

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 12, 2007**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:45 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on November 12, 2007.

**Board Members Present:** Tom Davis, Gary Johnson, Hope Luken, Sue Moore, Marc Orlow, Dr. William Ryan and Steven Slutsky.

**Board Members Absent:** Dr. Pascal Scoles, Mitch Zimmer.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Gerald E. Berger, Director of Human Resources; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Dr. Monica Sullivan; Lewis Bennett, Jr. and Lewis Bennett, III.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on 10/24/2007, 11/07/2007 and 11/12/2007 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Mr. Orlow noted that the District had a special award to present. He moved to the podium and asked Lewis Bennett, III to join him. Mr. Orlow praised Mr. Bennett for his role in thwarting a threat against Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS). Mr. Orlow expressed gratitude on behalf of the entire Colonial School District (CSD) community for Mr. Bennett's courage in coming forward with information. He presented Mr. Bennett with a special "Citizen's Award" and stated that he hoped others would consider Mr. Bennett a role model for making the right choice. Mr. Bennett received a standing ovation from the members present.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow requested that Board members review the minutes of the Work Session of 10/15/2007, the General Meeting of 10/18/2007 and the Human Resources Committee, the Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee and the Finance Committee of 11/01/2007. See enclosures #1 through #5. He noted that the minutes of the Facilities Management and Transportation (FMT) Committee of 10/23/2007 were before members as a separate attachment, and the minutes of the Curriculum Committee of 11/12/2007 should be available for review on Thursday.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow asked Board members to examine the financial reports on the list for approval on Thursday evening. The reports include the Budget Transfers, the Bond Fund Report, the Capital Projects Report, the General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund, the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 10/31/2007. See enclosures #6 through #17.

Mr. Orlow noted a discrepancy on the Bond Fund Report regarding anticipated costs for projects yet to be completed and funds available. Mr. Yemm stated that the FMT Committee planned to meet to prioritize the remaining projects. He confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the estimated prices are accurate.

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

**Staff Report:** None

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to four drafts of the 2008-2009 school calendar. See enclosure #18. Dr. Cotter confirmed that the drafts incorporated suggestions made by the Board in October. He stated that drafts #1 and #2 reflected traditional schedules, draft #3 includes a modified spring break and draft # 4 contained fewer instructional days.

Responding to a question from Mr. Slutsky, Dr. Cotter stated that three snow days are built into draft #4. He also confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the administration has shared the drafts with the Colonial Education Association (CEA), which has 60 days to review the options and provide feedback. Considerable discussion ensued on the placement of in-service days, the length of spring break and the number of student days in the school year.

The Board indicated a preference to end the school year during the second week of June, thereby reducing the number of student days from the traditional 185. The Board also directed the administration to maintain the traditional week for spring break.

Mr. Orlow noted that the calendar drafts were for information purposes and that the Board could not take action until after the CEA review period stipulated in the contract.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review revised Board Policy #437, Teacher Exchange Programs. See enclosure #19. He stated that the policy revisions codify the teacher exchange process and establish expectations for teachers returning from an exchange program.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed his report which includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List, a list of Activity/Team Sponsorships and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #20 through #22. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contained 13 actions, including five resignations, two retirements, two childrearing leaves, two replacements, three additional needs and six substitutes. He added that the Activity/Team Sponsorships list included new or revised clubs and activities and the staffing positions associated with them. He noted that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included one appointment.

Mr. Orlow stated that new activities or clubs go through an extensive two-year review process before even reaching the Board level. Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the Technology Student Association (TSA) and Odyssey of the Mind (OM) club at Colonial Middle School (CMS) were presently operational. He noted that the music groups at CMS, which were created by splitting an existing group into two new groups, won't begin until the winter.

Mr. Orlow received confirmation from Mr. Berger that the salaries for the TSA and OM club will be retroactive to the beginning of the school year once approved by the Board.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to the 2007-2008 Anti-Vandalism Program. See enclosure #23. The program establishes funds at PWHS and CMS to cover the cost of repairs resulting from acts of vandalism. The Board is asked to consider returning one-half of the unspent money from the 2006-2007 program to each school's student council as an incentive to reduce vandalism. The high school payment is suggested to be \$2,130 and the middle school payment \$1,174. The Board is further requested to re-establish the program for the 2008-2009 year with funding of \$5,000 at PWHS and \$3,000 at CMS.

Mr. Orlow noted that because of the hiring of a new Food Service Director, Mr. Bickleman requests approval of new bank signature cards for the Food Service Fund. See enclosure #24.

Mr. Orlow stated that Mr. Bickleman further requests to update check signers for depository authorization and agreement certificates. See enclosure #25. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the request was for existing depositories.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review a proposal for PWHS history teacher Robert Culp to participate in a teacher exchange program in Australia or New Zealand. See enclosure #26. Mr. Orlow stated that the request was reviewed in committee a couple of times and that the administration was still waiting for additional information. He noted that CSD had the right to approve the teacher coming from the other country.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board is asked to approve utilization of "A+ Test Prep and Tutoring" for homebound instruction in the areas of foreign language, math and science. See enclosure #27. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter stated this is a new vendor. He added that other districts have used the vendor and feedback has been positive. Mrs. DeLong stated that the District may have used the vendor prior to 2004 for reading tutoring. Mr. Orlow noted that the request was reviewed in committee.

Mr. Orlow requested Board examination of five professional conference requests. See enclosures #28 through #32. Dr. Cotter requested Board approval this evening for the first two requests because of timing. Per Mr. Orlow's direction, Dr. Gorodetzer highlighted two of the conferences. The National Staff Development conference in Dallas, Texas from December 2-5 focuses on developing skills in the area of instructional coaching. A team of teachers will attend the Training Institute on Sound Grading Practices in Portland Oregon from December 5-7. Mr. Orlow stated that all of the conference requests were reviewed in committee. He added that the conferences highlighted by Dr. Gorodetzer reflect the progress that the District has made in the area of curriculum and instruction.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion that the Board approve a PWHS request for three teachers to attend the National Council of Teachers of English Convention in New York City from November 15-18, 2007 and a Ridge Park Elementary School request for a speech teacher to attend the American Speech-Language Hearing Association's annual meeting in Boston, Mass., during the same time period. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review two student trip requests. See enclosures #33 and #34. One trip is for a student to attend the National High School Honors Orchestra Festival in Albuquerque, New Mexico from February 25 through March 1, 2008. All costs are paid through the PWHS orchestra fund. The other trip is for the PWHS girls' lacrosse team to travel to Florida during spring break, March 15-22, 2008. The players are responsible for all costs associated with the trip. Dr. Cotter noted that the Florida trip has become a tradition for the lacrosse team.

Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to a recommended bid for the replacement of stage curtains at PWHS. See enclosure #35. He noted that the low bid was submitted by Pittsburgh Stage, Inc. Mr. Yemm confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the bid included all curtains on the stage and the hardware associated with them. He added that there were no code compliance issues. Mr. Slutsky asked if Mr. Yemm was concerned by the noticeable gap between the prices submitted by bidders. Mr. Yemm stated that the company was quite reputable and was known for its competitive pricing. Mr. Yemm noted that if approved, work will begin in December.

Dr. Cotter stated that bids for the Colonial Elementary School renovation project are not ready for Board review.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David M. Sherman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary