

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, OCTOBER 17, 2005**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:41 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 17, 2005.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

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

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session on 09/21/05, 10/05/05 and 10/17/05 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to the minutes of the Work Session of 09/12/05, the General Meeting of 09/17/05, the Special Joint Meeting of CSD and Conshohocken Borough Council of 09/28/05, the Facilities Management Transportation Committee Meeting of 10/06/05, the Community Relations – Student Life Committee Meeting of 10/10/05 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 10/17/05. See Enclosures #1 through #5 of the agenda for Thursday evening and material to be available to board members on Thursday evening. There were no questions or comments on the minutes.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow quickly reviewed the financial reports on the list for approval on Thursday evening. The reports included the Budget Transfers, Bond Fund Report, the Capital Project Report, General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund Report, the Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Escrow Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 09/30/05, as shown in Enclosures #6 through #16 of the agenda for Thursday evening. Mr. Orlow asked if the furniture purchases on the Bond Fund Report represented additions to the original purchases for the District Office. Mr. Bell reported that, except for a few minor items that had been missed earlier, the entries on the report represented original purchases of furniture that had been delivered to the district late. Mr. Slutsky asked how the district handled escrowing taxes paid under while taxpayers were appealing their assessments. Mr. Bickleman explained the process for holding 25% of the contested taxes in escrow.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: None.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow reported that some district residents had donated 20 TI-84 Plus Silver Edition calculators valued at \$2,500. See Enclosure #17 of the Agenda for Thursday's meeting. Mr. Slutsky asked if the district routinely sent thank you letters. Dr. Cotter confirmed that that it did. Mr. Orlow asked if the district had already received the calculators. Dr. Cotter reported that the district had accepted them pending Board approval. Mr. Orlow indicated that the Board would act on the donation on Thursday evening.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter summarized his report outlining the personnel actions, professional and non-professional substitute lists, the proposed extra-duty/extra-pay assignments and the termination resolution contained in Enclosures #18 through #21 that were a part of Thursday evening's agenda. Mr. Orlow inquired about the impact of having an aide work in larger classes at Ridge Park Elementary School. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that the addition of the aide had had a positive impact and was working out well. Mr. Slutsky asked if the SADD organization at the high school was akin to a similar organization called Colonial Community Against Destructive Decisions. Dr. Cotter indicated that the programs were not related and that the latter organization had probably been township based.

New Business: Mr. Orlow referred board members to Board Policy #202, Non-Resident Students and Tuition Payment. See Enclosure #22 of the agenda for Thursday evening. He noted that the policy had been reviewed by the Community Relations – Student Life Committee and addressed gray areas in the current policy as it relates to state law. Mr. Slutsky asked if the policy called for the Board or the Superintendent to make decisions on residency issues. Dr. Cotter reported that it called for the superintendent to make the decisions.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be acting on Thursday evening on an agreement that would terminate the district's licensing and services agreement with Tetra Data. See Enclosure #23 of the agenda for Thursday evening. He noted that the district had found a better means to handle the collection and analysis of student data.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would soon be acting to set the calendar for the 2006-07 school year. He reported that the Board had several draft calendars before it which varied slightly in the way that they handled winter and spring breaks and in-service days. Dr. Cotter reported that the drafts all called for the first student day of the new school year to be the Tuesday after Labor Day. He indicated that draft #1 called for two in-service days, and draft 1A called for one in-service day. Dr. Cotter also reported that draft #2 called for two in-service days and a modified spring break. He advised that all three drafts had five snow days built into the calendar. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board had an obligation to seek input from the CEA on school calendars and suggested that the Board set the start

date for the 2006-07 on Thursday evening and act on the full calendar at its November meeting after it had secured input from the CEA. Dr. Scoles reported that the Community Relations – Student Life Committee recommended draft #1. Mr. Zimmer asked that the minutes of the Community Relations – Student Life Committee be corrected to show that the committee supported draft 1, not draft 1A. Mr. Slutsky asked why an in-service day would be scheduled for the end of the school year. Dr. Cotter noted that the scheduling called for the school year to end on a Friday. Dr. Gorodetzer indicated that end-of-school in-services were often very worthwhile because staff were relaxed following the end of classes and prepared to focus on the matters at hand.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be acting, ex-post facto, on Thursday evening to approve a request from Dr. Monica Sullivan, Principal, PWHS, that Erika Miller, PWHS Librarian, attend the American Association of School Librarians' Conference in Pittsburgh, PA from 10/05/05 through 10/09/05. See Enclosure #25.

Dr. Cotter reported that an additional conference request from Ms. DeLong would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. That request was to be for Susan Dryburgh, Speech and Language Specialist, to attend the American Speech and Hearing Association Conference in San Diego from 11/17/05 through 11/20/05. The cost of the trip was to be covered through a special education allocation.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to two special education agreements that would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. It was a request for approval of a placement for a special needs student in an approved private school and the provision of appropriate services. Mr. Orlow asked if the placement and services were in response to an IEP. Dr. Cotter reported that the placement and services were appropriate for the IEP and the agreement reached during a re-evaluation of the student's needs. Mr. Orlow asked if it was typical to get Board approval of arrangements made in accordance with an IEP. Dr. Cotter felt that it was appropriate and wise to get Board approval for the placement.

The second agreement was a proposal before the Board for contracted occupational therapy services from Therapy Source, Inc. during the period in which the district's regular contractor is on child-rearing leave. Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would consider the proposal at its meeting on Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow noted that two student trip requests would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. Enclosure #26 was a request from the sponsors of the PWHS Ski Club for weekend ski trips to Killington, VT from after school on 01/06/06 through 01/08/06 and 02/24/06 through 02/26/06. Enclosure #27 was a request from the PWHS Student Council sponsor for five to seven students to attend the PA Association of Student Council Leadership Conference in Reading, PA from 11/10/05 through 11/12/05. Both requests were supported by the PWHS Administration. Students would pay the costs of the ski trips. Mr. Orlow noted the ski trips were annual events. Dr. Cotter reported that students attending the Student Council conference would stay with host families.

Mr. Orlow announced the PTO fundraising budgets were on the agenda as an information item. No Board action was required. Board members questioned whether PTO had written guidelines covering their fundraising activities. Dr. Cotter reported that there were written guidelines for student fundraising but not for PTO fundraising. He noted that principals had some latitude in dealing with those activities and access to District Office administrators if they had questions about them but suggested that an administrative regulation could provide written guidelines in the future. Mr. Slutsky asked if schools could piggyback on a district membership at BJ's or similar discount stores. Mr. Bickleman thought that might be possible but advised that he would need to check membership rules.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: None.

Additional Public Comment: Mr. O'Brien expressed his concern that a recent Board mailing on the issue of property tax reform seemed to be a pricey campaign piece published at taxpayer expense. Mr. Orlow explained that the purpose of the mailing was to alert the community to the importance of current legislative activity on the issue of property tax reform and the significant impact that some of the proposed changes would have on local control of schools. Mr. O'Brien stated that he was not in favor of funding schools with funds from gaming but saw no problem with giving voters the right to vote on budget referendums. He also questioned the Board's practice of not using the district's public access television station to broadcast candidate debates. Mr. Orlow noted that the district policy was drafted following citizen opposition to the idea of using the district station to cover political debates. Mr. Orlow and several other board members outlined the Board's efforts to engage local state representatives and community groups in a constructive dialogue on property tax reform. He also responded to a concern that the district had not responded to a League of Women Voters query about the issue by noting that the district had not received correspondence from the organization.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



James M. Bell
Board Secretary