

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, APRIL 24, 2003**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:03 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 24, 2003.

**Board Members Present:** Marc Orlow, Thomas Davis, Lynn Glodek, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Susan Moore, William Ryan, Steven Slutsky (arrived late), and Thomas Yunker.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Research, Assessment and Technology; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Charles Graham, Director of Technology; Pat Williams, Assistant Principal, Plymouth Whitemarsh High School; Robert Carroll; Robert Franz; Tom Gibson; Bill Lawler; Gina Lawler; Bill Lukens; Suzanne McMahan; Michelle Mowad; Pieter Ouwerkerk; and Rachel Pulver.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He also recognized Ms. Williams from the high school who, in turn, recognized Ms. Pulver, a high school student who had won a *Yes, I Can* award from the National Council for Exceptional Children. Ms. Williams and Ms. McMahan, Ms. Pulver's teacher, announced the student's award in the employment category and noted that she was one of just two Pennsylvania students to receive awards at the National Council's recent convention. Ms. Williams spoke highly of Ms. Pulver's effort, skills, and work ethic. The Board awarded Ms. Pulver a certificate of achievement and warmly applauded her accomplishments.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed Board approval of the minutes of the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 03/13/03, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 03/17/03, the General Meeting of 02/20/03, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 03/26/03, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 04/02/03, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 04/04/03, and the Finance Committee Meeting of 04/10/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #9 through #20. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 04/03, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report; General Fund and Program Bills, General Fund/Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Report; Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month

ending 03/31/03; the Budget Analysis of 04/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 03/31/03. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Slutsky joined the meeting

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Franz who raised questions about the steps involved in approving facility use applications and expressed his belief that the fees should include manpower costs. Mr. Bell reported that facility users in the three upper categories paid rental fees and that all outside users paid personnel charges for work outside staff hours.

Mr. Carroll commended the Board on developing a policy on board members who were seeking employment with the district. He noted his past support for such a policy. Mr. Carroll also commented extensively on the proposed preliminary budget. He noted the increases in the cost of health care benefits and recommended that all district employees make significant contributions to the cost of these benefits. Mr. Carroll noted that employees working for many companies paid more for their health care benefits and, in some cases, faced reductions in their coverage. He urged the Board to negotiate with the staff and administrators to reduce the cost of health insurance premiums. He also advocated that the district lobby the state through PSBA to roll back the multiplier for calculating retirement benefits for school district employees across the state. Mr. Orlow noted that the cost of these retirement benefits would increase each year for years to come.

**Adjustment to the Agenda:** Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Lukens, a high school student, who spoke on his graduation project dealing with alternatives to diesel fuel for school buses serving the district. Mr. Lukens noted that bio-diesel and natural gas were options. He reported on the health hazards of diesel fuel and the advantages and costs for converting vehicles to bio-diesel or natural gas. Mr. Lukens specifically noted the availability of grant funds to help with the conversion process. Mr. Ouwerkerk from PECO provided additional information on the grants and the availability of grant funds to all those who were willing to undertake the conversions. Board members asked clarifying questions about Mr. Lukens presentation, commended him for his work and referred the topic to the Building and Grounds Committee for review with the district's transportation contractor. In response to a Board query, Mr. Lukens advised that he would be attending Carnegie Mellon University in the fall.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a number of proposed policy changes.

- Enclosure # 21, Board Policy #004 – Board Committee Functions (Student Life): Ms. Glodek moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the changes discussed on Monday evening. Mr. Yunker requested that the highlights be removed from the policy now that the Board was aware of the changes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

- **Enclosure #22, Board Policy #004.1 – Membership – Student:** Board members continued an earlier discussion about who the student representatives should be. Dr. Lipshutz wondered how the current Board Student Representatives felt about the issue. Ms. Glodek reported that the committee favored having the alternate student representatives serve on the committee. Both Ms. Glodek and Mrs. Moore felt that having the alternate student representatives serving as representatives to the committee provided the Board greater access to student input since the primary student representatives would still be able to provide input at regular Board meetings on any issues that arose. Ms. Glodek asked how student attendance at morning committee meetings might be handled. Dr. Cotter advised that it would be handled as attendance at a student activity. Mr. Orlow noted that morning committee meetings could be held at the high school. After some discussion, Ms. Glodek moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve on first reading the appointment of Alternate Board Student Representatives as ex officio members of the Community Relations/Student Life Committee. On a roll all vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- **Enclosure #23, Board Policy #404.1 – Recruitment and Selection:** Board members: Mr. Yunker advised that he would be voting against the policy because it could result in the Board having to settle for the second best candidate if the best qualified candidate were a former board member. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policy as presented on second reading. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker and Dr. Ryan voted in favor. Mr. Yunker and Dr. Ryan voted in opposition. The motion was carried.
- **Enclosure #24, Board Policy #701 – Care and Maintenance of Flags:** Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the policy. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Correspondence:** The Board took note but no action on Enclosure #25, a notice from the state Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management that reported on the district’s compliance with state and federal regulations and policies as reflected in the Single Audit Report for the fiscal year ending 06/30/02.

**Superintendent’s Report:** Dr. Cotter briefly updated his report as it was shown in Enclosures #26 through #28. He noted the additions made to the report since the work session on Monday. Mr. Yunker received clarification on a resignation following child-rearing leave and an extension of sick leave following a sabbatical for health restoration. Board members raised questions about the position of Acting Supervisor of Special Education. Those questions centered on the process for filling the position on a permanent basis. Mr. Berger explained that the temporary assignment had been recommended to allow the occupant and the district to assess whether or not the applicant was well suited for the position on a permanent basis. If that was the case, the Administration’s plan was to award the position to the occupant on a permanent basis. Mr. Orlow asked if that process would result in any contractual issues with the CEA. After some discussion, the Board reached a consensus to post the position several weeks before the expiration of the temporary position to allow interested parties to apply in case the district chose to look at

other candidates for the permanent position. Dr. Cotter stressed the need for continuity in the position. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. Dougherty reported on the senior class trip and thanked the sponsors for all of their hard work and support. She also commented on the recent naturalization ceremony held at the high school, the lacrosse season and the selection of a sophomore as a nominee for Board Student Representative. Ms. Cousounis reported on the dedication of Victory Fields, the recent talent and fashion shows, distinguished graduates, the freshman formal, the softball tournament and the Best Buddies Ball.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow reprised his Monday summary of the preliminary budget for 2003-04 in Enclosure #29. The budget called for expenditures of \$67,412,000 and a real estate milage rate of 14.53 and represented a 1.96% tax increase or \$28 for each \$100,000 of assessed value. Projected expenditures included significant increases in the cost of health benefits and special education and the addition of \$750,000 to the district's capital reserve. Mr. Orlow reminded the community that adoption of the preliminary budget was the first step in public discussion of the budget. He announced a budget hearing on 05/15/03 and final adoption of the budget in June. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the preliminary budget. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Orlow request Board action on the revision of Board Policy #810 – Transportation as shown in Enclosure #30. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the policy update on first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board consideration on first reading of the new Board Policy #440 – Military Leave of Absence in Enclosure #31. The Board continued the discussion that began at the work session the previous Monday. This discussion centered on the provision of health care benefits during the period that the employee was on active duty. Dr. Cotter reported that the government insurance available to employees and their families was reasonable but not as good as the PC215 plan provided by the district. Mr. Berger confirmed the statutory requirements for coverage short-term. Mr. Yunker suggested that the Board policy reflect the insurance coverage required by law or by an applicable negotiated agreement. Mr. Orlow noted two issues that the Board would need to address: Whether or not it wanted to reimburse employee for extra costs if the district did not continue to provide health care coverage beyond the mandated period and whether the Board could actually pay more than what was provided in a labor contract. Dr. Ryan noted that contracts typically covered compensation. Dr. Cotter advised that the policy could be referred back to the Personnel Committee for further consideration. Dr. Lipshutz noted that the government insurance provided to military personnel was better than many tax payers received. Board members briefly discussed coverage and costs. Mr. Orlow noted that these always seemed to be changing. Dr. Lipshutz suggested that the Board vote

