

THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

January 12, 2015

SUPERINTENDENT APPOINTMENT: **Dr. Paul R. Fried** was appointed to a three-year term as Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1st. **Board President Rosemarie Eller** said that Dr. Fried emerged as the finalist among 62 candidates. The interview team was expanded beyond the Board to include wider representation from the community and the Board thanked the participants in this process. Mrs. Eller said the Board believes Dr. Fried is a seasoned superintendent who has the experience necessary to succeed here.

Dr. Fried expressed excitement about coming to White Plains and thanked the Board and those who participated in the interviewing process for their confidence. He said, "One of my first goals will be to build strong and trusting relationships so that, together, we can do the very best job of supporting the children of White Plains." He plans to visit the district several times this spring to see the schools and meet staff, parents and community members.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: **Superintendent Tim Connors** asked for a moment of silence in memory of six former staff members who passed away in recent weeks. **Nancy Carlton** was a School Nurse in several buildings for 15 years until retiring in 1998. **Harry Dickson** was Director of Facilities & Operations, and was with the district for 37 years, retiring in 1985. **Matty DiTomasso** worked for the district for 22 years as Head Custodian at the High School and at Education House and retired in 1999. **Tom Eaton** began his career as an English Teacher in the district in 1971 and taught at both the Highlands and High School. He became House Administrator at the High School in 1983 and retired in 2009. **Lee Fiori** joined the district in 1957 as a teacher at Post Road School and then at the North Street School. He became principal at Eastview Junior High in 1967 and retired in 1984. **Marjorie White-Wilson** was the Districtwide Dental Hygienist from 1973 to 1982.

PERSONNEL: The Board granted tenure to two teachers: **Sam Rizzio**, Special Education Teacher in the STAR Program at Rochambeau School, was described by **Program Director Paul Bratcher** as a champion for students, a fine human being, and passionate about his work.

David Babicz, Science Teacher at the Highlands Middle School, was presented by **Principal Ernie Spatafore**, who said he is a voice for high standards and challenging curriculum. His classroom is very welcoming and he enjoys his students.

The resignation for the purpose of retirement was accepted from **Mitchell Barnett**, Elementary Education Teacher at Post Road School.

The Board approved an amendment to the Administrators and Supervisors Agreement regarding credit for retirement service, relating to health benefits.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Kindergarten registration began on January 5th and Mr. Connors said this year's data will determine eligibility for bilingual education, in accordance with new State regulations. The Board will discuss this at a future meeting.

The Academic Team won its first national title, coming in first in the Fall Quiznet competition in December. The team was comprised of **Esther Ritchin, Captain, Jacob Brady, Angelica Duque, Leo Fisher, Danielle Herman, Seth Jaffe, Max Kratzok, Noah Lichtblau, Drew Smiley and Phillip Tortoriello.** Advisor to the group is **Les Roby.**

Nine High School students were honored at the Women in Tech Luncheon for their leadership in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Students were **Gabriella Alexandrou, Rizza Estacio, Daysi Fuentes, Jennifer Jasne, Michelle Krug, Catalina Martinez, Sarah Samaranayake and Lily Wincele.** They were accompanied by **Science Coordinator Dr. Margaret Doty.**

High School Junior **Joshua Colas** won the 2014 New York City Chess-in-the-Parks Rapid Open for the third time and was selected to the 2015 All-American Chess Team. Joshua is the youngest African-American Chess Master in history.

Mr. Connors explained the State's proposal regarding administration of Field Tests and said that many districts have passed a resolution recommending rejection of the amendment to mandate these tests. He proposed that this Board do so as well. In response to questions, he said these tests have no benefit for the students, only for the testing company. The Board agreed to place the item on tonight's agenda for adoption and later approved it unanimously.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Fred Seiler explained the Smart Schools Bond Act which was passed by the voters in November and which will provide \$1,781,000 to the district. One of the requirements for participation is a revised technology plan which includes an online survey twice a year. The district conducted a survey in December to comply with that.

Mr. Connors noted that budget season has begun and the community is urged to provide input at the first Budget Forum, on Wednesday, January 21st, 7:30 P.M., in the B-1 Room at the High School.

DONATIONS: The Board accepted the following donations to the district:

\$500 from the **Exxon Mobil Education Alliance** for George Washington School

\$1,200 for the Dorothy Thomas Scholarship Fund from **Dr. Terri and Robert Klemm, Ellen and Bill Laimit, and Ms. Thomas's grandchildren**

\$13,943.56 from the **White Plains High School Alumni Association** for furnishings in the school's renovated Senior Center

A drawing table from **Alex and Suzanne Trapp** for the High School Art Department

\$5,000 from the **Foundation for Public Education in White Plains** for the Youth Shakespeare Program at Eastview School

Lunch from **Broadway Pizzeria** and **Don Coqui** for Rochambeau School students who met the Director's Challenge during October and November

\$409 for the Leonard G. Rhodes Scholarship Fund from **various donors**

\$1,865 for the Guy Mathews Memorial Scholarship Fund from **various donors**

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

January 21: Budget Forum, High School B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.

February 9: Regular Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld