

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, OCTOBER 18, 2004**

President Orlow convened the Work Session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:38 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 18, 2004.

**Board Members Present:** Marc Orlow, Thomas Davis, Gary Johnson, Hope Luken, Susan Moore, William Ryan, Pascal Scoles and Mitch Zimmer.

**Board Members Absent:** Steven Slutsky.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; and John Quinn, Director of CITV.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters on 09/23/04, 09/29/04, 10/07/04, 10/13/04 and 10/18/04.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 09/20/04, the General Meeting of 09/23/04, the Facilities Management/Transportation Committee Meeting of 09/30/04, the Special Meeting of 10/07/04, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 10/14/04, the Community Relations/Student Life Committee Meeting of 10/14/04, the Finance Committee Meeting of 10/15/04 and the Curriculum Committee of 10/18/04. See Enclosures #1 through #4 of the agenda for Thursday, 09/23/04 for the first four items. The last four were available to the board members in handouts or were to be provided for the meeting the following Thursday. Board members had no questions or comments.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports. They included Budget Transfers, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Project Report, General Fund/Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Report, Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparisons of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report, Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 09/30/04, as shown in Enclosures #5 through #15 of Thursday's agenda. Mr. Orlow inquired about the zoning application fee from Whitemarsh Township and voiced his belief that the township had waived fees for the district. Mr. Bell reported that the township had waived some but not all fees and stated that he would look into the fee in question and report back on Thursday evening.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Staff Report:** The agenda indicated that Terese Boegly, Principal, Colonial Elementary School, would report on the school's application for the NSBA Magma Award on Thursday evening.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be taking action on Thursday evening on three Board Policies dealing with Copyright Guidelines: Policies #553 for classified employees, #453 for professional employees and #228 for students. These policies were contained in Enclosures #16 through #18 for Thursday evening. In response to a question from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter confirmed that the policies had not changed since the Board's general meeting in September and that all Board Policies were shared with bargaining units representing district employees after adoption but not before.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter walked board members through the personnel actions listed in Enclosures #19 through #21 of the agenda for Thursday evening. Mr. Orlow asked if positions on the extra-duty/extra-pay list were posted. Mr. Berger reported that coaching positions were posted district-wide and that other building-based positions were posted only in the building involved. Dr. Cotter shared some general information on the professional leave request in Enclosure #22 that was slated for Board consideration on Thursday evening. He noted that the request was from a high school teacher and involved courses totaling nine credits. In response to a query from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter reported that he had asked the applicant for additional information and would have a recommendation on the request on Thursday.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow reported several trip requests would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday. They included a request from the sponsor of the Ski Club for a trip to Killington, VT from 01/07/05 through 01/09/05. He noted that students would pay for the cost of participating in the trip. See Enclosure #23. The remaining trips were all for permission for the high school cheerleaders to participate in overnight competitions: the Pennsylvania State Cheerleading Championship from 11/19/04 through 11/21/04 in Johnstown, PA ; the U.S. Open Cheerleading Competition from 02/04/05 through 02/07/05 in Orlando, FL; and the ECA National Cheerleading Championships from 03/18/04 through 03/20/04 in Williamsburg, VA. See Enclosures #24 through #26. Mr. Orlow noted that the Community Relations/Student Life Committee had reviewed the requests. He asked how much instructional time the students would miss. Dr. Cotter reported that the students would miss no time for the PA State Championship, half a day for the ECA Nationals, and two days for the U.S. Open. Mr. Zimmer asked if cheerleaders had lost comparable time in previous years. Dr. Cotter reported that they had.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would act on Thursday evening on the professional conference requests listed in Enclosures #27 through #31. He reported that the requests involved administrators and teachers. Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer told board members that the high school would pay for the trips using funds budgeted for training. They also noted that the high school administration supported the requests. In response to a question from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter explained that the trip to Adlai Stevenson High School outside of Chicago would allow attendees to visit a school that was recognized for academic

excellence and was a leader in educational reform. He reminded the Board that Dr. Sullivan, the high school principal, had visited the school the previous year and that those slated to go in the current year would have an opportunity to see many programs with possible application to Plymouth Whitemarsh High School, including remedial programs that might be applied to the PWHS resource period. He also reported that Adlai Stevenson H.S. had a number of intervention programs and a large AP program worth studying. Dr. Gorodetzer advised that the school had teacher collaboration model that makes use of performance data. Mr. Orlow reminded the Board that the district was looking for best practices to become a part of its *Above and Beyond* program. Dr. Cotter noted Adlai Stevenson's very personal manner in delivering its educational programs.

