



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Ken Valenti

914-576-4305

kvalenti@nredlearn.org

**Safety and Security is Focus
Of New Rochelle School District Town Hall Meeting**

*Altaris Consulting Group Joins District, Police and Fire Officials
Answering Questions from the Public*

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. (February 27, 2019) – The safety and security consultant hired by the District in December joined leaders of the City School District of New Rochelle and the city’s police and fire departments in addressing questions about school safety from the community Monday evening.

In the Town Hall session, held in Isaac E. Young Middle School, the community heard from the head of the Altaris Consulting Group, which the Board hired to implement safety and security practices and procedures. Altaris will make use of the recommendations from the report of last year’s Task Force on Reducing Violence in the Lives of Children and Youth.

Joining Altaris founder and chief executive John LaPlaca on the dais were New Rochelle Police Commissioner Joseph Schaller and Deputy Commissioner Robert Gazzola and New Rochelle Fire Department Chief Andrew Sandor and Captain Barry Nechis. New Rochelle Board of Education President Jeffrey Hastie and Interim Superintendent Dr. Magda Parvey also answered questions.

LaPlaca explained that Altaris focuses exclusively on K-12 schools and serves more than 200 schools, mostly on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley. The districts they serve in Westchester include the public schools in White Plains, Rye, Scarsdale, Bronxville, Irvington and Peekskill.

Altaris provides a thorough approach that focuses on working collaboratively with school districts through the process of making improvements and helping manage safety and security effectively, LaPlaca said. The firm then works with a school district to maintain safety and security standards and procedures and improve operations as needed.

The firm has a one-year contract with the School District for \$104,000, with 52 percent reimbursable by New York State aid.

“We’ve just begun our work with the District but one pleasant surprise is that we are finding a lot of initiatives are already being done,” he said. “I can tell you quite seriously, not many districts, when we start our work with them, are in this position.”

Altaris is meeting with each of the schools, individually, to determine improvement opportunities. Most school principals in the District attended the meeting last night.

The firm will develop a timeline of project work, implement training and collaborate with outside emergency services personnel. “We don’t want to repeat the process previously carried out,” LaPlaca said. “We will, however, look at everything through the lens of a K-12 security firm.”

Among the questions raised was whether Altaris and the District will continue their relationship after the initial 12-month contract. LaPlaca said just about every school district that Altaris has worked has continued the relationship.

LaPlaca said every school district’s safety and security challenges are unique and that Altaris tailors a unique plan for each district. The firm bases its recommendations on best practices from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and other security agencies, he said.

The site assessment of the schools is expected to be done in approximately 30 days. LaPlaca asked for patience and understanding from the community regarding the release of information because the nature of safety and security requires that a lot of information – such as building level emergency plans – must not be disclosed publicly.

About the City School District of New Rochelle

With nearly 11,000 students in 10 schools, the City School District of New Rochelle, through an active partnership amongst community, parents, staff and students, provides a high-quality and challenging education for every child, in a safe, nurturing environment that embraces rich diversity and drives success.

###