

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JANUARY 17, 2002**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:02 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on January 17, 2002.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Robert Carroll, Thomas Davis, Valerie Flounders, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Thomas Marchozzi, Susan Moore, 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; 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; Jeffrey Sultanik, Solicitor; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Patricia Campbell, Principal, Plymouth Whitemarsh High School; William Wells, Chairman, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Tom Gibson; Tina Jones; Stuart Kessler; Michelle Mowad; Karen Newberry; and John Sorti.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the minutes of the Curriculum Committee of 11/15/01, the Special Meeting of 11/30/01, the Reorganization and Special Meetings of 12/03/01, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 12/10/01, the Special Meetings of 12/18/01 and 12/20/01, the Buildings & Grounds Committee and Personnel Committee Meetings of 01/07/02, and the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 01/08/02, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #10. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the financial reports that listed as Enclosures #11 through #22 on the agenda. 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 11/30/01 and 12/31/01; the Food Service Report for the month ending 10/31/01; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the months ending 11/30/01 and 12/31/01; the Budget Analysis/Deficit Status Reports through 11/30/01 and 12/31/01; and the Treasurer's Report for the months ending 11/30/01 and 12/31/01. Mr. Bickleman reported that four additional bills had been presented for payment with

bond funds. In response to a question from Mr. Yunker, he confirmed that the bills were listed for payment and would be paid after Board action was taken to authorize the payments. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Mr. Orlow reminded the audience that speakers were to address items on that evening's agenda and save comments of a general nature to the end of the meeting. He recognized Mr. Kessler, a former board member. Mr. Kessler advised that he knew the rules and would link his comments to an agenda item, the Superintendent's Personnel Report. He then provided a summary of some of the Board's past decisions on filling key administrative positions in the district. Mr. Kessler noted that the Board had occasionally selected candidates with considerable potential and reasonable experience over candidates who had years of experience in a similar job. He felt that those decisions had resulted in the district hiring administrators who had provided or were providing quality service to the district. Mr. Kessler also believed that there was value in the district sometimes stepping outside common practice. He suggested considering talented local candidates who were well known to the district and who knew the district well. He expressed a belief that no candidate should be denied consideration simply because he or she was well known. Mr. Kessler cited Mr. Pinheiro, acting Director of Transportation with the district and a former board member, as a case in point. He suggested that the Board knew Mr. Pinheiro and his capabilities extremely well and should promptly either offer him the job on a permanent basis or cut him loose. He urged the Board to make that decision that evening and put the matter to rest.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow recognized Patricia Campbell, Principal, Plymouth Whitmarsh High School who made a presentation on the "Accreditation for Growth" process underway at the high school and the plans for the related site visit in the spring. Ms. Campbell reviewed Middle States accreditation process. She explained the normal cycle for accreditation was 10 years but that re-accreditation at PWHS was happening later due to construction of the science wing and the move to block scheduling. She noted that the school had several process choices but had, in the end, selected accreditation for growth because it focused on the future. Ms. Campbell reported that the school was focusing on student achievement and that the areas on which the accreditation process centered dovetailed nicely with the district's *Above and Beyond* program. She highlighted goals that centered on student achievement as reflected in higher scores on standardized tests, student involvement and climate as reflected in student participation in school activities and use of the library/media center. Board members had several follow-up questions on a number of issues. Ms. Campbell responded to these by reporting several facts: PSSA test goals related closely to the district's goals under *Above and Beyond*. Failure to reach accreditation goals in later years had few repercussions as long as the district was making a good-faith effort and could demonstrate progress. (Dr.

Cotter confirmed this piece of information.) Middle States team members were practicing professionals in their fields. The high school had some initiatives already underway and others planned to improve student SAT scores. She also reported that the team visit was scheduled for April and that the team leader would be a principal from Delaware.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow took this category out of order in deference to Mr. Wells, Chairman, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, and the teachers waiting to make presentations. Mr. Wells introduced Ms. Jones and Ms. Newberry, 6th grade teachers at Colonial Middle School and mini-grant recipients. The teachers described a project in wildlife and wilderness preservation, ecology and conservation that had class-based internet research and field trip components funded by a foundation grant. They reported that 160 students would be involved in a trip to Indiantown Gap where they would participate in survival-related and conservation activities supporting the 6th grade science curriculum. The teachers reported that costs to the students would be minimal because of the grant. They thanked the foundation for its support.

Mr. Orlow referred to a notice of a donation of \$2,200.00 to the district from the estate of Joshua Morris. See Enclosure #24. He asked for Board action to accept the gift. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion accept the gift. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow referred board members to several possible scenarios for the school calendar for the 2002-03 school year, including one that called for 184 student days rather than the 185 that the district usually scheduled. He noted that Dr. Cotter had originally advanced the option for discussion purposes only and asked if he was now ready to make a recommendation. Dr. Cotter noted that the third option incorporated all of the concepts that board members had raised the previous Monday evening. He reported that option #3 called for classes to begin after Labor Day and end before the third week in June and had 184 student days. He noted that it also listed Monday 12/23/02 as an in-service day. Dr. Cotter further reported that the draft also addressed the key issues of the CEA but suggested that the Board consider and discuss the option further and take final action on the calendar at its February meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly recapped his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #25 and #27. The report contained normal information on personnel actions, changes to the substitute lists and recommendations for adult evening school instructors for the spring of 2002. Dr. Cotter again noted that a staff person was taking professional leave and a cabinet member was going to retire at the end of March. Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would accept with regret the retirement of Mr. Klinger at the end of March. He thanked Mr. Klinger for his many years of service to the district and the stability and reliability that he had brought to his position and the administrative team over the years. Mr. Johnson

moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Student Board Representatives Report: Ms. Kurtz highlighted the winter concert, preparations for the school musical, *Grease*, freshman bingo, and the DECA competitions. She also noted the distribution of the program planning guide, a financial aid program for seniors and their families, and the upcoming senior recital. Ms. Dougherty reported on the dedication of the new fitness center, the upcoming Mr. PW contest, exams, graduation projects, good early admissions statistics for seniors moving on to college and a student project to plant tulips in front of the school.

New Business: Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a “Resolution of Termination” of an instructional aide. Mr. Yunker asked about the document shared with board members. Mr. Orlow reported that there had been no change in the resolution since Monday. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Marchozzi seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a Bond Reimbursement Resolution on the agenda as Enclosure #29. Mr. Bickleman reported that the revised resolution addressed all issues raised by board members on Monday evening and that updated information was included in Dr. Cotter’s handout. He reported that the \$10,000,000.00 bond limit still applied. Board members briefly discussed some of the timing constraints on reimbursements. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Flounders seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the appointment of Public Financial Management as Financial Advisor for the proposed 2002 bond issue. See Enclosure #30. Costs included an advisory fee of \$10,500.00, official statement formatting at \$1,500.00 and expenses not to exceed \$1,000.00. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Flounders seconded a motion to approve the appointment. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on several trip requests. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve a request for middle school science trips to Wallops Island, Virginia from 04/10/02 to 04/13/02 and Cape Cod, Massachusetts from 05/19/02 to 05/22/02. See Enclosure #31. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the 2003 senior class trip to Disney World from 04/05/03 to 04/08/03. See Enclosure #32. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow reported that the additional trip requests that Dr. Cotter had noted on Monday evening were on the agenda for Board action as Enclosures #40 and #41.

Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve a request for participation in an overnight district choir competition at the Hill School from 02/07/02 to 02/09/02. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Carroll moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve a request for student participation in district, regional and state orchestra festivals/competitions from 01/24/02 to 01/26/02, from 03/07/02 to 03/09/02, and from 04/24/02 to 04/27/02 respectively. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow deferred action on the appointment of a PSBA/Employee Relations Contact.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: None. Mrs. Moore noted that the I.U. Board would be meeting the following week.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that Mr. Slauch had provided a historical overview of the Center for Technical Studies for four new members of the Joint Operating Committee.

Personnel: None.

Finance: None

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee had met on 12/10/01 to review the policy on exemptions from finals and had proposed no changes for the current year. He also reported that handbook changes were due by 04/01/02 and that the district was looking at the exam policy because it might need data from final exams for its tracking of student achievement. Dr. Lipshutz advised that the committee had asked the high school principal for data on the number of students who were eligible to opt out of final exams at the end of the first semester. He also reported discussions on the weights attached to honors and AP courses and recommendations of the music consultant to eliminate the marching band for 6th grade students, and to re-institute the 3rd grade strings program. He noted that the committee supported the former and would be seeking student and parent input through surveys on the latter. He also reported that the committee supported requiring concert band members to be members of the marching band as well, and he advised that the district would be looking in house for someone to serve as Music Chair for the district.

Buildings and Grounds: Ms. Flounders reported that she and Mr. Bell were working on identifying the projects that should be scheduled for the summer of 2002.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson thanked all those involved in the most recent town meeting on the *Above and Beyond* program for their participation and support.

Legislative: Mr. Carroll reported on a recent meeting with State Senator Allyson Schwartz, Democratic Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and a number of pieces of legislation in process in Harrisburg. He reported that the state pays only 35% of special education funding and that local districts pay the rest. He also reported on pending bills on all-day kindergarten, shared information on charter and cyber schools, and noted that it had become difficult to comment on pending bills.

Public Comments: Mr. Kessler suggested that the district remind the community that district school would be open on Martin Luther King Day.

Announcement: Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would meet briefly in Executive Session following the meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary