

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, FEBRUARY 19, 2002**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on February 19, 2002.

**Board Members Present:** Marc Orlow, Robert Carroll, Thomas Davis, Valerie Flounders, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Susan Moore, and Thomas Yunker.

**Board Members Absent:** Thomas Marchozzi.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Director of Educational Services – Elementary; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services - Secondary; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/ Treasurer; and Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He also advised that the Board had met in executive session immediately preceding this work session to discuss legal matters and personnel issues.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 01/14/02, the General Meeting of 01/17/02, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 01/23/02, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 01/30/02, and the Special Meeting of 02/04/02 as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5 of the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday. Board members noted some corrections that needed to be made to the minutes of the General Meeting of 01/17/02. These included a spelling correction and two content adjustments to the Curriculum Committee Report. Mr. Bell took note of the recommended changes.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #6 through #17 of the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. They included Budget Transfers, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, General Fund and Program Bills; and Capital Reserve Fund Report for the months ending 01/31/02; the Food Service Report for the month ending 11/30/01; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the months ending 01/31/02; the Budget Analysis/Deficit Status Reports through 01/31/02; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 01/31/02. Mr. Orlow asked for and received confirmation from Mr. Bell that the district was holding sufficient retainage to cover any costs that it may encounter in

getting playable fields on the WFIL tract if the contractor fails to produce them. He also inquired about costs for replacement of athletic uniforms and learned from Mr. Bickleman that Mr. Forster had under-expended other line items in the accounts under his control and had taken advantage of the availability of funds to cover other identified needs. Dr. Lipshutz noted the wide variations from school to school in the year-to-date profitability of the food service program. Mr. Klinger noted that variables in the free and reduced lunch program, the financial impact of medical insurance for eligible staff assigned to each building, and the scheduling of staff interested in working during the strike affected individual schools differently. He also reported that Mr. Haines was taking a close look at these and other factors that could affect the bottom line of the Food Service Department.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow reported that Dr. Cotter would be giving a presentation at the general meeting on 02/21/02 on the “Above and Beyond” program.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members once again to several possible scenarios for the school calendar for the 2002-03 school year, as shown in Enclosure #18 of Thursday evening’s agenda. He reminded the Board and the community that the district had formally set Tuesday, 09/03/02 as the day on which classes would begin and had reached a consensus to end classes on Friday, 06/13/03. Dr. Cotter noted that the CEA and the other sending districts to the Center for Technical Studies had reviewed all of the proposed calendars. He provided a brief recap of the options of most interest to the Board. Board members had a variety of comments on them. Ms. Flounder was in favor of an in-service trade-off for the holidays before Christmas. Mr. Orlow noticed and Dr. Cotter confirmed that the in-service between the two terms at the high school had been eliminated from some of the drafts. Dr. Cotter reported that the CEA unanimously supported option 3D which moved an in-service day from 03/07/03 to 01/24/03, the day that marked the break between the terms at the high school. In response to queries from board members, he advised that five early dismissal days had been built into the calendars and noted at the bottom of each one. Mr. Carroll noted that early dismissals resulted to lost instructional time. Dr. Cotter indicated that the inclusion of the days did not affect the district’s ability to meet state guidelines for instructional time. Mr. Yunker wondered if there would be a problem in designating 12/23/02 as an instructional day. Dr. Cotter felt that there would be some attendance issues if the district did so. Dr. Lipshutz asked to see the original set-up of the calendar and wondered about using Martin Luther King and President’s Day holidays to offer additional time off for the winter and spring breaks. Mr. Johnson indicated that he would not support a calendar that called for classes on 12/31/02. Mr. Yunker, Mr. Carroll and Dr. Cotter all supported 185 school days. Dr. Cotter responded to a query from Mr. Orlow on how the district reconciled its intent to put a premium on instructional days and the need to focus on professional development. Dr. Cotter explained the function of early dismissal days spread across the school year to allow additional time for professional development. Dr. Gorodetzer and Ms. Iannelli also provided supporting information on the value

of spreading professional development time across the school year. Mr. Yunker asked the Board to consider having classes into the third week of June if district needed additional time to meet all of its needs. Several people spoke up on the potential negatives involved in making such a move. Mr. Carroll asked for and received an explanation of flex in-service time. Ms. Flounder favored using 12/30/02 and 12/31/02 as class days and giving students breaks at other times of the year. Some discussion followed on the topic of possible commitment to an in-service day between terms at the high school. Mr. Klinger recalled that the district had committed to such a break only in the year in which block scheduling was implemented. Mr. Orlow noted that board members could discuss the options further at the general meeting the following Thursday evening.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow noted that William Wells, Chairman, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation would be presenting a mini-grant for Board consideration at its meeting Thursday evening. See Enclosure #19 on the agenda for Thursday evening.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter briefly reviewed his routine Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #20 through #22 of the agenda for Thursday evening. The report contained normal information on personnel actions and changes to the substitute lists and recommendations for naming temporary professional employees as well. Dr. Cotter also noted that there would be a recommendation on Thursday evening to fill the position of Transportation Supervisor on a permanent basis and that there could be a recommendation to fill the slot of Facilities Manager as well.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be acting on a recommendation to support the Summer Consortium of the Arts with funding in the amount of \$6,300.00. Mr. Orlow noted that the consortium involved Upper Merion and Norristown School Districts as well as Colonial and that the proposed funding was the same as in prior years. In response to a question from Mr. Orlow, Ms. Iannelli reported that 28 students had participated the previous year, all in the theater project. Mr. Carroll asked and learned that the district could send a maximum of 50 students to the summer program. He noted that the program required a considerable student commitment. He also encouraged greater participation in the program and praised the opportunities that it offered and the quality of its outcomes. Ms. Iannelli noted that district participation might have been down last year because notices went home a little later than usual. She reported that steps were being taken to get the word out earlier this year. She also confirmed that the district's cost was the same regardless of the number of students who attended and that student tuition fund-raising efforts also supported the program. Dr. Cotter indicated that he could share additional information on fund-raising and reported that he would be talking with his fellow superintendents about the consortium at his meeting with them at the Center for Technical Studies.

