

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MARCH 12, 2001**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:30 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on March 12, 2001.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Robert O'Neill, Robert Carroll, Stuart Kessler, Hugh Lipshutz, Gary Johnson, Jack Pinheiro, and Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: Thomas Marchozzi.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Patricia A. Iannelli, Director of Educational Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Charles Forster, PWHS Activities Director; Ray McMahon, PWHS teacher; and Scott Helfand.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 02/12/01, the Community Relations Committee of 02/13/01, and the Regular Meeting of 01/15/01, as shown as Enclosures #1 through #3 on the agenda for the General Meeting on Thursday, 03/15/01. Mr. Bell advised that the Board had also received the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/07/01 and that they would be on the agenda for the Thursday meeting for approval as yellow pages. Dr. Lipshutz noted that he had been a little late but present for the meeting on 02/12/01. He was incorrectly shown in the minutes as absent. Mr. Bell noted the need to update the minutes.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow noted that the financial reports for the month of February 2001 would be on the agenda for Board consideration the following Thursday. The reports included the Budget Transfers dated March 2001; the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, General Fund/Federal Program Bills and Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 2/28/01; the Food Service Report for the month ending 1/31/01; the Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the months ending 02/28/01; the Budget Analysis through 02/28/01; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 01/31/01, as shown in Enclosures #4 through #15 on the agenda for Thursday evening. Board members had no questions or comments.

Budget Report: Mr. Yunker reported for the Curriculum Committee on the proposed budget for curriculum and instruction for the upcoming school year. He recapped proposed expenditures of \$287,750.00 for proposed curriculum initiatives that were on cycle. These included social studies, science in grades 6 through 12, family and consumer science in grades 9 through 12, and math at the middle school. He also reviewed initiatives

totaling \$157,800.00 that were not on cycle. These included K-12 language arts, math at the high school, 9-12 social studies, 6-8 family and consumer science, visual arts, technology education, and transition and career exploration. Mr. Yunker referred to other initiatives totaling \$150,685.00 and Ms. Iannelli provided a brief recap of the multicultural diversity committee, Imperial software, resource and reading recovery staffing, and stipends for foreign language teachers. She also provided information on a music consultant, strategic planning, summer reading and projects involving the curriculum cycle, staff development and the induction program. Mr. Yunker was unsure if a number of these last initiatives were directly related to curriculum, but he noted that including them in the curriculum report offered an opportunity to take a look at them. He advised that the committee would be meeting again the following week to take a further look at all of the initiatives. Mr. Orlow asked about the stipends for foreign language teachers. Ms. Iannelli and Dr. Cotter noted that the stipends would cover a pilot foreign language program at the elementary level before or after school and staff it much the same way as the district covered extra-duty/extra-pay assignments in other areas. Some board members asked about the disposal of old textbooks and Dr. Cotter noted that, when they were no longer of use in our schools, the district had the option of selling them or donating them to others. Details on proposed expenditures by program are contained in Attachment #1 to these minutes.

Mr. Kessler provided an overview of the maintenance expenditures and capital improvement projects being proposed for the 2001-02 budget. He reported that the preliminary budget information prepared by administration for the routine maintenance and operation of district buildings included an 11.3% increase in expenditure to \$1,477,600.00. He noted that much of this increase could be attributed to increased costs for supplies and services, particularly in utilities, energy and fuel. Mr. Kessler indicated that administration was recommending a number of capital improvements that represented enhancements to district facilities. He announced that the members of the Buildings & Grounds Committee would be visiting each of the district's schools to take a first-hand look at the planned improvements and that follow-up report could be expected from the committee. He indicated that the committee would be approaching its review with the philosophy that the district had gotten good use of its facilities over the years and now had to recognize that they were in need of some repair. He indicated that the committee would be looking to maintain district schools as assets in which the community, staff and students would take pride and with which they would feel a high degree of satisfaction. He noted that the ultimate goal was to make and keep them conducive to learning. Mr. Kessler reported that the cost of the new improvements was currently estimated at \$134,629.00, a 20.9% increase over the current year. He advised that the preliminary budget figures for maintenance and capital projects represented a 14.4% increase in expenditures for the coming year. A brief synopsis and comparison of expenditures can be found in attachment #2 to these minutes.

Mr. Bell briefly reviewed the preliminary budget recommendations for other support services components, including custodial, grounds, security and administrative services. He indicated that projected expenditures were set at \$989,380.00, \$138,530.00 or 16.3% higher for the coming year than they were for the current year. He reported modest

increases in many items in the budget and noted that these represented anticipated increases in the costs of basic equipment, supplies and services, including snow removal and insurance. He also noted significant increases in expenditures for copy services to support differentiated instruction initiatives and for grounds equipment and supplies to maintain the new fields and parking areas coming on line in the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow noted Mr. Sigafos, Principal, Ridge Park Elementary School, was slated to make a presentation to the Board at its general meeting on Thursday evening on a variety of programs and initiatives underway in his building.

Old Business: None

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow announced that the district had received correspondence from Dennis Harken, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, that provided information on the proposed 2001-02 I.U. budget. (See Enclosure #16 on the agenda for Thursday evening.) Mr. Pinheiro explained that the four budgets – administration, instructional materials services, legislative and curriculum and development – would be going up by 2% but that district costs would remain unchanged from the current year. That meant that there would be no increase in the districts' contributions. Mr. Pinheiro confirmed Mr. Orlow's understanding that board members would have to vote on the budgets as a Board and as individuals. Mr. Pinheiro reminded board members that these budgets were separate from the services that the district might have to purchase from the I.U. and that those costs would probably go up. Mr. Shipman confirmed the likelihood that expenditures for I.U. services would rise. Mr. Pinheiro noted that most of the increase would probably be the result of salary increases that they would generally average about 4%.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly reviewed his Superintendent's Report for the General Meeting on Thursday evening. (See Enclosure #17 on the agenda for that meeting.) He highlighted the fact that administration was moving to fill internally and on an interim basis the vacancy created by the departure of one of the assistant principals at the middle school. He noted that the district had received 77 to 80 applications for the position and would be looking to interview to fill the position permanently as of 07/01/01. Mr. Orlow asked when the temporary position would end. Dr. Cotter indicated that it would likely come to a close at the end of the school year.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that there would be two trip requests on the agenda for Board action at its meeting on 03/15/01. Mr. McMahon outlined the purpose and scope of the Adventure Weekend. He noted that 170 students from all grades at the high school had applied for the trip and were organized into 17 teams of 10. He advised, however, that only 10 teams would be going. He explained the process by which the teams would be selected, the types of activities that they would be experiencing during the trip, the steps that were being taken to insure student safety, and the local and regional interest in the program. He

also noted that one of the chaperones would be videotaping the event. (See Enclosure # 19 on the agenda for 03/15/01.)

Mr. Orlow advised that Ms. Asel, PWHS Band Director, had requested permission for the 2001 Band Trip to Cleveland, Ohio. (See Enclosure #20 on the agenda for Thursday evening.) Mr. Kessler noted several attractions in Cleveland. Dr. Cotter spoke of the value of the trip in attracting students to the music program and rewarding them for their efforts.

Mr. Orlow advised that bids for pool shower replacement, a light panel for the Colonial Elementary School Auditorium and carpet replacement at three schools and the district office would all be on the agenda for Thursday evening's meeting. Mr. Bell reported that he had distributed copies of the bid results to board members prior to the meeting and that they would be included in the agenda for the Thursday meeting. Mr. Kessler and Mr. Bell provided some background information of the bids and the timing of the work involved.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro summarized the steps that preceded the committee's decision to recommend to the Board several amendments to the district's memorandum with CASEA, the district's administrative group. He noted that one amendment covered the group's move to Personal Choice 215 for medical coverage. A second provided for the creation of a tax-sheltered annuity with a district contribution equal to 2% of the administrators' annual salaries. A third would allow administrators to convert up to 10 days of unused vacation time into tuition reimbursement. Mr. Pinheiro noted that he would be requesting Board action on these items on Thursday evening.

Dr. Cotter referred back to an item that was passed over earlier in the meeting during his superintendent's report. He advised that the district would be seeking Board authorization to proceed with planning for the 2001 summer school program. Mr. Pinheiro asked how many non-residents attended the summer program. Dr. Cotter advised that there were a few, but he indicated that he would have to check to provide an accurate number. Ms. Iannelli noted that non-residents could attend if a class was not filled. Mr. Orlow asked who would be managing the program this year. Dr. Cotter advised that he was still looking into options but saw value in having an administrator take charge of the program. He felt that it might be appropriate to assign the responsibility to the new assistant principal at the middle school.

Public Comments: None.

Additional Comments: Mr. Kessler asked for input from board members on the issue of self-insurance under the Pennsylvania Health Care Trust. He noted that the project was a joint venture by PSBA and PSEA, funded by a grant for the Heinz Foundation and was modeled on Blue Cross/Blue Shield Personal Choice 10. Mr. Kessler and his fellow board members briefly discussed the pros and cons of participation and some of the issues that

needed to be addressed before the Board could decide whether or not to participate. The Board reached a consensus to gather information of the self-insurance program.

Mr. Carroll asked about summer reading readiness programs at the elementary level and suggested that the district do more for students who were reading less than two years below grade level. Dr. Cotter noted that administration was ready to provide such support if the district was ready to fund it.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**