

THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

February 10, 2015

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent **Tim Connors** asked for a moment of silence in memory of several members of the school community. **Theresa Kunzelman** was a Secretary at George Washington School from 1975 to her retirement in 1987. Frances McKean taught Economics at the Highlands and the High School for 20 years, retiring in 1983. John Naughton was an English Teacher and Drama Coach at the high school from 1968 to 1996, when he retired. Dr. Anthony “Champ” Marano was a respected and beloved member of the White Plains community and strong supporter of our schools. Among his many affiliations and activities, he was Medical Director of the School District, chairman of the Tiger Fans Committee, and was inducted into the High School Hall of Fame in 1998.

AWARDS TO BOARD MEMBERS: Board Members **Rosemarie Eller** and **Sheryl Brady** were presented with Achievement Awards from the New York State School Boards Association for their participation in leadership development training activities. Mr. Connors commended the entire Board for its outstanding reputation for leadership and commitment to the community.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE: In response to new State regulations regarding services to English Language Learners, Mr. Connors introduced a presentation regarding the changes which will be required in the way we teach these students. He said our district has already been recognized by the State for its Dual Language program and for its leadership in the area of bilingual education. **Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Jessica O’Donovan** and **Director of ELL/LOTE Lisa Panaro** explained the new legislation, with bilingual programs required for at least 70% of the students when there are 20 or more, districtwide, on the same grade level, who speak the same home language. Options for the district include expanding our current program from two schools to a third, or a school-wide model, expanding to five sections of Dual Language per grade. No new teachers would be added; rather they would be replaced through attrition.

Mr. Connors noted that there will be discussion relating to our Choice Program and the need for flexibility and for dialogue with the community. He added that there are also other options. We will be forming a committee to study the issue and will continue to be very sensitive to the changes in the law and to our responsibility to our children.

2015-2016 BUDGET: **Assistant Superintendent for Business Fred Seiler** presented this first portion of next year’s preliminary budget. Among the challenges is the fact that we do not have State Aid information. Mr. Seiler reviewed the various categories, pointing out that the largest increases are in Facilities & Operations. Employee benefits costs have been held fairly stable. The draft of this portion of the budget totals \$92.4 million, an increase of 0.5% over last year. Mr. Seiler reminded everyone of dates of future meetings and hearings and the vote on May 19th.

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

PERSONNEL: Resignations for the purpose of retirement were accepted from the following staff members: **Deborah Amorosa** and **Margaret Cavanagh**, both Teaching Assistants at Church Street School; **Jennifer DeSena**, Districtwide Coordinator of Athletics and Physical Education; **Linda Pandolfo Gale**, Library Media Specialist at George Washington School; **John McGee**, Social Studies Teacher at the Highlands Middle School; **Narcita Medina**, Assistant Principal at the Highlands Middle School; and **Elizabeth O'Brien-McKeon**, Foreign Language Teacher at the High School.

The Board also accepted the resignation of **Sarah Sorenson**, Districtwide Co-Director of Special Education-Instructional.

DONATIONS: The Board accepted the following donations to the district and Mr. Connors thanked the donors for their generosity.

A flute and a clarinet from **Monnel Cremin** for Mamaroneck Avenue School

A violin from **Pat Silbert** for Eastview School

Two music stands from **Mr. and Mrs. Allen Gould** for Post Road School

\$1,000 from the **Foundation for Public Education in White Plains** for a High School symposium with Roberto Quesada, Latin American Author

\$1,650 from **various donors** for the Guy Mathews Memorial Scholarship Fund

File cabinets from **Susan Levin** for Eastview School

2015-2016 SCHOOL CALENDAR: Approval of the calendar was tabled for further discussion. The administration will contact staff and parents to reach a consensus on options and a recommendation will be brought to the Board at its next meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

February 23:	Special Meeting (Budget), Education House, 7:30 P.M.
March 9:	Regular Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.
March 11:	Budget Forum, High School B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld