PLANNING: Mr. Connors introduced the subject by noting that the White Plains Board of Education has always devoted a tremendous amount of time and effort to planning. This new initiative is intended to set a long-term direction for the district. He introduced **Dr. Stephen Barone**, of Transformation Systems, Ltd., who will facilitate the process. Dr. Barone discussed the meaning and value of planning strategically and the process of change. This is a system-wide commitment to a common purpose and values, provides a framework for decision-making, and allows the district to focus on resources. It will include many points of view and will be consensus-based and creative, not reactive.

A survey will be available for the public after January 15th on the district’s website: www.whiteplainspublicschools.org and a “World Café” will be held on January 24th, at 7:30 P.M. in the High School Cafeteria, to hear the views of the public. Following that, various committees will be established: a Core group, to formulate goals for the district, Action Teams, to implement the goals, and Measurement Teams, to develop tools to measure progress toward these goals. Anyone interested in serving should contact **Teresa Niss** at 422-2016, or **Michele Schoenfeld**, at 422-2071.

BOARD MEMBERS: **Michelle Trataros, President; William Pollak, Vice President; Peter Bassano; Rosemarie Eller; Terry McGuire; Donna McLaughlin**

2007-08 BUDGET: Assistant Superintendent for Business **Fred Seiler** presented a very preliminary draft of expenditures for next year. Within the principal goal of maintaining quality programs, Mr. Seiler will look at various cost efficiencies. There are several options for funding the anticipated \$8 million in tax certiorari refunds and these will be examined by the Board and Annual Budget Committee. Board members feel that their Finance Committee should look at more of the detail in the budget.

The Board will hold a meeting on January 29th on Budget Planning, and three Annual Budget Committee meetings are scheduled, on February 6th, February 15th, and March 7th. The public is welcome at these meetings, which are all at Education House, at 7:30 P.M.

DONATIONS: The Board accepted the following donations: Establishment of the **Louis and Rose Massaro Scholarship** at White Plains High School, in memory of a former coach and his wife; musical instruments from **Laurie Bass** for the High School; and desk chairs from **Julia and Jory Probbler** for the Eastview Middle School. Mr. Connors thanked these donors for their generosity.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: January 17 Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.
Executive Session -- Collective Bargaining
January 24: World Café, White Plains High School, B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.
Strategic Planning
January 29: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.
2007-08 Budget Planning
February 6: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.
First meeting of Annual Budget Committee
February 12: Regular Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld