

THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

October 5, 2015

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools **Dr. Paul Fried** asked for a moment of silence in memory of three people who passed away recently. **Herbert Brannum** was a District-wide Carpenter for 14 years, retiring in 1985. **Elaine London** began in 1971 as Coordinator of Volunteers and served in various capacities in the district until 1994. She then became a volunteer and supervised the Community Service Program at the High School. **Grace Royalty** was the Principal School Office Manager at the High School for 30 years, from 1953 to 1983.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR "SMART SCHOOLS" PLAN: Assistant Superintendent for Business **Fred Seiler** explained this program, to comply with requirements for funding as established by New York State. He reviewed the history of this state effort to address the area of technology and said White Plains is eligible for \$1,746,127, which is the cost of the preliminary plan. Mr. Seiler acknowledged the work of **Director of Management Information Systems Ron Velez** and **Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Jessica O'Donovan**. The information was posted on the district's website, as required, and public comment was solicited. The plan was later approved on tonight's Board Meeting agenda.

HONORS AND AWARDS: Dr. Fried congratulated 18 students recognized in the National Merit Program and their families. Semifinalists are **Michael Ainsworth, Jacob Brady, Justin George** and **Sinead Hunt**. There were twelve Commended Students and five were named Scholars in the National Hispanic Recognition Program. (Several students were honored in two categories.)

The district received two Financial Reporting Awards -- from the Government Finance Officers Association and the Association of School Business Officials International. Dr. Fried and **Board President Rosemarie Eller** congratulated and thanked **Mr. Seiler** and **Carol Stein**, School Business Administrator/Treasurer, for their work.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: **Ms. O'Donovan** presented State Assessment Data for 2014-2015, noting there were some nice gains but also some decreases. There was also a significant gap in subgroup data. Information on students who opted out shows minimal impact on the overall results. Dr. Fried commented on the importance of using multiple measures. He said we are committed to working on behalf of our children and will continue to look at opportunities to move forward.

The district is participating in the **Ex-STEP-tional Challenge**, a White Plains Hospital program to promote a healthy lifestyle. Of the 122 teams competing citywide, 46 are from the school district. Whole Foods is offering gift certificates to each of the five members of the district's winning team.

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

Whole Foods will also be displaying our students' artwork in a pop-up art gallery to celebrate the store's grand reopening on October 24th. The work will be on display for several weeks.

Walk/Bike to School Day is this Wednesday and everyone was encouraged to participate.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT: **David Tellier**, Partner in the firm of NawrockiSmith, LLP, reported that, as shown in the Audit Report for 2014-15, the district is in a good financial position, with "clean" audit reports, and within the allowable limits for the New York State Tax Cap and fund balance limitations. He noted no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal controls. Mr. Tellier added that there will be challenges in the future, with costs on the rise and tax caps allowing for little maneuverability. He commended the district's Business Office, as "one of the best we work with."

The Board accepted the audit as presented.

DONATIONS: Dr. Fried thanked the following for their generous donations to the district:

Whole Foods Market/White Plains for \$250 in gift certificates for the winning team members in the White Plains Hospital Ex-STEP-tional Challenge

Susan Van Doren for wrestling equipment for the High School Wrestling Team

Lorraine Trovato-Cantori for a Target gift card for the Rochambeau PBIS Program

Sandra Serrano for 3 iTunes gift cards for the Rochambeau PBIS Program

The Parishioners of St. Bartholomew's Church for 13 backpacks and school supplies for Post Road School

Alfredo Gonzalez on behalf of **Banco Industrial de Venezuela** for student and office supplies for the High School

PERSONNEL: Tenure was granted to **Na'ama Papadakos**, Teaching Assistant at Post Road School.

Monica Mazzelli was granted a Probationary appointment to teach Special Education at the High School.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: October 26: Special Meeting (Retreat), Education House, 7:30 P.M.
 November 9: Regular Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld