



THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS: Rosemarie Eller, *President*; Charlie Norris, *Vice President*; Sheryl Brady, James Hricay, Cayne Letizia, Rose Lovitch, Randy Stein

July 6, 2021

REORGANIZATION MEETING: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph L. Ricca took his Oath of Office along with Board Members James Hricay, Cayne Letizia and Rose Lovitch, who were re-elected in May for three-year terms of office. The Board also re-elected its officers: Rosemarie Eller, **President**, and Charlie Norris, **Vice President**. Action was taken on various resolutions for the District to conduct business in the 2021-22 school year.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca asked for a moment of silence in memory of Rene Van Hecke, Districtwide Carpenter from 1965 to 1976.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Ricca welcomed everyone back to this "in-person" meeting and said information will be provided on expectations for the fall as soon as it is available. He also discussed the District's recent reassignment of Elementary School Assistant Principals. He assured everyone that this was a well thought out decision, made in the best interests of the children.

Dr. Ricca commented on the subject of the Critical Race Theory, which has raised some questions. He said this is a very complex subject, which the District does not teach. He said, "White Plains has always valued diversity and that has not changed."

Dr. Ricca presented a citation to Sean Lewis who is retiring as Director of Security. He thanked him for his role in creating a safer environment throughout the District.

BOARD COMMENT: Board Members spoke about the graduation and moving up ceremonies and the excitement and creativity which they saw first-hand. They were pleased to note that efforts were made to include those who didn't attend in person. They said we have much to be proud of and students and staff demonstrated new skills and strength as a result of the experiences of the last year.

Mrs. Eller mentioned that it was a great honor to be part of the recent Equity Summit held by the U.S. Secretary of Education and Mr. Norris cited Mrs. Eller's excellent leadership throughout the pandemic.

APPOINTMENTS: Eight teachers were given probationary appointments to begin in September. Feona Bailey will teach Special Education at Mamaroneck Avenue School; Sophy Tejada, Special Education at Ridgeway School; Christine Biskup, Special Education at George Washington; Ines Appel and Kayleen Lugo, Elementary Education at Church Street; John Bivas, Physical Education, Districtwide; Chamely Rodriguez, School Psychologist, Districtwide; and Shira Kessar Schwartz, CSE Chairperson, Districtwide.

DONATIONS: Dr. Ricca thanked the following donors for their generosity:

Selma Ortiz for five copies of the book "Just Ask" by Sonya Sotomayor for the elementary schools

Elizabeth Dan for Teacher Resource books for use Districtwide

Mamaroneck Avenue School PTA for \$2,731.03 for additional seating in the MAS outdoor classroom

Susan Hessney for two clarinets for use Districtwide

OTHER ACTION: In an amendment to the calendar, the District confirmed the "official" observance of Juneteenth on June 20, 2022.

The Board approved an agreement with the White Plains Department of Safety to continue its School Resource Officer program for the coming year, promoting safe schools.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: July 28: Special Meeting, 5 P.M. (Executive Session)

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld