

THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

February 9, 2009

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools **Timothy Connors** asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Kathryn Hirsch**, former Coordinator of the Prekindergarten Program. She retired in 1983 after 12 years in the district and was a strong advocate for early childhood education.

NEW SUPERINTENDENT APPOINTED: **Dr. Christopher P. Clouet** was appointed Superintendent of Schools, with a four-year-contract to begin July 1st. Board President **Donna McLaughlin** said this is a bittersweet time, anticipating the retirement of Mr. Connors after a very successful term in which the district made great strides. Mrs. McLaughlin that after a long search, the Board is very excited to be bringing Dr. Clouet here. She said the consultants, Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, did a great job and Board Vice President **Terry McGuire** commented that the process was excellent. After a site visit to Dr. Clouet's current district, New London, CT, and his visit here for a day, Mrs. McLaughlin said it was apparent that the district had chosen well. Dr. Clouet said he is very honored and excited to be coming here and looks forward to the challenge.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: In an update on the budget, Mr. Connors said that since the Board has requested further cuts, he has asked for additional time to prepare a preliminary version. He will present this at the February 23rd Board Meeting, to be followed by a Community Forum on February 25th. All comments will be considered and the budget will be finalized for adoption by the Board on March 30th.

Assistant Superintendent **Dr. Lenora Boehlert** invited everyone to a program on March 3rd at 3:45 P.M. in the Highlands Auditorium, featuring **Dr. Pedro Noguera**, an authority on closing the achievement gap. Dr. Boehlert said Dr. Noguera is a dynamic speaker with a powerful message.

Dr. Boehlert also led a Career Fair last Saturday at which 350 applicants were interviewed by 20 administrators from the district.

PERSONNEL: Resignations for the purpose of retirement were accepted from: **Rosalyn Weiner**, Secretary, Education House; **Michael Angiuli**, Industrial Arts Teacher, Middle School-Highlands; **Elizabeth Calabro**, Family & Consumer Science Teacher, Middle School-Eastview; **Lois Chanofsky**, Science Teacher, High School; **F. Thomas Eaton, Jr.**, House Administrator, High School; **Philip Feinberg**, Special Education Teacher, New York Presbyterian Hospital; **Sandra Harrison**, Special Education Teacher, Alternative & Supplementary Programs; **Joyce Krauss**, Elementary Education Teacher (Grade 6 Science), Middle School-Highlands; **Mona E. Levy**, Special Education Teacher, New York Presbyterian Hospital; **Karen Mishkin**, Reading Teacher, Middle School-Highlands; **Nicholas Panaro**, Coordinator of Athletics, Districtwide; and **Marcia Schupper**, Elementary Education Teacher, Ridgeway School.

BOARD MEMBERS: **Donna McLaughlin**, President; **Terry McGuire**, Vice President; **Peter Bassano**, **Sheryl Brady**, **Rosemarie Eller**, **Charlie Norris**, **Randy Stein**

DONATIONS: The Board accepted a donation of \$1,650 from **The Foundation for Public Education in White Plains, Inc.** to be used for the Academic Team trip to the national competition.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROGRAM: Upon direction from the Curriculum Committee to explore expansion of this program, **Dr. Margaret Dwyer** presented a proposal for two options, adding LOTE (Languages Other Than English) instruction in 7th or both 6th and 7th grade at Highlands. (This is currently offered to Eastview students.) Both options are based on a nine-period day and a change in the daily schedule which would add transportation costs. The Board authorized Mr. Connors to include the second option in the budget. Mrs. McLaughlin noted that fiscal prudence does not preclude new programs. The Board is trying to move the district forward and spend wisely.

RECOGNITION: Mr. Connors congratulated White Plains High School for being named as one of 10 higher-performing high schools in a study by the School of Education at the University of Albany. The study stated our students “consistently outperform students in schools with comparable demographics.”

CAPITAL PROJECT: Assistant Superintendent for Business **Fred Seiler** provided an update on the capital project and said that, at the halfway point, the financial situation looks very good. The Board approved a contract with **Kaeyer Garment & Davidson Architects** for additional work as part of the filter replacement project at the High School pool.

The Board also approved about \$6 million in infrastructure work, including general construction, HVAC and electrical work at seven buildings. This is part of the capital project approved by the voters in 2006. **Peter Bassano** pointed out that the project falls within the Wicks Law and Mr. Seiler estimated that the cost will be 10-15% more as a result.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Several people spoke as advocates for the Newcomer Center and urged that funds be maintained for this unique and vital program. Speakers were **Isabel Villar**, Director of Centro Hispano; **John Deyle**, parent of a former student in the program; and High School student **Monserat Galeno**.

White Plains Teachers Association President **Kerry Broderick** said there are continued concerns regarding the budget and about spending for consultants.

Augie Zicca urged fiscal prudence and a 0% tax increase. He suggested cuts in administrative positions, establishment of an independent citizens review board, and postponement of tax certiorari payments until funds are available.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- February 23: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.
Preliminary Budget
- February 25: Special Meeting, High School B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.
Community Forum on the Budget
- March 9: Regular Meeting, Education House 7:30 P.M.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld

REMINDER:

**COMMUNITY BUDGET FORUM
Wednesday, February 25, 2009, 7:30 P.M.
White Plains High School B-1 Room**