

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, OCTOBER 18, 2001**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 18, 2001.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Robert Carroll, Stuart Kessler, and 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; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Board Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Colleen Dougherty and Michael Fazzini, Student Board Representatives; Donna Drizin, Principal, Whitmarsh Elementary School; Linda Romano, Principal, Colonial Middle School; Sandy Newman, Assistant Principal, Colonial Middle School; Bill Wells, President of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Paul Antal, District Safety Officer; Kim Clemente; Laura Gunsalus; Melina Henry; Michelle Mowad; Cindy Rossien; Susan Slattery; and Betty and John Sorti.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on 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. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #4 through #15. 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. Pinheiro noted that the Board had expressed its intent not to act on further bills from Brand Scaffolding until outstanding issues with setting the height of the scaffolding had been resolved. He moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a

motion to approve the financial reports as presented with the exception of the one bill from Brand Scaffolding. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow recognized Linda Romano, Principal, CMS. Ms. Romano and several teachers on her staff presented information on the writing program in the school and its implementation across subject areas. They highlighted in-service programs for staff, writing programs that taught students to write in response to prompts, and curricular mapping that occurred the previous summer. She thanked the Board and Dr. Cotter for their support of curriculum initiatives. Dr. Cotter noted that the middle school was a little further along in programs that were part of the district's "Above and Beyond" program. He noted that all K-8 students would be working on writing projects in response to prompts. Mr. Johnson noted that Ms. Romano would be leaving the district in January and thanked her for her service. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be inviting Ms. Romano back for a more formal recognition.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow asked board members for their recommendations on Enclosure #16 of the agenda, a final calendar for the current school year. Board members restated their positions from the meeting the previous Monday. Ms. Dougherty shared the results of a survey that the student council at the high school had undertaken in all classes. She reported that students favored retaining spring break by a wide margin. Several board members wondered if seniors had supported that choice under the assumption that graduation would be fixed at an earlier date. A couple of board members stated their belief that making up the days a little earlier in the year would be a better educational value. Dr. Cotter noted that the district could apply for an Act 80 waiver and avoid a loss of subsidy by meeting the required number of instructional minutes for the year. He noted that this might be possible at all levels except kindergarten. He also reported that there was not much history on the reason for having graduation for a Thursday night and noted that the Board could choose to postpone a decision on graduation until spring. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve option 1A with the first three days of spring break as school days, Thursday and Friday as holidays, and the following Monday as an in-service day that would be a snow make-up day, if required, and fixing graduation on Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow recognized Bill Wells, President of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation who introduced mini-grant recipients, Melina Henry and Cindy Rossien of Whitmarsh Elementary School. The two teachers thanked the foundation for its support and explained an enrichment program funded by their mini-grant. The program involved the purchase of multi-cultural books that are now being used in a special reading program. Under the

program students select books that are just right for them early in the school year and others that are challenging and can be read to them by a parent. They then follow up their reading of the books with discussions and connections that they share with others. Ms. Henry and Ms. Rossien invited board members and administrators to visit the school and see their mini-grant program in operation.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter briefly recapped his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #17 through #19 on the agenda. Mr. Orlow had several questions about the extra-duty list. Mr. Klinger responded. He confirmed that the positions on the list were covered under the collective bargaining agreement, that positions were not posted, that building principals sometimes did recommend applicants for the posts that they sought. He also reported that positions were often filled by bargaining unit members, that the district gave unit members preference for these positions but was not obligated to fill the positions with members of the unit. Dr. Cotter noted that the district often gave teachers these posts because they saw the students everyday. He also reported that the Activities Director conducted informal evaluations of those in extra-duty posts based on their interactions with students, parents, referees and the like. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve all parts of the report except Enclosure #19, the extra-duty List. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Pinheiro then moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve Enclosure #19. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. O'Neill voted in favor. Mr. O'Neill abstained because he had a family member recommended for an extra-duty assignment. The motion was carried.

**Student Board Representative Report:** Ms. Dougherty reported on spirit week activities including Homecoming and all of the activities that surrounded it. She also announced the new student council officers. Mr. Fazzini reported on efforts to provide emotional and humanitarian support to those affected by terrorist activities in New York and Washington, a voter registration drive, fall standardized testing, the high school open house and fall sports season.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on 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. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the Certified Corporate Resolutions for Depository Authorization and a Deposit Account Application for activity and athletic accounts at the high school. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the resolutions and application as shown in Enclosure #21. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Mr. Orlow sought Board input on the start date for the coming school year. He noted that administration was developing calendar options and would be submitting them to the annual review process. Ms. Dougherty reported student support for starting the school year after Labor Day. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion for setting the first day of class on 09/03/02, the Tuesday after Labor Day. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

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

**Solicitor's Report: None.**

**Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: None.**

**CMCAVTS: None.**

**Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro advised that the committee would be meeting the following week. He also announced that Mr. Carroll and Mr. Kessler were not at the Board meeting because they were attending a PSBA conference.**

**Finance: None.**

**Curriculum and Program: Mr. Yunker advised that the committee had met that week and had taken a look at the results of summer programs and test results from the previous year. He advised that the results were favorable but noted that PSSA test results were difficult to compare to prior year figures because they were now reported in a different format. He stressed the importance of collecting information in ways that allowed for comparisons from year to year no matter what format the state used in reporting. He reported that raw scores had improved in each building and that comparisons with other schools in the same band had remained about the same. He also noted a compression in the range at the middle school level. Mr. Orlow noted that the results were good news and had been reported in the media. Mr. Yunker suggested that the data be captured by percentages so that the district could track progress even if the state changed its reporting format. Dr. Cotter noted that the district was compiling data and looking into data warehousing systems. Mr. Orlow advised that the district was committed to making critical decisions based on data. Dr. Cotter suggested taking some time to review the district's "Above and Beyond" plan formally at an upcoming Board meeting.**

**Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Orlow reminded the Board that, on Monday evening, Mr. Kessler had presented a change order to the Board addressing the need for support for the new acoustical panels on the side walls of the high school auditorium. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the change order as shown in Enclosure #23. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Community Relations:** Mr. Johnson reported that the next town meeting would be held on December 4<sup>th</sup>. He advised that the new teacher's contract and the district's Pathways Program would be on the agenda.

**Legislative:** None.

**Public Comments:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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