

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, OCTOBER 15, 2001**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:47 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 15, 2001.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Robert O'Neill, Robert Carroll, Gary Johnson, Stuart Kessler, Hugh Lipshutz, Jack Pinheiro 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; 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 and Paul Antal, District Safety Officer.

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 General Meeting of 09/20/01, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 10/01/01 and the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 10/05/01, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #3 on the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday. Board members had no questions or comments on the minutes.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #4 through #15 on 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 month ending 09/30/01; the Food Service Report for the month ending 07/31/01; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 09/30/01; the Budget Analysis/Deficit Status Report through 09/30/01; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 09/30/01. Mr. Orlow asked about the LaSalle Program listed under budget transfers and learned that it was a connected math program now a part of the district's curricular offerings. Mr. Orlow also asked if the township was still holding escrowed funds for the all-weather track. Mr. Bell believed that the district had already requested the release of the funds but would confirm that with Mr. Bickleman.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow noted that Linda Romano, Principal, Colonial Middle School would be giving a presentation on instruction programs and initiatives at the middle school at the general meeting on 10/18/01.

Old Business: Mr. Kessler entered the meeting at this point. Mr. Orlow directed board members to Enclosure #16 of the agenda for the general session the following Thursday. He noted that there were several options for completing the calendar for the current school year beyond that portion adopted by the Board at its September meeting for the period of the year through February 2002. Dr. Cotter briefly summarized the options. Board members had a number of comments on the options presented. Mr. Yunker inquired about the district's practice of always holding graduation on Thursday evening. Mr. Pinheiro noted his preference to stay with past practice but advised that the district would lose \$856 dollars in state subsidy for each day the senior class attended fewer than 180 days of class. Mr. Johnson stated his preference for option 2A. Dr. Cotter reported that the district had placed a survey on the web site and had also sought parent and student reaction in other ways. He indicated that 60-70% of the respondents to the surveys indicated that they were supportive of using some days from spring break to make up days lost through the strike. He also advised that the CEA would like to preserve spring break. Dr. Cotter also noted that, as of the date of the meeting, there were no sports camps scheduled over spring break. Mr. Kessler expressed his support for spring break and asked if the student body had supported it. Dr. Cotter reported that he had heard that student reaction closely mirrored the results of the parents' survey. Dr. Lipshutz worried about going into the fourth week of June in the event that the district had to close for snow during the winter months. Mr. Kessler wondered if the Board would be willing to take a subsidy hit if school closed at the end of the third week of June even if it had not met the requirement for 180 days of school. Mr. Pinheiro asked Dr. Cotter to confirm with PDE the penalties for failing to provide 180 days of instruction. Mr. Kessler stated his preference for option 2. Mr. Carroll inquired about make-up days for teachers and strongly supported meeting the 180-day requirement. Dr. Lipshutz concurred. Mr. Kessler noted that he and Mr. Carroll would be at a PSBA conference on Thursday and would be unable to vote on the matter. Dr. Cotter counseled against setting any precedents by negotiating the calendar. Several board members indicated that their votes for a solution to the present dilemma over the calendar should not be interpreted as a lack of support for the district's regular calendar schedule. Mr. Yunker cautioned that the district should watch its in-service schedule. Dr. Cotter indicated that flex in-service sessions would be held.

Correspondence: The agenda for the work session noted an upcoming presentation by two mini grant recipients at the general session the following Thursday. No mention was made of the scheduled presentation at the work session.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #17 through #19 on the agenda for Thursday evening. Mr.

Pinheiro inquired about vacancies in extra-duty/extra-pay slots. Mr. Klinger reported that there were still some vacancies that needed to be filled. Mr. Orlow asked about the process for determining the unit value for the various positions. Mr. Klinger reported that the process involved a committee applying a formula that gave both time and the risk of injury values. Dr. Cotter noted that the committee met semi-annually to apply the formula.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted a request from the high school cheerleading coach for overnight field trips by bus to Johnstown, PA from 11/16/01 through 11/18/01 and to Williamsburg, VA from 03/15/02 through 03/17/02, as outlined in Enclosure #20 on the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. He noted that students and boosters would bear the cost and that the high school administration supported the trip. Mr. Orlow asked if administration was looking into trip requests in light of recent world events. Dr. Cotter indicated that it was doing so on an on-going basis. He reported that the district was assessing parental concerns, monitoring events and considering travel advisories. He noted that the district's final recommendations would always be based on student safety. Board members expressed concerns about the student trip to Spain scheduled for the coming spring. Speakers were cognizant of the possibility that families could lose money if trips were cancelled late.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be taking action at its Thursday meeting on Certified Corporate Resolutions for Depository Authorization and a Deposit Account Application for activity and athletic accounts at the high school. Dr. Cotter indicated that the applications were necessary in light of the assignment of new administrative staff. See Enclosure #21 on the agenda for the meeting of 10/18/01.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board had received six options for a calendar for the 2002-03 school year and, following past practice, would set the start date for the year early in order to allow parents time to plan. He noted that there was strong community support to start the school year after Labor Day. Dr. Cotter reported that the CEA supports a post-Labor Day start. Dr. Lipshutz and Mr. Johnson also voiced support for starting after Labor Day.

Mr. Orlow noted that the fundraising budgets for 2001-02, as shown in Enclosure #22 on the agenda for Thursday's meeting, were being provided for information purposes only.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Kessler summarized the change order included as Enclosure #23 in the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. He indicated that the work was necessary to correct cracks in the walls of the high school auditorium that were only discovered when wood panels had been removed during construction. He noted that the changes would address the cracks and that the auditorium was structurally sound. At Board request, Mr. Bell provided an

update on the status of work on the fitness center. He noted that Gilbane was working to secure the construction details needed by the architect and contractor and that work would resume shortly.

Mr. Kessler provided the Board highlights of an NSBA conference that he had attended at an IBM facility in Palisades, NY. He reported on an opportunity to learn first-hand about crisis management in the area surrounding the World Trade Center and the impact of the disaster on local schools. In response to Board interest in the topic, Dr. Cotter noted that the district was reviewing its own crisis management and disaster preparedness plans in light of what happened in New York. Mr. Kessler also reported briefly on the state-of-the-art technology on display at the IBM facility in Palisades and the opportunities it offered industry and school districts to take a look at how they conducted business.

Public Comments: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary