

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 15, 2005**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on September 15, 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; Bonnie Sheehan for the Solicitor, David Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Chad Murray and Jill Forster, CEA; J. and Jean Marie Haubert; and Nancy Mortimer O'Brien.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session on 08/31/05, 09/07/05 and 09/12/05 to discuss legal and personnel matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the minutes of the Work Session of 08/15/05, the General Meeting of 08/18/05, the Facilities Management Transportation Committee Meeting of 09/01/05, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 09/08/05, the Facilities Management – Transportation Committee Meeting of 09/08/05, the Community Relations – Student Life Committee Meeting of 09/08/05 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 09/12/05. See Enclosures #1 through #3 and #26 through #29. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Luken seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the financial reports on the agenda. The reports included the 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 08/31/05, as shown in Enclosures #4 through #14. He noted that one entry on the Bond Fund Report had not referred to the project involved. Mr. Bickleman pledged to correct the oversight. Mr. Orlow sought and Mr. Bell provided confirmation that the boiler projects were bond fund projects. Dr. Ryan inquired about the unusually high collection rate for delinquent taxes so early in the budget year. Mr. Bickleman responded that the report included taxes collected in June and that these taxes would be moved to the previous accounting year shortly. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer reported on District Goals for 2005-06.

Dr. Gorodetzer reported on the significant building renovation and added resources that the district had invested in Conshohocken Elementary in recent years and the Board's commitment to the school. She noted a 25% decline in enrollment in the last several years and stressed the district's desire to stabilize enrollment in that attendance area. Dr. Gorodetzer advised that the Administration and Board were involved in discussions of a wide range of issues affecting enrollment and pledged a thorough review and analysis before the district brought recommendations forward for deliberation and implementation. She confirmed Mr. Orlow's understanding that the district intended to invite the community to meetings that would be scheduled to encourage community input as options were being discussed. She noted that the district's goal was to have a thorough and open discussion of the issues and options without any community unrest.

Dr. Cotter outlined the district's multicultural awareness effort which began as a response to incidents of racial and ethnic graffiti on the high school tennis courts the previous year. He reported that programs were planned at all grade levels and had already begun at the secondary level under the theme "respect the difference". It was noted that the district had already formed a broad-based multicultural task force that was, among many initiatives, checking curriculum and counseling in an effort to integrate services in the area of multicultural awareness.

Dr. Gorodetzer highlighted the district's efforts to date to use data analysis to develop individualized instruction programs for all students at the elementary level and noted the positive impact that it had on student proficiency. She stressed that the current year's initiative was to move successful strategies forward at the secondary level.

Dr. Cotter noted educational successes at the secondary level, such as rising SAT scores , but reported that the district would be going through a five-year reform program at the high school that would look at all facets of the school program with an eye to incorporating initiatives that proved to have a positive impact on student achievement. These included full implementation of the district's Above and Beyond program at the high school level and personalizing the school environment there.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow reported that two Board Policies were on the agenda for passage following a second reading: #203, Revision of Student Health, Safety and Welfare (Enclosure #15) and #811, School Bus Idling (Enclosure #16). He noted that the former documented the district's current practice while the latter reflected district awareness of the need to deal with health, environmental and economic issues. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve Policy #203. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve Policy #811. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow reported that the district had received correspondence from Scott Tattar, a public relations specialist serving Susquehanna Bank, offering Plymouth

Whitemarsh High School a donation of \$2,500 for the school's math and computer science departments to commemorate the bank's new branch in Conshohocken Borough. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to accept the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter summarized his report outlining the personnel actions, enrollment figures and extra-duty/extra-pay assignments contained in Enclosures #18 through #20. He pointed out changes in the report since the Monday meeting. Dr. Cotter also provided information on class sizes for the coming school year. Mr. Orlow sought and Mr. Berger confirmed that the classroom aide recommended for hire would serve the first grade classes at Ridge Park Elementary School. Mr. Berger confirmed that, as of the meeting, district classrooms were fully staffed. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: Mr. Orlow welcomed the representatives. Ms. Klein provided updates on the multicultural diversity program at the high school and the recent assemblies that were part of the program. She also noted the establishment of Jewish and Middle Eastern Awareness Clubs and homecoming activities that would highlight cultural diversity. Ms. D'Alessandro highlighted fall sports, parents' night, tryouts for the fall play, the issuance of ID badges to freshmen, the band's flea market fundraiser and the back-to-school dance.

New Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a series of special education placements that included three renewals for placements at the Perkins School for the Blind, Magnolia School and Eagle Hill School and the placement of a special needs student in a program in Upper Merion Area School District. Mr. Orlow inquired if there were any lingering issues with the placement at the Eagle School. Dr. Cotter and Ms. DeLong indicated that all issues had been resolved. Ms. Luken moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the placements as outlined in contracts shared with the Board. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request from secondary principals to send a total of 12 administrators and teachers to a symposium on high school reform in Washington, DC from 10/01/05 through 10/03/05. Note was taken that the three-day event fell over a weekend and that steps had been taken to assure that classes would be covered on that Monday. See Enclosure #21. Ms. Luken moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the request.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on two weekend trip requests from the coach of the PWHs Cheerleaders. The first was to a cheerleading competition in Pittsburgh from 11/11/05 through 11/13/05 and the second was in Williamsburg from 03/17/06 through 03/19/06. Dr. Cotter confirmed that participants would cover the cost of the trips and that no school would be missed. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Ms. Sheehan greeted the Board but had no formal report.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: Dr. Ryan provided information on Good School PA and a presentation about successful school budgeting, a plan to have the state provide enough money to educate all of its students. He also provided advance notice of a conference on special education and the need to manage the escalating costs associated with it.

CMCAVTS: No report.

Personnel: Mr. Johnson reinforced Mr. Berger's report that all vacant positions in the district had been filled.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis noted that the committee had met the previous Monday evening and had taken a look at the even-handed presentation of evolution and creationism in the district's curriculum as required by state regulations. He noted that Ms. McKeaney had provided current information on PSSA scores and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results. Mr. Davis reported that those results showed that students in grades 5, 8 and 11 had improved as a result of curricular improvements over a four-year period. He also noted that all but one group had met AYP goals, including economically disadvantaged students. Mr. Davis reported that the only group that had fallen short was the special needs group where statistically significant improvement had been made but had fallen short of AYP goals. Students in this group were hard pressed to keep pace with their regular education counterparts but had shown marked improvement as a result of district efforts to focus their educational programs on their individual needs.

Facilities Management: Mrs. Moore reported the successful completion of all summer capital projects, including the roof and retaining wall at the middle school, the exterior concrete work and new student drop-off area at the middle school and the renovation of the auditorium ceiling, floor and seating at Colonial Elementary School. She congratulated Mr. Yemm, Mr. Lally and their Facilities Management team on the emergency replacement of the main electrical lines between the substation at Flourtown Road and the building. Mr. Bell provided information on the damage to the original lines that were over 40 years old and the steps taken to restore power. Mrs. Moore noted that the emergency repairs had cost \$59,437 for the professional firms and electrical contractor involved in the two-day effort. She noted that, while the district had undertaken the work as a change order on the on-going project to renovate a portion of the building, Board policy called for Board approval of change orders in excess of \$30,000. Mrs. Moore moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the change order. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mrs. Moore also reported that the renovation of the high school library was on schedule and that the facility would be a bright, welcoming center for the school's educational initiatives. She also indicated that the main office renovation was well underway and open for business as final touches were completed. Mrs. Moore highlighted district partnering with Plymouth Township in exploring the science and environmental opportunities of

Wetherill Park and with Conshohocken Borough on the possibility of TIF financing for development along the Schuylkill River in the borough. She also sought Board support for a plan to relocate Facilities Management, the District Safety Officer, Residency Investigator, Copy Center and Turf Management Storage to the building at Victory Fields. She noted that this move, coupled with the relocation and upgrade of the Trainer's Room and several storage areas, would free up space that could be used as classrooms and education support spaces. She polled board members who unanimously supported moving forward with the project.

Community Relations – Student Life: Dr. Scoles reported that the district would be a part of the annual Conshohocken Fun Fest on October 1st and that the district's Annual Report was in production and would be mailed to local residents in October. He also reported that the committee was in favor of having the boys' lacrosse team make the transition from club team to Suburban I team during the current school year and recommended moving up the timetable for participation in PIAA play to the spring of 2006. Mr. Orlow noted that the board members had been watching this program since the coach and team members approached the Board in the spring of 2005. He understood that the issue would be financial support for the team. He also noted that the team would not be eligible for post-season play during its first year. Dr. Cotter noted that boys' lacrosse had become one of the high school's bigger programs. He reminded the Board and the community that the district was already paying for staff, referees and medical supplies and, once the team joined league play, would have to bid and cover PIAA-approved equipment. Dr. Scoles moved and Ms. Luken seconded a motion to approve the move of the boys' lacrosse program to the PIAA Suburban I League. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Ryan provided an update on issues at the state capitol. He noted that both houses of the legislature would be back in session within two weeks. He reported that he would be meeting with a member of the House Education Committee who supported use of a lower sales tax that covered more taxable items to support education. Mr. Orlow noted that such legislative proposals were a reaction to the failure of Act 72 and that the Board would be meeting with legislators to present the district's perspective. Dr. Ryan indicated that Governor Rendell would be forming a commission to look at high school reform and the inclusion of career training. He reported that state regulations were being written to address dual enrollment of students at the high school and college levels and that there were several house bills that would stop local collection of taxes and prohibit new debt. Dr. Ryan stated that the state defined the graduation rate from high school as the number of students graduating divided by the number of students entering 9th grade four years earlier.

Additional Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**