Mr. Orlow indicated that the Board would act on Thursday evening on his donation of 20 years of *National Geographic* to the high school library.

Mr. Orlow reported that the fundraising information contained in the budgets in Enclosure #32 for Thursday evening was for informational purposes only and that no Board action would be necessary.

Mr. Orlow announced that board members had received a preliminary draft of several school calendar options for 2005-06. He noted that deliberations on the calendar were just beginning and that the Board usually sets the first day of school for the following year in the previous October or November so that families would be able to begin planning their summer vacations. Dr. Cotter reported that the calendars in the #1 series of drafts all had the first day of school on the Tuesday after Labor Day and that draft #2 had a pre-Labor Day start date. Dr. Scoles noted that three drafts had a post-Labor Day start. Dr. Cotter reminded board members that the goal was to end the school year by the end of the second week of June. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board traditionally favored a post-Labor Day start if classes could be finished in the second week of June. Dr. Cotter noted that, since the district had 185 days of instruction in its calendar, five snow days were built into its school year calendar.

**Solicitor's Report:** No report.

**Committee Reports:** No reports. Mr. Orlow took the opportunity to provide the community some information on an Earned Income Tax Resolution that the Board would be considering on Thursday evening and some information on the potential impact of Act 72 on the district.

Mr. Orlow reported that the district was facing severe financial issues based on the lack of growth in its tax base, increasing state mandates and decreasing state funding, and state legislation that could restrict the district's ability to fund its educational programs by forcing back-end referendums on budgets that fall outside state guidelines. He noted that two of the district's local municipalities, Plymouth Township and Conshohocken Borough had earned income taxes of 1% and that the other, Whitemarsh Township, had an earned income tax of 0.5%. Mr. Orlow reported that only 45 of the state's 501 school districts had not enacted an earned income tax and Colonial was one of them. Mr. Orlow reported that the Colonial Board had traditionally shied away from enacting an earned income tax

because of its impact on its municipalities but is entitled to enact a 0.5% earned income tax. If it were to do so, its action would have a great impact on Plymouth Township and Conshohocken Borough which would lose 0.5% of the earned income tax that they now collect. He advised the community of the Board's intention to adopt a resolution notifying its municipalities of its intention to enact such a tax in February 2005. The notification would allow the municipalities to consider the impact of the district action as they prepare their budgets for 2005. Mr. Orlow noted that a district earned income tax of 0.5% would become effective on 07/01/05, if enacted. He also reported that the resolution on the tax was in the hands of board members and had been prepared by the solicitor. Mr. Orlow reported that it was estimated that the tax would eventually produce between \$4,125,000 and \$4,300,000 in revenue annually. The issues had been reviewed in the Finance Committee. Mr. Orlow believed that the shift from a tax program based almost solely on local real estate to one that included earned income would be less of a burden district-wide.

Mr. Orlow indicated that, while the subject of Act 72 was not on the agenda for Board action, it was important to note that the district would have to decide by 05/30/05 whether or not to participate in slots revenue. He reported that the legislation provided for a real estate tax reduction based the filing of a homestead exemption. He advised that the county was handling the mailing of homestead exemption applications and that they were already in the mail. He encouraged residents to complete and return them to the county.

Mr. Orlow advised the community that the district had some tough decisions to make in the months ahead about Act 72 legislation. He noted that the act would have a significant impact on the district and its communities and that the Board would be considering its options carefully. He expressed the desire of the Board for community input and announced that the Board was establishing an AD Hoc Citizens Advisory Committee to review the issues and make recommendations to the Board. He reported that the Board would be acting on a formal resolution to establish the committee on Thursday evening and would be seeking applicants from across the community via press releases, advertisements in the media and on CITV and the district website. He also announced that applications would be available online, at all district schools and in local municipal offices and libraries. He stressed that the Board was looking for a cross section of the community geographically, demographically and politically. Dr. Scoles reinforced the intent of the Board that the committee be broad-based. Mr. Orlow noted that the applications would contain a question on political affiliation and asked that applicants answer that question so that the Board could be certain that all political parties would be represented on the committee.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary