

**PLEASANTVILLE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**Dr. Donald Antonecchia Announces September 2010 Retirement Plans**

PLEASANTVILLE NY, October 20, 2009 – Dr. Donald Antonecchia today made known his decision to retire as Superintendent of Schools of the Pleasantville School District effective September 2010. Having served as principal of Pleasantville High School from 1984-1995, Dr. Antonecchia has devoted twenty-six years to the schools and community he considers his “second family.”

In announcing his retirement, Dr. Antonecchia noted, “When I bid farewell to Pleasantville, I will do so with the confidence that the strength of our programs, the condition of our facilities, the high caliber of our staff, and the consistent support for public education that we receive from our residents will not only sustain us, but will continue to move this district forward and enhance its outstanding reputation in the educational community.”

The Board of Education appreciates Dr. Antonecchia’s consideration in providing early notice of his decision to retire. “Dr. Antonecchia has provided the District with exemplary leadership in curriculum, staff development, wellness, capital and fiduciary oversight and the ethical foundations of good citizenship.” said Sol Skolnick, president of the Board of Education. “We will miss Dr. A’s leadership, but his decision comes at a time when the District is strong and highly respected. After more than three decades of service he has more than earned this time with his family and his personal pursuits.”

Since 1995, under Dr. Antonecchia’s leadership as superintendent, Pleasantville has strengthened and enhanced its instructional programs. Bedford Road School students consistently score in the top levels on state and national tests. Pleasantville High School, which received recognition as a New York State School of Excellence and a National Blue Ribbon School during Dr. Antonecchia’s tenure as principal, received its second designation as a New York State School of Excellence and was ranked twelfth in *Worth* magazine’s list of the Top 50 Public Schools in the country. Pleasantville Middle School was honored as a New York State School of Excellence and a National Blue Ribbon School. Dr. Antonecchia also has encouraged and supported programs throughout the District that promote civic responsibility, intergenerational interaction, and healthy lifelong habits.

Concurrently, Dr. Antonecchia has overseen a number of capital projects necessitated by rising student enrollment, program changes, and outdated facilities. At present, the

District is engaged in a major construction and renovation project at Pleasantville High School, built in 1929, that will better accommodate a 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum and be more energy efficient. The new Bedford Road School, which replaced a building that was overcrowded and out-of-date, received an Elementary School Citation for outstanding school design from *American School and University Magazine*. It also provided space for the implementation of full-day kindergarten and an autism spectrum disorders program, among others.

Dr. Antonecchia, who has spoken often about the state's need to reform its funding of public education, made it a priority to control costs and find new sources of income. Establishing in-district programs for students placed in out-of-district special education programs has given Pleasantville greater control over both expenditures and programs. In addition, tuitions paid by other districts for their students' participation in these programs have generated income for Pleasantville. Another source of income has been the designation of Pleasantville High School as a choice for tuition-paying students from Pocantico Hills, a K-8 school district. Through these and other efforts, in 2008 Pleasantville was one of eight school districts in the Lower Hudson Valley that was recognized by Standard & Poor's for providing "the biggest bang for your educational buck."

Dr. Antonecchia, who has been instrumental in the hiring of a majority of the District's staff, has promoted a culture of high visibility for Pleasantville's administrators and serves as a role model for all. His attendance at numerous student events, assistance with the morning drop-off at Bedford Road School, participation in community organizations and Pleasantville's Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, and involvement in professional organizations – all these and more attest to his commitment to students and the community. He has received numerous awards for service and leadership, including the New York State PTA's Jenkins Memorial Award, Rotary International's Paul Harris Fellow Award, and the Westchester County Human Rights Commission's Human Rights Meritorious Service Award. Dr. Antonecchia is past president of Pleasantville Rotary and of the Southern Westchester BOCES Chief School Administrators, which he represents on New York State's Section One Athletics Executive Board. He is an instructor of education at the college level and a reader for Yeshiva University's Doctoral Dissertation Committee.

Dr. Antonecchia has devoted a total of thirty-six years of service to New York's public schools. He earned his BA from Farleigh Dickinson University and MA from The New School for Social Research, a Certificate of Advanced Studies from SUNY New Paltz, and his Ed.D. from Yeshiva University. Prior to coming to Pleasantville, he was a teacher and an assistant principal in the Yonkers Public Schools.

Dr. Antonecchia will continue to work hard throughout the school year on behalf of his "second family," while looking forward to being able to spend more time with his own family.

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## **Superintendent Search FAQs**

**Q: Who is responsible for finding a new superintendent for Pleasantville?**

**A:** It is the Board of Education's responsibility to select and hire the superintendent.

**Q: Will the Board consider hiring an interim or acting superintendent?**

**A:** It is considered to be a best practice to interview search firms and engage one that will assist the Board in the selection of a new, permanent superintendent.

**Q: Why engage a search firm?**

**A:** A search firm has the tools and skills to help the District self-evaluate in order to come to an understanding of the attributes that are desirable in a superintendent for Pleasantville. The position of superintendent requires specific certifications and qualifications. An experienced firm has a thorough knowledge of these requirements as well as access to highly qualified candidates.

**Q: What will the search firm do?**

**A:** The firm will assist in all phases of candidate recruitment and evaluation. The search firm will develop a comprehensive community assessment by conducting focus groups with stakeholders and public meetings open to all District residents. This will allow us to develop a profile for the new superintendent. The firm will recruit candidates through networking, publicity and advertising. The firm will screen all candidates and provide the Board with a short list of qualified candidates, who will be interviewed by the Board.

**Q: How will District staff and community members be able to provide input into this process?**

**A:** Staff and community input are critical to a successful search process. The search firm will conduct focus groups and community meetings as well as developing a written questionnaire to help determine the expectations of the staff and the residents. This part of the process will begin shortly after we hire the search firm.

**Q: Who will be involved in the process of interviewing candidates?**

**A:** Using the short list provided by the search firm, the Board will conduct confidential interviews to reach consensus on a candidate.

**Q: Who is responsible for evaluating references and conducting background checks?**

**A:** The search firm is responsible for thoroughly investigating the work and personal histories of the candidates who will be interviewed by the Board.

**Q: Does the interview process have to be confidential?**

**A:** We have been advised, and believe, that in order to attract the highest caliber of candidates we must assure them that our process is confidential. Qualified candidates are generally reluctant to jeopardize their current position unless or until they are identified as a finalist.

**Q: When does the Board anticipate announcing the hiring of the new superintendent?**

**A:** Our current timetable should allow us to complete the search process and offer the position of superintendent to the successful candidate in April 2010.