



# 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

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September 13, 2021

MOMENT OF SILENCE: **Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca** asked for a moment of silence in respect and remembrance of 9/11/01, for those who lost their lives, their families and those who continue to suffer the effects of exposure.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: **Dr. Ricca** said he is grateful that we're back and it's wonderful to see students in the schools and participating in their various activities and sports. We're in a much better place this year than last. With our past experiences, we know how to attend to issues that arise.

Dr. Ricca introduced this year's student liaisons from the High School: **Jack Cannone** and **Thiago DeOliveira** who said students are happy to be back in school. They mentioned an issue – crowding at lunchtime – which Dr. Ricca said it is being addressed.

BOARD COMMENT: Board Members attended the Summer School Graduation held in August and congratulated these 14 students who, they said, have demonstrated great perseverance. They mentioned the reopening of schools and how the District is continually looking at methods to keep everyone as safe as possible in the pandemic environment.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL LEARNING & EQUITY: Dr. Ricca introduced this presentation, noting the importance of devoting attention to the subject – making sure kids are okay and making sure we are attending to the entire human being. He introduced **Assistant Superintendent Debbie Augarten** who began by saying that our Strategic Plan, aligned with our Mission and Vision, focuses on the development of the whole child. Our work is to create an environment where all children are seen and can learn. Ms. Augarten reviewed the frameworks of SEL and Equity – Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education -- and the core assumptions of Circle Practices. This work is expected to take about three years to put into place. We are moving forward, making our schools welcoming and inclusive places for all students and adults. Ms. Augarten answered questions from the Board and public.

STRATEGIC PLAN: The Board approved the Strategic Plan for 2021-24 and Dr. Ricca thanked the Board Members for participating in re-examining the Plan each year. He congratulated the Board for its focus this on outcomes such as attendance, suspension and student failure rates.

PERSONNEL: Board Members accepted resignations for the purpose of retirement from **Veronica Telesco**, Office Assistant II, Education House; **Mariana McCormack**, Teaching Assistant, Middle School-Highlands; and **Marilyn Moreno**, Teaching Assistant, Church Street School.

Probationary appointments were given to four teachers: **Joanna Sniffen**, Elementary Education, Mamaroneck Avenue School; **Abigail Stolz Monks**, ENL at Middle School Highlands and Eastview; **Christina Bartolotta**, Special Education, High School; and **John Corbett**, English at the High School.

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

**Joanne Fytros** for fabric and sewing equipment for the High School

**Dr. David Elcott & Rabbi Shira Milgrom** for \$1,000 for the Acts of Loving Kindness Award

**The Huaxia Chinese School of Greater NY Inc.** \$1,000 for the Asian Heritage Scholarship

**Michael Stevens** for \$75 for the Brown Family Memorial Scholarship

**John Curley** for 2 guitar amplifiers for the High School

UPCOMING MEETINGS: September 29: Special Meeting, 5:30 P.M. Human Resources Committee (Executive Session),

October 18: Regular Meeting, 7:30 P.M. Education House

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld