

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, AUGUST 15, 2002**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:10 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on August 15, 2002.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Thomas Davis, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Susan Moore, William Ryan, Steven Slutsky and Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: Lynn Glodek.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Research, Assessment and Technology; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer; Lorraine DeRosa, Curriculum Supervisor; William Wells, President, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Scott Schearer, Public Financial Management; and Julie Pustilnick, Cindy Rossien and Cindy Slagle, district teachers.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He advised that the Board had met in executive session prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Special Meeting of 07/11/02, the Work Session of 07/15/02, the General Meeting of 07/18/02, the Special Meeting of 07/25/02, and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 07/31/02 as shown in Enclosures #1 through #4 and #46. 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 directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #31 through #41. They included the Bond Fund Report and Capital Projects Report for the month ending 07/31/02; General Fund and Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 07/31/02; the Budget Analyses of 08/02; and Food Services Report and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 07/31/02. Dr. Cotter noted that the reports had been distributed as agenda yellow pages because Mr. Bickleman had generated them after returning from vacation. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bickleman to change the name of the Bond Fund Report to delete references to years in which bonds had been issued. Mr. Orlow inquired about references in the reports to charter school subsidies. Mr. Bickleman reported that the subsidies were state rebates for attendance last year and were

authorized by recent legislation. Mr. Yunker requested that Mr. Bickleman routinely hold his Reconciliation of Cash Accounts until bank statements had been received. Mr. Bickleman agreed to do so. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve all of the reports except the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None

Agenda Adjustment: Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Schearer of Public Financial Management (PFM) who gave a report on the district's options for refinancing previous bond issues. The details of his report are contained in Enclosure #27. Board members interacted with Mr. Shearer on many of the details in his reports and on potential options for refinancing. At the end of the discussions, Mr. Yunker moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to authorize the following: PFM shall monitor on a bi-weekly basis the estimated net savings of refunding the series 2000 bond issue. Such monitoring shall involve a bi-weekly update to the Finance Committee of the Board of such estimated net savings at a minimum amount of \$225,000. In order to facilitate a rapid decision to approve such refunding officially, PFM shall work with the Chief Financial Officer to update the official statement of the district. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Staff Report: Dr. Gorodetzer and Dr. Iannelli gave a brief report on the district's summer programs. See Enclosure #5. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that they had been better than ever. She indicated that the *Read to Succeed* program, the reading program at Ridge Park Elementary School and the intermediate reading program at the middle school had all gone well. Ms. Pustilnick shared some favorable comments from students, teachers and parents about student success in the programs. She also briefly highlighted the writer's workshop. Ms. DeRosa responded to questions about attendance at the programs and the process for recruiting students who would benefit from the programs. Dr. Iannelli reported on the regular summer school program. She indicated that 74 students had taken remediation courses and indicated that behavior and attendance had been better than in years past. She attributed that to the somewhat longer day and the shorter four-day week. In response to queries, she reported that no students had failed their courses but that three had dropped out of the program. She indicated that she would follow through on a suggestion to analyze the data on student performance in the program. Mr. Yunker also asked her to check on those students who had not made courses up in summer school and might end up falling short of the necessary credits for graduation because they were retaking courses during the regular school year instead of meeting other requirements.

Dr. Iannelli also reported on the annual Consortium of the Arts. She noted that district participation had been smaller than usual due to the late decision on whether or not to run the program. Dr. Iannelli indicated that the three sending districts had not made contributions for the 2002 program because the consortium

had a fund balance which covered costs. She advised that members of the consortium would meet in December to discuss the future of the program.

Dr. Iannelli reported on the work that had been done on the district's strategic plan. She requested Board authorization to post the plan in the district, at Jeanes Library, and on the website for the required 30-day period. See Enclosure #6. Mr. Orlow asked about the district's success committees and the number of students still at risk. He suggested that the district take a look at the issues, target assistance to those in need and plan for the future. Mr. Yunker suggested that the first goal in the strategic plan should reflect the district's objective of improving student achievement. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to include in goal #1 the improvement of student achievement and to authorize the posting of the plan for 30-day period of public comment and input. Following the posting, the Board would then incorporate public input as appropriate and take final action on the plan at its meeting in September. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to the detailed explanation of the revised course weighting for AP courses in Enclosure #42. He felt that the Board needed to vote on the matter. Dr. Lipshutz felt that the Board had, in July, authorized the Curriculum Committee to take care of the issue. Dr. Cotter shared Dr. Lipshutz recollection of the action taken at the July meeting. Mr. Yunker confirmed the accuracy of the calculations contained in the revised weighting and noted the importance of understanding differences among the marking period, year-end, and cumulative grade point averages. Dr. Cotter and board members noted the importance of making sure that everyone understood the new weighting process and all recommended frequent reminders and follow-ups throughout the school year. At the end of the discussion, Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the weighting formula. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow noted the petition from Mr. Ferraioli to consider his application for a high school diploma under House Bill #186. See Enclosure #7. Dr. Cotter advised that he was seeking Board direction on the issue raised by the application and noted that the Board had the power to establish a program that awarded a diploma to veterans who left school in order to serve their country. Board members asked some clarifying questions about the program. Dr. Cotter noted that what would be issued to an applicant would be similar to an honorary diploma and that veterans could apply to any high school. Dr. Lipshutz noted that the current applicant grew up in the community and was a current resident of the district. The consensus of the Board was to have Mr. Ferraioli move forward with the application process.

Mr. Wells asked for Board approval of major and mini-grants proposed for 2002-03 school year as listed in Enclosure #8. Mr. Orlow asked about the different

procedures that led the foundation to recommend major and mini-grants to the Board. Mr. Wells reported that the foundation board carefully reviewed and discussed the specifics of major grants but generally followed the recommendations of a sub-committee in recommending mini-grants. Mr. Orlow expressed some concerns with equity in approving a math grant at one elementary school and not at the others. Dr. Gorodetzer indicated that she viewed the grant as a pilot that would be monitored by the administrative team and recommended for expansion if it proved successful. Dr. Lipshutz suggested collecting data and checking into the effectiveness of the pilot. Mr. Wells noted that the foundation funded a program once and then looked to the district to pick up the funding if it was effective. Dr. Cotter advised that he shared Mr. Orlow's concerns. Mr. Slutsky inquired about the extensive use of PDA's when calculators might suffice. Mr. Wells responded that the PDA's allowed for computer interface. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the grants. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Orlow suggested that the Board hear summaries of each section of the Superintendent's Report and then act on them all in a single motion. Dr. Cotter reviewed Enclosures #9 and #13 with the Board. He advised the Board of line items in the Personnel Report that contained updated information, noted the filling of three unassigned positions and pointed out the recommendation to fill two key administrative positions – David Yates as Acting Principal, PWHS and Dr. Iannelli as Director of Research Assessment and Technology. Dr Cotter walked board members through the list of proposed extra duty/extra pay assignments. He highlighted the addition of 7th and 8th grade girls soccer coaches, a World Affairs Club sponsor, and an assistant varsity cheerleading coach. Mr. Orlow sought and received confirmation that a number of employees listed in slightly different ways in the enclosure were, in fact, the same individuals serving in different roles. Dr. Cotter confirmed that the administration was recommending the computer resource personnel and department chairs listed in the report.

Dr. Cotter reported that adult evening school staffing and administrative conference requests were standard annual recommendations. In response to a query from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter reported that funds were allocated for conferences based on each administrator's responsibilities. Dr. Cotter briefly reviewed the Act 48 plans of the district for continuing professional development. He confirmed that the program incorporated the district's *Above and Beyond* initiatives, *Pathways* and a database for monitoring. Dr. Iannelli noted that the plan was for five years and was a part of the district's *Strategic Plan*. Mr. Orlow suggested that the district do more community outreach as it sought community members to participate in the planning process. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report as contained in Enclosures #9 through #12. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker abstained. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: None

New Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board approval of committee assignments as presented in Enclosure #14 and as required under Board Policy By-Law #001, Article II, Section 1. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the assignments. 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 shown as Enclosures #15 through #18. The contracts were with Devon Preparatory School at a cost of \$9.25/student/day, Lakeside Youth Services at a cost of \$26.00/student/day, St. Joseph's Preparatory School at a cost of \$5.10/student/day and Center for Family and Youth at a cost of \$11.15/student/day. All contracts included increases over the prior year's costs. Dr. Cotter reported that all still represented the lowest cost option available. Mr. Shipman cited increased personnel costs for the vendors and unusually low charges for the prior year as reasons given by vendors for the cost increases. He also noted that he and Mr. Bell recommended taking a close look at the contracts in coming years because the costs were nearing the point where alternate arrangements might prove less expensive. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to a recommendation to extend the operating hours of the high school library two days/week from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mr. Slutsky asked if the district coordinated with local libraries about schedules and library collections. See Enclosure #19. Dr. Lipshutz reported that the Curriculum Committee had coordinated with the local library on the schedule and that the libraries would be open later on alternating evenings. He reported that the committee could explore the possibility of extending the coordination to cover resources as well. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that one of the district's librarians had connections to the local library and could help promote dialogue between the district and the township. Dr. Cotter reported that the new schedule was coordinated with the activity buses at the high school. Mr. Orlow asked that the high school track use of the library and survey students' response to the extended hours. Dr. Lipshutz asked the administration to update the committee at the end of the first semester. Note was taken that the \$4,092 cost of the change had not been budgeted but that the administration wished to proceed with the change for the new school year. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Yunker seconded extend library hours as proposed. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that the administration was seeking approval of a computer-assisted SAT review and college preparation course at the high school. See Enclosure #20. Mr. Yunker wondered why the district was not seeing an increase in scores as a result of offering such courses. Dr. Cotter advised that the administration was taking a look at the students enrolled in the courses. Dr.

Lipshutz asked who benefited most from the courses. Mr. Orlow noted that the courses seemed to help math scores more than verbal scores. Mr. Slutsky thought that offering such courses was a great idea. Mrs. Moore noted that average test scores tended to rise when students re-took the test even without the courses. Dr. Iannelli indicated that she would check further into the test data and report back to the Board. Board members asked about the scheduling of the course. Dr. Cotter reported that it would be based on the enrollment. He indicated that he believed that some changes would have to be made to the schedule proposed by the high school. Mr. Berger noted that the district would pay the teacher the curriculum rate. The cost to the district was set at \$5,720. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the course. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to a request to approve the attendance of an exchange student at the high school during the 2002-03 school year in grade 9. See Enclosure #21. Board members had a number of questions related to the request. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Shipman responded to the questions. They indicated the student was not part of a reciprocal exchange, that the proposed exchange was being handled through a reputable exchange organization and that the student would be receiving the full services of the district during his stay. Mr. Sultanik noted that the student would not technically be a resident but would not be an out-of-district tuition student either. He reported that such exchanges historically required Board approval. Dr. Cotter noted that the presence of the student should offer enrichment opportunities for district students who would have an opportunity to interact with a peer from abroad. Mr. Shipman reported that the district had not interviewed the student and had few details about him. Several board members and administrators spoke of their positive interactions with exchange students over the years. Dr. Cotter indicated that the district would be monitoring and supporting the student throughout his stay. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to accept the exchange student. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bell to provide brief summaries of the bids contained in Enclosures #22 through #25 and #44. Mr. Bell provided background information on each bid and answered the few questions raised by board members. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to award the bid for security cameras at the high school to Access Security Corporation in the amount of \$81,245.00. Mr. Sultanik responded to a question from Mr. Yunker about the disqualification of one of the bidders by confirming that the failure to provide a bid bond or certified check was legitimate grounds for disqualifying the bidder. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to award the bid for carpet replacement at Ridge Park Elementary School to Har-Pat Carpets in the amount of \$13,256. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to award the bid for security access equipment at several schools to James Doorcheck,

Inc. in the amount of \$122,150. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to award the bid for two nine-passenger school vans to Wolfington Body Company in the amount of \$31,995 each. Mr. Bell explained the planned purchase of one vehicle and the unplanned purchase of the other to replace a vehicle damaged beyond repair in an accident. He also outlined budget implications of the unplanned purchase and the sources of payment. Mr. Bell assured the Board that both vehicles would be in regular use. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to reject all bids for the intercom head-end control replacements, as recommended by the administration. Mr. Bell explained that the district had received few bids and that one late bid had been opened inadvertently. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: No report.

CMCAVTS: No report.

Personnel: No report.

Finance Committee: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Lipshutz noted that, although the committee had requested additional information on the need for a .33 employee to oversee graduation projects at the high school before filling the position, the master schedule had been built including the position. Recognizing that plans were already in place to handle graduation projects for the new school year by employing the services of a .33 staff person, Dr. Lipshutz recommended that the district proceed in that fashion for one more year and revisit the issue before renewing the position for the following year. The position had been included in the 2002-03 budget. Dr. Cotter indicated that he wanted to see changes in the program for the following year.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the revised easement agreement with Plymouth Township for the installation of sewer and storm water lines across district property at Plymouth Elementary School, as shown in Enclosure #28. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to waive the township's payment of district legal fees involved in reviewing and finalizing the easement agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve procedures for handling on-call architectural services as outlined in a

handout given to board members and attached to these minutes as Attachment #1. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Community Relations: No report.

Legislative: No report. Mr. Bell assured those board members attending the special legislative session that arrangements had been made for their attendance.

Additional Public Comment: None

Their being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**