

# THE BOARD REPORTS

## Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

March 8, 2010

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Superintendent of Schools **Dr. Christopher P. Clouet** asked for a moment of silence in memory of Jean Meaney, a clerical worker in the district for 25 years until her retirement in 1982.

**RE-REGISTRATION FOR RESIDENCY:** The Board approved the recommendation of the Residency Committee, chaired by Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services **Dr. Anne Lillis**, to establish, on a pilot basis, the mandatory re-registration of all students who will be entering sixth grade in the district. This initiative addresses concerns that there may be students enrolled in the schools who are not White Plains residents. The district is mindful of the sensitive nature and the potential inconvenience of re-registering and will work with families to facilitate the process. Communication with parents will begin this spring. Efforts will be supplemented by expansion of internal audits, use of the district's new student database system to monitor residency, and continued investigation of all suspicions.

**CALENDAR FOR 2010-2011:** The Board approved the School Calendar for 2010-2011, which is now posted on the district's website. New next year will be 17 early release days, all on Wednesdays, which were discussed in depth by the Board. These one-hour early dismissals would result in two-hour blocks of time for staff to address professional development in sessions guided by a very serious set of criteria. They replace one conference day and the two curriculum planning early release days in previous calendars. The two half-days for parent conferences remain.

Dr. Clouet and **Dr. Margaret Dwyer**, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction addressed questions on the subject. At the elementary level, supervision of students would be covered by Teaching Assistants and there would be "bridge" activities for those students who attend the Youth Bureau afterschool program.

Dr. Clouet noted that a survey of parents on the issue, with hundreds of responses, resulted in a positive reaction. The district will work with those who have logistical issues. Plans need to be finalized on implications for the High School schedule.

Instructional Specialist **Jackie Miller** also spoke on this subject, and said that the common thread expressed in discussions about professional development is the need for more time. She added that many staff members are very excited about this new model.

**DONATIONS:** **Dr. Dinah Moché** donated copies of her textbook, Astronomy: A Self-Teaching Guide, for the High School Science Department. An astronomer and author, Dr. Moché is an alumna of White Plains High School and a member of the school's Hall of Fame.

Resident **Cindy Frenchman** gave the district a large-screen TV which will be used at Church Street School.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Clouet thanked everyone who participated in tonight's Data Fair, which preceded tonight's meeting. He said the schools did a wonderful job in sharing information about their good work.

Dr. Clouet also expressed appreciation to all those who responded to the Haiti relief efforts and said there would be a special event in May, celebrating our Haitian community.

Discussing School Sustainability Gardens, Dr. Clouet said an excellent core group has been assembled, representing the community, and ground will be broken in April. Participating schools are George Washington, Mamaroneck Avenue, Ridgeway and the High School.

BUDGET: Assistant Superintendent for Business **Fred Seiler** made this third and final presentation on the budget, which included Part II of the Instructional Budget and the total Preliminary Budget. He reviewed figures for certain programs and itemized major budget reductions. Staffing changes show a decrease of 83.1 positions, down 7.27% from last year. Over the last two years, staffing will have been reduced by 11.37%.

Summarizing the budget, the current total of \$184,539,094 is a reduction of .67% from last year, the first reduction ever recorded for the district. Due to the overall revenue decrease of over \$6 million, the tax rate comes in at an increase – currently 4.72%. Mr. Seiler expects this to be reduced by further work in the coming weeks. On the contingency budget, Mr. Seiler said this would, in effect, be equal to last year's budget. He then spoke about the budget calendar and reminded everyone of the Public Hearing on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Dr. Clouet thanked Mr. Seiler for the excellent job he has done on the budget and for providing much of the detail on the website.

TAX CERTIORARIS: Claims for refunds amounting to more than \$760,000 were approved by the Board. These were submitted by three commercial property owners.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- March 22: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.  
Public Hearing on the Budget
- April 5: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.  
Final Review of Proposed Budget
- April 12: Regular Meeting, High School, B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.  
Recognition of Scholar-Athletes  
Board Adoption of Proposed Budget

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