on the policy as a first reading and then get the solicitor's opinion and send the policy back to the Personnel committee for review prior to reconsidering it on second reading. Mr. Orlow agreed. Board members requested and received clarification of some of the language in the policy. Mr. Yunker noted that the Board would be obligated to follow the law whether or not the policy was in place. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the proposed policy on a first reading and seek the solicitor's opinion and the Personnel Committee's input prior to acting on the policy on a second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board comment and action on Enclosure #32, a proposed fee schedule for groups who wanted to use the high school track. Board members revisited earlier discussion of the possibility of finding a simpler way to address the issue of billing based on the number of people using the track during a rental event. Mr. Johnson suggested that two fee schedules be established, one for events involving up to the number of participants participating in a district tri-meet and another for events involving more people than those participating in a tri-meet. He recommended that the fee structure shown in Enclosure #32 be the structure for events up to the size of tri-meets and that a new pro-rated schedule be developed for larger events based on Class VI rental fees set at \$3,000. He made a motion to that effect. Mrs. Moore seconded the motion. Mr. Yunker commented on average personnel fees. Mr. Bell reported that average fees covered district personnel costs. Mr. Yunker suggested that a fee structure be set for the tennis courts. Mr. Bell noted that the district had never made the tennis courts available above Category III for which no fees were applicable. He suggested that the Board carefully consider the pros and cons before making more district facilities available to an expanding list of interested facility users. Mr. Yunker suggested that the Board look into dedicating rental fees to the maintenance of the rented facilities rather than simply reflecting them as revenue in the annual budget. On a roll call vote on the motion, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a lease of office at Conshohocken Elementary School by Montgomery Early Learning Centers. He noted that the Board had discussed the lease on Monday evening. Mr. Slutsky suggested that the language of the lease provide for termination of the lease if MELC lost its non-profit status. The board agreed to insert that language when the contract was renewed. In response to Board queries, Mr. Bell confirmed that the district had the right to terminate the lease if it needed the space for its own programs. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the lease as it appeared in Enclosure #32. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on Thursday on a proposal to have Industrial Appraisal Company conduct a physical inventory of all district fixed assets in preparation for the district implementing the provisions of GASB 34. Mr. Slutsky sought and received assurance from Mr. Bickleman that the district did not need to bid these professional services, that the costs were reasonable, and that the firm was a reputable one in the field. Mr. Slutsky moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve undertaking the

inventory as shown in Enclosure #34. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request for approval of the attendance of Cyndi Slagle at the 2003 Middle-Atlantic Planetarium Society Conference in Lanham, MD from 05/05/03 to 05/10/03, as outlined in Enclosure #35. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on two trip requests: Enclosure #36, a request for retro-active approval for a high school student to attend the PMEA All-State Orchestra in Hershey, PA from 04/09/03 through 04/12/03 and Enclosure #37, a request for approval for the boys' basketball team to participate in a holiday tournament in Orlando, FL from 12/16/03 through 12/31/03. Ms. Glodek moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on six bids:

- Enclosure #38, a bid to relocate the middle school chiller: Mr. Bell confirmed the location and the specs. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bid as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- Enclosure #39, a bid for computer lab air conditioning in high school: Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bid as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- Enclosure #40, a bid concrete work at Colonial Elementary School: Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the bid as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor.
- Enclosure #41, an accessible ramp at the front of Colonial Elementary School: Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bid as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- Enclosure #42, a bid to replace the leaking roof of the Victory Field storage building: Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to reject the bid of the lowest bidder for failure to comply with the bid specifications. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the bid to the lowest responsible bidder as presented. On roll call votes, all voted in favor. The motions were carried.
- Enclosure #51, a bid for athletic supplies at the high school. Note was taken that action was being requested that night because of the long lead time required to have the supplies delivered prior to the start of the new school year. Mr. Yunker moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the bid as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** Ms. Rothstein requested a motion to approve stipulations #93640 and #93557 and authorize the solicitor to prepare any adjudication documents which might be

necessary. Mrs. Moore moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to that effect. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit Board: Dr. Ryan reported that the I.U. Board had passed its non-service budgets and had certified the administrative budgets.

**CMCVTS:** Mr. Johnson reported that Dr. Cotter had become the Superintendent of Record for the Center for Technical Studies. Mr. Yunker reported that the Joint Operating Committee had approved the center's budget for the coming school year. He recapped comments at an earlier meeting. He noted that the cost per student had dropped, enrollment at the center and enrollment from Colonial School district had increased and that the cost of the budget to the district would be less than \$1,600,000. Dr. Ryan commented on enrollment increases in recent years. Mr. Yunker advised that the committee anticipated enrollment holding steady. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the budget as presented to the Board. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Personnel:** Mr. Davis referred the Board to Enclosure #6, the approved minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting. He noted increases and changes in CEA positions; the consideration given, within the context of considering of an eventual full-day program, to having aides in kindergarten classrooms; business office reorganization; salaries for non-bargaining unit employees; meet and discuss sessions with the CASEA group; negotiations with food service and facilities management employees; and food service grievances.

**Finance:** Mr. Slutsky referred the Board to Enclosure #8, approved minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting. He noted that the committee was looking at food service operations and mechanisms for promoting and monitoring effective food service operations.

**Curriculum and Program:** Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee had met on Monday evening, received an update on the gifted program at the middle school, looked at the success of the SEAC program for the full year, and recommended to extend the SEAC program to a full year in the coming school year. He noted that some housekeeping would be needed as the math program was implemented and reported a belief at the high school that some math materials had to be updated immediately, including those for transitional math, geometry, Carnegie math and applied algebra. He noted that two teachers would be released for training for one block in the coming year.

Dr. Lipshutz also highlighted the Long-Range Technology Plan and summarized Board discussion of the plan on Monday evening. He noted that the plan was well thought out and advised that the philosophy and details of the district's thinking were included in the document. He also emphasized that the plan did not obligate the district to fund the plan at any set level. Mr. Yunker sought and received assurance that the changes recommended on Monday evening had been included in the plan. Dr. Cotter noted that none of the reductions made impacted adversely on what was currently happening in the classroom.

**Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the plan. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Buildings & Grounds/Transportation:** Mr. Johnson advised that the bids approved that evening had been the focus of the committee's recent deliberations.

**Community Relations:** Ms. Glodek advised that the next committee meeting would be the first under the new arrangements to include student life issues. Mr. Yunker noted that schedules of committee meetings were difficult to find on the district website and asked the committee to look into the problem. Ms. Glodek said that she would bring the subject up.

**Legislative:** Dr. Ryan provided quick updates on bills related to full-day kindergarten and state funding for it, rural high school science and math programs, and superintendent and principal contracts.

**Additional Public Comment:** Mr. Franz thanked the Board for information on Latin at the high school. He expressed concern about 50-50 fund raisers. He supported only that health coverage required by law or collective bargaining unit agreements for reservist and national guard troops called to active duty. Mr. Franz felt that the non-instructional costs outlined in the preliminary budget were high, expressed his belief that the state legislature had given away the treasury when it approved changes in retirement benefits, and hoped that policies were in place to insure value to the students for tax-payers dollars spent on tuition reimbursement. Mr. Orlow outlined past efforts at tightening up on tuition reimbursement requirements. Mr. Bickleman provided some explanation for the non-instructional costs and noted that planned purchases had often been deferred in recent years.

Mr. Carroll raised a recent editorial in a local paper decrying the high budget increases in local districts. He urged the Board to pare the budget so that there would be no increase in taxes. He outlined what he believed to be a history of over-taxing. Mr. Orlow provided information of the districts fund balance and initiation of a capital reserve in an effort to avoid issuing additional bonds. Mr. Carroll questioned the current use of the science classrooms vacated when the new science wing was opened. Mr. Orlow reported that the rooms have been in use as regular classrooms and asked the Administration to provide Mr. Carroll information on their current use. Mr. Carroll made a number of comments about bonuses that he thought administrators were receiving even though the results of standardized tests seemed to indicate that the bonuses were not deserved. Mr. Orlow attempted to explain the performance incentives (not bonuses) that were the district's *Above and Beyond* program. He also noted how difficult it had become to employ and keep talented administrators. Dr. Cotter provided an overview of the successes of the *Above and Beyond* program, particularly the improvements at the elementary level and the rolling out of the program over time up through the secondary level.

**There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:45 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James M. Bell  
Board Secretary**