

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, AUGUST 16, 2001**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Colonial Middle School on August 16, 2001.

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

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Director of Educational Services – Elementary; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services - Secondary; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services, Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Patricia Campbell, Principal – Plymouth Whitmarsh High School; James Donofrio, Coach, PWSHS Boys Basketball; members of the Colonial Education Association; Allan Dovberg, President, Colonial United Taxpayers; parents of district students; local residents and representatives of the local media.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee of 07/13/01, the Work Session of 07/16/01, the General Meeting of 07/19/01, and the Special Meeting of 08/09/01, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #3 and #33 of the agenda. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #4 through #14 on the agenda. They included the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, and Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 07/31/01; General Fund and Program Bills; the Food Service Report for the month ending 06/30/01; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 07/31/01; the Budget Analysis through 07/31/01; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 07/31/01. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Kessler seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow asked that the staff reports be presented before the Board heard public comments on the agenda. Ms. Iannelli and Dr. Gorodetzer gave an update on a number of educational programs that had been conducted during the summer months. Ms. Iannelli highlighted the Summer Arts Consortium for interested students from Colonial, Norristown Area and Upper Merion School Districts. She reported that the program had

been held at Norristown High School this year and had included band, orchestra, writing, visual arts and sculpture, and music and technical theater components. Ms. Iannelli also spoke about the summer school program held at the middle school, Summer Success Academy for At Risk Students, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Transition Camp for orientation of students moving to the middle school, the first district SAT preparation course. She recognized and thanked all the staff involved in these successful programs. Dr. Gorodetzer highlighted the Young Writers and Young Readers programs, the Read to Succeed and Literacy Improvement Programs at Conshohocken Elementary School, and the reading program at Ridge Park Elementary School, all of which included staff development components as well. She, too, complimented the staff involved in these programs for their fine work. Ms. Campbell provided an overview and update on graduation projects at the high school. She noted that the program had gone through a long gestation period and provided a history of the development of the program. She reported that all but a handful of students required to complete projects had done so but noted that some steps needed to be taken to improve upon the scheduling of work involved in the projects, particularly student presentations. She responded to queries from board members about graduation projects and briefly highlighted the projects of five students from both regular and special education programs.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Before entertaining comments on the evening's agenda, Mr. Orlow read a prepared statement on the Board's and the CEA's rejection of the Fact Finder's report on collective bargaining. Mr. Orlow's full statement can be found in Attachment #1 to these minutes.

Mr. Orlow recognized members of the audience for their comments. He and other board members responded to comments from the speakers when questions were asked or clarification was required. A number of speakers spoke for and against merit pay, a subject that many of the speakers felt was a major obstacle to reaching an agreement. Mr. Orlow noted that merit pay was an issue for the CEA but that it was not the only issue. He cited compensation, benefits – especially medical coverage – and time for staff development as major issues for both sides. Speakers asked questions about these issues and Mr. Orlow provided the Board's perspective. He summarized the district's position on health care coverage and costs and cited the Board's goals to contain costs and level the playing field by having the teachers covered by the same health care plan as the rest of the district's employees eligible for benefits, i.e. Personal Choice 215. Mr. Orlow and Mr. Sultanik also provided some background information on health care coverage in school districts in Montgomery County and merit pay models in other districts and in other states. The Board heard speakers for and against the positions taken by the Board and the CEA, answered questions about salaries and taxes, complaints about the loss of instructional time involved in administering standardized tests, and concern that listeners were hearing the Board's perspective on the many issues involved but were not hearing the position of the CEA. Mr. Slagle, acting President of the CEA, and other union members spoke of the CEA's willingness to meet with people who had questions about the union's stance after the meeting. Many speakers spoke about the need for both sides to work diligently to reach a contract acceptable to both parties.

Mr. Orlow called a brief recess after the lengthy period devoted to public comments on the agenda. After the recess, Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Donofrio who spoke to the Board about his trip request to take the PWHHS Boys Basketball Team to a holiday tournament in Arizona. See Enclosure #28. Mr. Donofrio talked about the scheduling of such events, plans to include educational opportunities among the activities planned for the trip, and the high caliber of the student players on this year's team. He expressed his opinion that the team had worked hard and deserved the opportunity to travel and to showcase team member's talents before college coaches. Board members shared their perspectives on the trip. Several highlighted the potential educational impact on the students if they missed classes on holidays that were designated as school days to make up for lost time caused by a potential teachers strike. Dr. Lipshutz and Mr. Yunker voiced considerable concern about this possibility. Various board members spoke about the benefits for the students participating in such a trip. Several expressed concern about teachers who were on the teaching staff and would also miss classes in the event that the district designated days during which the team would be in Arizona as school days rather than vacation days. A number of board members were concerned that voting in favor of the trip request would set a precedent for handling other trip requests which may come before the Board at a later date. Mr. Yunker suggested that special parameters be set for the trip such as a minimum GPA for students and limitations on the number of staff coaches who could be out of the classrooms on school days. Mr. Donofrio advised that the members of his time were in good standing academically and could handle any extra work that they might have to make up for missed class days. After considerable discussion, Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the trip request and acknowledge that Board action on this request would not set a precedent for future requests. The consensus of the Board was to handle each request on a case-by-case basis. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow noted two items of correspondence on the agenda. See Enclosures #15, #16 and #34. These included letters from local resident, William E. Gunning, Jr. recommending changing the name of Plymouth Whitmarsh High School to Colonial School District High School, from Thomas J. Jentzel, Assistant Executive Director for Governmental and Member Relations, PSBA on the upcoming PSBA Legislative Council Meeting, and from Dr. Ann Stormes requesting a change in termination date. After some discussion, the Board reached a consensus to explore the costs involved in changing the name of the high school. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Kessler, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Orlow as the Board's representatives to the PSBA Legislative Council Meeting outlined in Enclosure #16. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve Dr. Stormes request for a change in termination date. Mr. Dovberg raised a point of order based on the Board's action or lack of action on this issue at its July general meeting. Mr. Sultanik ruled that the Board had the right to vote on the issue. On a roll call vote all but Dr. Lipshutz, Mr. Pinheiro, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Yunker voted in

favor. Dr. Lipshutz, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. Mr. Pinheiro abstained. The motion was carried.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #17 through #20. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Marchozzi seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Dr. Cotter provided an update on the district's efforts to make day care services available to parents at district cost in the event of a teacher's strike. He reported that approximately 550 families had completed the district survey on day care needs and that the district was capping the number of applicants at that number. Dr. Cotter announced that those responding to the survey would have to complete the registration process personally by visiting Colonial Elementary School between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on either 08/27/01 or 08/28/01. There they would confirm their intent to send their children to the program and complete required emergency contact forms. He advised that day care services would be housed at Plymouth Elementary School. He also noted that a regular lunch menu and a transportation schedule would be available to all participating families. Dr. Cotter noted that a class list would be available after registration was complete and that the program would begin on the second day of any work stoppage. He also advised that the district would be providing nursing coverage and that Montgomery Early Learning Center would be handling applications for before and after-school services.

**Student Board Representatives Report:** None.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow referred members to the results of a bid to re-wire Whitemarsh Elementary School. See Enclosure #21. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bid pending review and approval by the Building & Grounds Committee. Dr. Lipshutz received confirmation that the project would be funded by the bond issue. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that there were three requests to approve tuition students on the agenda. See Enclosure #22. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to a series of transportation contracts for the 2001-02 school year, as shown as Enclosures #23 through #27 in the agenda for Thursday evening. The contracts were \$9.00 per student per day for Devon Preparatory School, \$24.50 per student per day for Lakeside Youth Service, \$4.95 per student per day for St. Joseph Preparatory School, \$9.88 per student per day for the Lincoln Center for Family and Youth, and \$10.00 per student per day for the Chester County Intermediate Unit. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that administration was requesting approval to continue to participate in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement in the 2001-02 school year. Dr. Cotter summarized his comment on Monday evening and advised that the agreement involved the

**purchase of securities. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to reject the fact-finding report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik reported that board members had before them a resolution giving direction on how to treat compensation for teachers at the expiration of the current contract. See attachment #2 to these minutes. He noted that the resolution was similar to resolutions taken in the past and provided for the maintenance of the status quo, i.e. no vertical or horizontal movement until a new contract was reached, and for the cessation of all compensation in the event of a work stoppage. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: Mr. Pinheiro advised that the Special Needs Foundation had awarded scholarships to a number of students and that two Colonial students had received awards.**

**CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve a resolution forwarded to board members authorizing funding for the new roof at the Center for Technical Studies. See Enclosure #36. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the restructuring of the Technology Department to include two technicians and to appoint Jane Olley to the position of Supervisor of Technical Services and Michael Cavallaro to the position of Software Specialist. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Finance: No report.**

**Curriculum and Program: No report.**

**Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Kessler advised that, because of the lateness of the meeting still underway, he was rescheduling the building visits the following morning for 9:30 instead of 8:30 as originally planned.**

**Community Relations: None.**

**Legislative Committee: None.**

**Public Comments: One parent expressed disappointment with the change of classes and the problems with childcare that would come with a work stoppage. She explained the**

**hardships that she would face as a result of a work stoppage. Another district resident inquired about the workings of the Board and the scheduling of meetings.**

**There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 11:55 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James M. Bell  
Board Secretary**