**Mr. Orlow noted that administration was recommending a six-month extension of Montgomery Early Learning Center's lease of space in Colonial Elementary School for its day-care program. See Enclosure #23 of Thursday's agenda. Mr. Bell provided some background information on the reasons for the extension and the district's plan to prepare over the next six to nine months for remodeling of the vacated space for use by the District Office. Dr. Cotter noted that renovations would take place in phases with little or no disruption of district activities.**

**Mr. Orlow reported that administration would be seeking Board action on Thursday evening on a Certified Corporate Resolution for Depository because of administrative changes at the middle school. See Enclosure #24 of Thursday's agenda.**

**Mr. Orlow directed the attention of his fellow board members to a recommendation from the middle school to use state performance-based grant funding to support several conference requests. Dr. Cotter noted that the proposal contained in Enclosure #25 of Thursday's agenda was in line with the grant requirement that a portion of the funding be targeted toward staff development. He noted that funding was a result of an improvement in standardized test scores at the middle school. He also reported that, in accordance with state guidelines, a site-based committee had been convened to consider staff development proposals and determine who, from among those that expressed an interest, would attend the conferences. Dr. Cotter confirmed that unused funds had to be returned to the state. He also noted that Board policy required Board approval of all trips beyond 250 miles of the district. Mr. Yunker asked Dr. Cotter to provide the cost to the district for substitutes to cover the classes of those who attended the conferences. Dr. Cotter reported that grant funds could be used to cover these costs if necessary. He also reported that grant guidelines covered the selection of the oversight committee and answered some questions related to other uses to which the grant funds were being put.**

**Mr. Orlow noted that several trip requests would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday as Enclosures #26 through #28 on the agenda. They included a regional band competition from 02/21/02 through 02/23/02, state and national DECA competition from 03/06/02 through 03/08/02 and from 04/19/02 through 04/24/02, respectively, Adventure based weekend from 05/17/02 through 05/19/02, and a regional choral festival from 03/21/02 to 03/23/02. Mr. Orlow suggested that the Board vote that evening on the regional band competition since it would begin on the day of the Board's general meeting. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trip as outlined in the agenda. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Dr. Cotter confirmed that it was rare for student to attend national DECA competitions and all DECA trip costs would be borne by attendees. He also confirmed that the adventure weekend would be a follow-up to the very popular event held the previous year and that the choral festival was an overnight trip even though it was being held in a nearby district.**

Some board members commented on the time that students would be away from classes to take these trips.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be considering on Thursday evening a resolution to proceed with the preparation of documents for a 2002 bond issuance. Mr. Bickleman distributed a handout that had been discussed by the Finance Committee. He noted that blanks on the form had to be filled out to include schedules for payment. Mr. Orlow noted that the resolution would authorize administration to continue to work on documents related to the issuance of a bond but was not a commitment to sell bonds. He also noted that the Buildings & Grounds Committee had a project list for the bond issue under review. Ms. Flounders gave a quick overview of projects that the committee felt should be addressed in the summer of 2002. Mr. Carroll noted that the rewiring of Whitemarsh Elementary School had been on previous bond lists. Mr. Orlow agreed that it had but noted that there had been insufficient funds to move forward with the work. Ms. Flounders reported that the Buildings & Grounds Committee would have a three-year look at projects ready for Board consideration in April or May. Mr. Johnson noted that the Board had already received preliminary lists of potential bond issue projects. Mr. Yunker commented that the list had not yet been finalized and that the Board was moving too fast. He felt that all would not be in place to get work done during the summer months. Mr. Bickleman reported that it would take about 45 days to get the funds once the bond work was completed. Mr. Yunker first wanted to see a payment schedule that would not significantly increase debt service in the near future and allow the board to go out for additional bond funding a little farther in the future. Mr. Orlow asked the Finance Committee to review the issues and come back to the Board with a recommendation at its March meeting. He also asked the Buildings & Grounds Committee to continue its work on identifying and prioritizing capital projects.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** None.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Announcements:** Mr. Orlow advised that the Board had met in executive session at 6:00 p.m. that evening to discuss personnel matters and would meet again briefly after the meeting to discuss personnel and legal issues.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:43 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James M. Bell**  
**Board Secretary**