

# THE BOARD REPORTS

## Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

October 16, 2006

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Superintendent of Schools **Timothy Connors** requested a moment of silence in memory of three staff members who passed away recently: **Johnny Greene** was a Security Aide at the High School for 15 years; **Irma Montesano** taught at Highlands Junior High for 20 years; and **Anita Simon** spent 33 years in the Business Office as an Account Clerk.

**HONORS AND AND RECOGNITION:** High School Seniors recognized in the 2006 National Merit Scholarship Program include SemiFinalists **Mary Lau** and **Rose Liu** and eight Commended Students. SemiFinalists in the National Achievement Scholarship Program are **Andrea Clay**, **Arielle Hawkins** and **Akina Younge**. In addition, 36 students have received Advanced Placement Scholar Awards.

High School Art Teacher **Mary Fennell** was congratulated on being named Art Educator of the Year for Region Seven of the New York State Art Teacher's Association.

In celebration of **School Board Recognition Week**, beginning October 23<sup>rd</sup>, **Teresa Niss**, President of the Administrators and Supervisors Association, **Jerry Gorski**, President of the White Plains Teachers Association, **Natalie Arone**, President of the Civil Service Employees Association, and **Sheryl Brady**, Co-President of PTA Council, expressed gratitude to the members of the Board of Education for their exemplary service on behalf of the children of White Plains. They commended their dedication and commitment to quality education for all children.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Connors reported on a partnership with **IBM** in three different programs which will benefit students in the district. The "KidSmart Early Learning Program" will offer computer centers for PreKindergarten and Kindergarten students. "Reading Companion" is a new web-based family literacy program which will be implemented throughout the district. Finally, "Translate Now!" is designed to open up a world of services and information on the Internet for Spanish speakers, using automatic English-to-Spanish translation. IBM funding of these programs totals about \$50,000.

Mr. Connors mentioned the new "Margaret's Place" facility at the High School, resulting from Joe Torre's program to assist young people who experience violence in their lives. A presentation on this will be made at a future meeting.

**DONATIONS:** Mr. Connors thanked **Anthony Abatino**, Class of 1999, for the donation of a piano for George Washington School; and **Neil Grand** for computer equipment for a Library program.

**TAX CERTIORARIS:** The Board approved two tax certiorari refunds, upon recommendation of counsel. Cases involved settlements with Macy's East and Cameo House for a total of over \$1.7 million in refunds.

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

**TENURE APPOINTMENTS:** At the September 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, tenure was granted to **Lisa Weber**, Coordinator of Mathematics, Districtwide. Mr. Connors described Ms. Weber as an outstanding educator and teacher who is passionate about her work. Assistant Superintendent **Margaret Dwyer** praised Ms. Weber's leadership abilities and her tireless energy in implementing best practices.

Elementary Education Teacher **Ilia Edwards** was granted tenure at the same meeting. Mamaroneck Avenue School Principal **Gail Epstein** said Ms. Edwards is highly effective, has tremendous enthusiasm and is an invaluable resource for other teachers.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** The Board approved a consultant contract of \$74,000 for teacher training with Columbia University Teachers College's Reading and Writing Project. This involves coaching and professional development at each of the five elementary schools as well as workshops for principals. The purpose is to enable the district to implement its new writing curriculum and improve the writing skills of students.

The Annual Professional Development Plan, mandated by New York State, was approved by the Board and is aligned with the state's learning standards and assessments and student needs. It was developed by the district's Professional Development Planning Team and outlines major goals for professional development of the instructional staff. Also included is an implementation plan for reaching these goals.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:** October 30: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.  
Test Analysis  
November 13: Regular Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.

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