

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, APRIL 15, 2010**

President Johnson convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:05 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on April 15, 2010.

**Board Members Present:** Bernie Brady, Gary Johnson, Susan Moore, Tom Sigafos, Beth Suchsland, Alan Tabachnick and Mitch Zimmer.

**Board Members Absent:** Hope Luken and Kathleen Oxberry.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Richard Hartz, Director of Human Resources; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Allan Hong and Lauren Stern, Board Student Representatives; Lisa Knapp; Amy Spooner; Lisa Watkins; Chris Speranza, Denise Marks, Melissa Sterling; Joanne Penn; Lyndsay Schmidt; Katie Michelson; Tom Davis; Liz Malarski; Susan Hope; Ofelia D'Aulerio; Cheryl Rossini; Charles Forster; Robert Franz; Mickey Engel and students receiving awards, their friends and families.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on March 24, April 7 and April 12 to discuss legal and personnel issues.

At Mr. Johnson's direction, Dr. Cotter announced that a number of students were in attendance to be recognized for outstanding athletic accomplishments. Dr. Cotter introduced Mr. Sherman who presented woman's track awards to Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) juniors Haley Gorenflo and Emerald Walden on behalf of girls' track coach Kendra Hoffman who could not attend. The students were honored for their performance at the PIAA Indoor Track and Field Championships. Dr. Cotter then introduced PWHS swimming coach Taren Igou who presented sophomore Kyle Lukens and junior Alex Chialastri for their performance at the PIAA AAA Swimming Championships. Finally, Dr. Cotter introduced PWHS boys' basketball coach Jim Donofrio who presented his PIAA AAAA State Championship team and staff.

**Minutes:** Mr. Johnson sought Board action on the minutes of the Work Session of March 15; the General Meeting of March 18; the Human Resources Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee of April 6; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of April 7; the Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee of April 8 and the Curriculum Committee of April 12. See enclosures #1, #2 and #40 through #44. Mr. Tabachnick noted that the minutes of the Curriculum Committee required a correction. He stated that the reference to the Curriculum Committee in the next to the last sentence should be removed to read "...present these conference requests at the Board Meeting on April 15."

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Sigafos seconded a motion to approve the minutes with Mr. Tabachnick's noted correction. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on the financial reports on the list for approval. They included 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 Trust Fund Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report

for the month ending March 31. See enclosures #3 through #15.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Sigafos seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

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

**Staff Report:** Conshohocken Elementary School Principal Denise Marks, with the assistance of third-grade teachers Chris Speranza and Lisa Watkins, used a PowerPoint presentation to report on the school's use of laptops to differentiate instruction. Following the presentation, Mrs. Suchsland questioned what WebPath was. Mrs. Watkins explained that it was similar to a computerized card catalog that students use to find information on the Internet. Mrs. Marks also showed photographs of a mural project created in the main hallway of the school.

**Old Business:** Mrs. Moore asked Board members to consider offering the Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP), that the Board approved for teachers in March, to Cabinet Administrators, members of the Colonial Administrators and Supervisors Education Association, members of the Colonial Education Support Professionals; Confidential Secretaries, members of Teamsters Local #384; members of the Colonial Food Services Personnel Association and Hall Monitors. See enclosure #22.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to waive the 10-person minimum previously approved before the plan could be extended to other employee groups. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Moore stated that the further rollout of the ERIP is intended to achieve budget savings for the District. Mr. Sigafos asked for clarification on the deadline for the extended offering. Mr. Hartz stated that the extended offer was to be open through May 7. Mr. Sigafos suggested that the reference to a deadline of April 30 in item #7 of the ERIP document be corrected.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the extended offering of the ERIP. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Johnson noted that Dora Rivas, President of the School Nutrition Association (SNA), has notified the District that Director of Food Services Lori McCoy has successfully passed the SNA's credentialing exam and is now certified as a School Nutrition Specialist. See enclosure #16. Mr. Johnson stated that only approximately 1,000 individuals nationally have earned this certification. He invited Mrs. McCoy to come forward and accept her certificate.

Mr. Johnson stated that an anonymous donor has offered to give \$2,000 for a scholarship to be awarded to a former Whitemarsh Elementary School student who is a graduating senior at PWHS. He added that \$500 is to be awarded to a different recipient each year from 2010 through 2013.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to accept the scholarship donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed his report that includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List and summer staffing appointments. See enclosures #17 through #21. He stated that changes to the Personnel Report and Substitute List since Monday evening noted in the yellow pages include a retirement, two revised leave of absence dates, six replacements and two substitute staff nurses. He added that Board members have a blue page before them that reflects changes resulting from the ERIP. They include seven retirements and two transfers. Dr. Cotter also noted the lists of teachers recommended for the District's various summer programs including the K-5

Summer Literacy/Reading Program as shown in enclosure #18, the Colonial Middle School Summer Learning Project as shown in enclosure #19, the Special Education Extended School Year and Secondary Remediation as shown in enclosure #20 and the Summer Bridge Academy as shown in enclosure #21. Dr. Cotter noted that Board members also had a blue page before them as an update to enclosure #20.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Zimmer needed to abstain from voting on the Personnel Report and therefore asked the Board to consider that item of the Superintendent's Report separately. Note: Mr. Zimmer filled out the required abstention form stating that his son-in-law was a candidate for appointment.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Sigafos seconded a motion to approve the Personnel Report and Substitute List. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Zimmer voted in favor. Mr. Zimmer abstained. The motion was carried, 6-0-1.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the summer program staffing. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. Stern reported on the PWHS Pops Concert, the Colonial Players' spring musical performance of Disney's Beauty and the Beast and the state championship won by the boys' basketball team. Mr. Wong stated that a College Panel Night was held by college counselor Pat Tamborello on April 8, but many seniors were not able to attend because they were on the annual class trip to Florida. Mr. Wong thanked the Board for giving the seniors the opportunity to participate in the trip and noted that the class had a great time and was complimented on its behavior. He also stated that it was a good time for class members to heal after the loss of fellow senior Denise Cotteta to a tragic traffic accident. Ms. Stern and Mr. Wong confirmed their college choices for Mrs. Moore. Ms. Stern plans to attend the University of Pittsburgh while Mr. Wong intends to continue his education at Bucknell University.

**New Business:** Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a request that two teachers attend Microsoft training sessions in New York City (NYC) on May 13 and 14. See enclosure #23. He noted that the training is related to the Microsoft Surface unit and asked Mr. Boegly to explain the system. Mr. Boegly stated that Surface is a multi-touch unit that has a variety of applications. He showed a video produced by students at the high school which details their use of the technology. PWHS teacher Mr. Engel stated that a number of students are actively involved with the unit and spend a lot of their spare time working on it. Responding to a question from Mrs. Suchsland, Mr. Boegly stated that a number of high schools have the Surface unit but to his knowledge PWHS is the only high school in the nation to have students actively programming the unit. Responding to another inquiry from Mrs. Suchsland, Mr. Engel stated that there is no current class devoted to the Surface unit, but classes such as Advanced Placement Computer Science will incorporate Surface-based projects next year.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the Microsoft training request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Tabachnick asked the Board to consider a professional conference request for Ed Swetkowski to attend the AVID Northeast District Director's Meeting on May 7 in NYC. See enclosure #24.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mr. Sigafos seconded a motion to approve the conference request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Zimmer reported that Board action is requested on five student trips. The first is for Colonial Middle School students to attend the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. on May 24. See enclosure #25. The second is for one PWHS student to attend the DECA National Conference in Louisville, Ky., from April 24-27. See enclosure #26. The third request is for CE second graders to travel to the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, N.J. on May 26. See enclosure #27. The fourth is for two PWHS students to attend the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association All State Competition from April 21-24 in Pittsburgh, Pa. See enclosure #28. Mr. Zimmer stated that the final request is for the Colonial Players to attend a Broadway show in NYC on April 25. See enclosure #29. Mr. Zimmer noted that the group plans to see the show "Chicago."

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the trip requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a bid for PWHS Athletic and Physical Education Equipment. See enclosure #30.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the bid. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. Sultanik asked the Board to approve Disciplinary Stipulation #128730 as presented to them in executive session.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the stipulation as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Sultanik stated that the next item is not listed on the agenda and therefore the public should be allowed to comment before the Board vote. He stated that the item involves the settlement of an assessment appeal with Riverwalk Realty Company, Inc. and Parcel #05-00-11900-90-2 as presented to the Board earlier and contingent upon solicitor and administration review and approval of the final wording. Mr. Sultanik noted that the agreement calls for a \$400,000 one time payment to the District in return for the District dropping its assessment appeal.

**Public Comment on the Item:** Mr. Franz asked for background on the appeal. Mr. Bickelman stated that the District began the process several years ago by questioning the initial 2006 assessment of the property. He noted that the one-time payment covers the period of February 2006 through August 2008.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the assessment appeal settlement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer reported that the IU board approved guidelines for the election of new members. There will be eight seats open in July. He added that the Board approved a recommendation to apply for a \$24,502,161 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Special Education American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

CMTHS: No report.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: Mr. Bickelman reported on the April 6 meeting at which time the committee received an update on the status of the 2010-2011 Budget, discussed the 2005 bond refinancing and heard a report on the meeting of the county wide Tax Collection Committee.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Tabachnick reported that the committee discussed the Health and Physical Education program at Colonial Middle School including the possibility of adding more

physical activities for the students. He stated that the committee also heard a report on the evolution of the District's curriculum, instruction and assessment programs and received an update on the grading changes at PWHS from Dr. Monica Sullivan, the school principal. Dr. Gorodetzer explained that the "D" grade was eliminated in Language Arts and Math courses and that most students who had previously scored at the "D" level were now earning a "C" grade. She stated that the District will monitor the new grading structure for another year before possibility expanding it to other subject areas.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Brady asked the Board to consider donating 57 cell phones, no longer in use by the District, to the Cell Phones for Soldiers organization (see enclosure #31) and provide obsolete computers to Sycamore Tech from West Chester which has agreed to pay \$425 and remove them from the District at no cost (see enclosure #32).

Mr. Brady moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to dispose the phones and computers in the manners described. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mr. Zimmer again commended the PWHS boys' basketball team on its state championship and also promoted the District's participation in Whitemarsh Day on April 24. He also noted that the Board is asked to approve a memorial scholarship in honor of Denise Cotteta. Dr. Cotter stated that the donation under consideration is from the PWHS Class of 2009 and to be paid to a member of the PWHS Class of 2010. He added that there may be other memorial scholarships coming, including one from the Ms. Cotteta's family.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the scholarship. Prior to the vote, Mr. Zimmer requested a moment of silence in honor of Ms. Cotteta. Following a brief pause, a roll call vote was taken. All voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Safety and Wellness: No report.

Legislative: Mrs. Suchsland reported that she attended a meeting of the IU Legislative Committee where the Keystone Exams and a proposed state mandate regarding Physical Education programs were among the items discussed. She added that she plans to attend an upcoming breakfast with area legislators.

Municipal Liaisons: Mr. Sigafos reported that the Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation Department will hold a Fishing Derby on April 17 and a Wetherill Park ribbon cutting ceremony on April 24.

Mrs. Moore read a note from Kathleen Oxberry, the Board's liaison to Whitemarsh Township. The note stated that Mrs. Oxberry was pleased that the Whitemarsh Township Supervisors voted in favor of the Victory Fields Lighting project. She thanks the Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission, the Supervisors, and District staff for their time and efforts in coming to an agreement on the project. She stated that while she understood the project seemingly took a long time in coming to fruition, it was a relatively short period of time by municipal standards. She was also pleased to learn from several residents that they moved back in to the area because of the progressive environment in the Colonial School District. See Attachment A for the complete text of Mrs. Oxberry's note.

**Public Comment:** Mr. Franz asked if, in the future, the Board would consider donating used cell phones to groups that work with victims of domestic violence. He also commented on a large event at PWHS that resulted in traffic blocking fire lanes and driveways. He reported that no District security was on hand. Mr. Franz required as to the nature of a weapons offense listed in

the PWHS discipline report and was informed the event was not serious. He also commented on the recent Inquire Report Card on the Schools and noted that Colonial scores in all subject areas were similar to or better than scores from other local districts. Mr. Franz also inquired if there was any cost to the District for grief counselors utilized following the recent fatal hit-and-run accident in front of PWHS. He was informed counselors were from the District and other local agencies and there was no cost incurred by the District.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David M. Sherman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "S".

David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary

## 04-15-10: CBoSD Public Business Meeting

I regret that I am not able to be with you this evening as I am in Dallas, Texas on a business trip.

One of my goals as a new School Board member was to keep the Victory Fields Lights Plan moving forward. As you have heard by now Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Victory Fields Lights plan.

I thank the Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission for arranging to have Colonial School District present twice in March; we appreciated the quick scheduling. The Planning Commission unanimously agreed to recommend the Victory Fields Lights plan to the Board of Supervisors.

I thank the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors for quickly scheduling Colonial School District to present at the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Terry Yemm CSD Director of Operations, Loren Szczesny, Attorney Fox Rothschild LLC, Stephen Peel President and Edward Landau Landscape Architect of Preferred Construction Services, Inc. worked tirelessly to develop the proposal and compelling argument. While it does seem that this was a long time coming, I do realize that the time frame was in reality, rather quick by municipal standards.

At the meeting on Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> I was gratified to learn that several residents have moved to CSD or returned to CSD because of the progressive environment in Whitemarsh Township.

Many people will enjoy and benefit from using the Victory Fields with the instillation of the Musco lights. CSD will do

everything in our power to minimize the impact to the lives of the residents who live adjacent to Victory Fields.

Again, kudos to Terry Yemm, Loren Szczesny, Stephen Peel and Edward Landau for the many hours they worked on Victory Fields Lights. We are one step closer.

Thank you,

Kathleen Oxberry

CBoSD Liaison to Whitemarsh Township