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Replacing Rivera

BOE mulls next steps in finding superintendent's successor

By **KOREY WILSON**
HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — With the resignation of Dr. Manuel J. Rivera about two months away, much work lies ahead for the Norwalk Board of Education to establish new leadership.

Rivera, who became Su-

perintendent of Schools in July 2013, announced Thursday he will resign on Jan. 31, 2015. He was appointed as the next superintendent for New London Public Schools Thursday evening.

"The aim would be to lose as little momentum as possible on the improve-

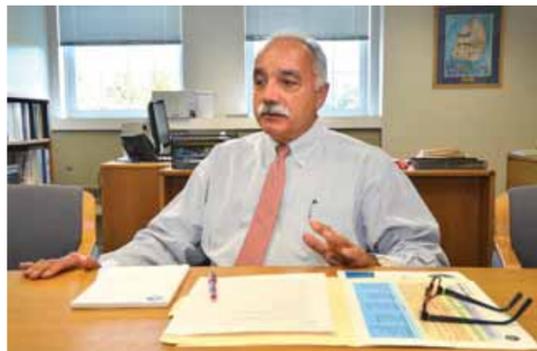
ments that Manny (Rivera) has made to the school system so an interim superintendent and the permanent replacement can continue to make progress on those initiatives," said Norwalk Board of Education Chairman Michael Lyons on Friday.

The top priority of the

school board would be to create a to-do list for Rivera's final two months, according to Lyons.

"That's going to include an exit memo that summarizes where we are, key initiatives underway and the next steps required to keep

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Hour file photo/Alex von Kleydorff

Norwalk Superintendent Manuel Rivera, above, announced he would step down to take the superintendent vacancy in New London Thursday. Norwalk's Board of Education now begins the task of finding his replacement.

Ramsey goes before Psych Review Board

Wilton man, who brutally killed father, was suffering from 'substance-induced psychosis'

By **STEVE KOBAK**
HOUR STAFF WRITER

WILTON — A Wilton man who killed his father two-and-a-half years ago was likely suffering from "substance-induced psychosis," according to testimony given Friday at his Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB) hearing at the Whiting Forensic Division of Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown.

Dr. Shanna Berger, a psychiatrist who has treated Aaron Ramsey, told the members of the PSRB that Ramsey has remained stable without medication during his stay at Whiting, and Rebecca Ewald, a forensic monitor, reported that Ramsey has made substantial progress in individual therapy since being committed to Whiting.

"Given the fact that he's maintained such excellent stability over two years without medication, it would be hard to say it was anything other than substance-induced psychosis," Berger said.

Wearing a white-collared shirt and brown dress pants, Ramsey appeared before the PSRB



Aaron Ramsey

Friday morning. By statute, Ramsey must appear before the six-member review board every two years for mental evaluations. The reviews determine whether or not Ramsey is mentally stable enough to be sent to a lighter security facility or released back into society.

Ewald, Berger and Dr. Dean Leone detailed Ramsey's treatment and progress and suggested that he be moved from Whiting to Dutcher Hall, a less restrictive setting where he can earn privileges he cannot earn in Whiting. Ramsey's treatment focuses on addressing his social issues, such as his uneasiness in dealing with other people, and making him understand

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Getting in the giving spirit



Hour photo/Erik Trautmann

Peter Havens and the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots campaign has obtained space at the former Loehmann's store on West Avenue for a donation location.

Norwalk Fire Department, Toys for Tots, Heart-to-Heart hosting toy drives

By **ROBIN SATTLER**
HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — For many children, the holidays represent a joyful time filled with presents and parties, but for those less fortunate, the season isn't quite as jolly.

Three local organizations are making an effort to boost the spirits of children in need. The Norwalk Fire Department is part-

nering with the Human Services Council's Children Connection's annual toy drive, the Children's Bank. Toys for Tots has a new headquarters at the former site of Loehmann's on West Avenue, which serves as a collection center as well as a means of centralizing donations from collection sites in Norwalk, Westport, Fairfield and the southern part of Wilton. The Heart-

to-Heart Foundation, a nonprofit established by the Rev. Nellie Mann, is also collecting gifts to be distributed to disadvantaged youths in Norwalk.

All five fire stations in the city are currently accepting donations of new toys and gifts that will be distributed to nearly 3,000 children living throughout lower Fairfield County.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to provide

support to the Human Services Council and help children in need during this holiday season," said Norwalk Fire Chief Dennis McCarthy. "We hope that using the five local firehouses will make it quick and convenient for residents or businesses that want to drop off toy donations this holiday season."

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Report sheds light on new face of poverty

By **ROBIN SATTLER**
HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — Bonnee Pecquex is one of many in Connecticut who represent the changing face of poverty.

The 51-year-old Wilton resident is a divorced mother of three who struggles to work three jobs to support her family and in doing so, earns more than the official U.S. poverty level, but less than what she needs to support the basic cost of living.

"I fall between the cracks," Pecquex said. "I'm actually not sure there are any programs out there that can even help me... I've been told that I'm not poor enough."

Pecquex, however, is not alone.

A new study of financial

hardship released by the Connecticut United Way — ALICE, which stands for — Asset, Limited, Income, Constrained, Employed — places a spotlight on a large population of hard-working residents who continually struggle to survive on their salaries.

Using data from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey, the ALICE report reveals that a total of 332,817 Connecticut households fall into a category that earn more than the poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living.

According to the report, 29 percent of the Norwalk community, or 34,957 people fall into the ALICE category, while Darien has 13 percent of its popula-

tion, New Canaan with 12 percent, Weston with 7 percent, Westport with 12 percent and Wilton with 9 percent.

"The thing is, you don't pay attention to this sort of thing until you need help," Pecquex said. "I have plenty of friends who don't work and their husbands make a lot of money and there comes a point where they just don't get what you're going through. The best they can say is, keep your chin up. Most people in Fairfield County don't have a clue as to what this is like."

Following her divorce

18 years ago, Pecquex was working as a real estate appraiser and supporting her family on her own.

She became engaged several years later and was on the road to happiness and financial security when her fiancée suddenly passed away from a brain aneurysm — leaving her without a job and financially spiraling out of control.

"Everything was such a mess," Pecquex said. "I fell behind on my mortgage and didn't have enough money really to cover any-

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Hour photo/Erik Trautmann

Bonnee Pecquex is struggling to make ends meet and is one of the many families in the state that has been identified as part of the ALICE (Asset, Limited, Income, Constrained, Employed) category. ALICE is a study of financial hardship through the United Way.



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