

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, AUGUST 28, 2002**

President Orlow convened the special meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on August 28, 2002.

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

Board Members Absent: Susan Moore.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; and James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Bell confirmed that the meeting had been appropriately advertised.

New Business: Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Yunker to summarize the proposed collective bargaining agreement between the district and the Secretaries/Instructional Aides Educational Support Personnel Association, PSEA, NEA on which the Board would be taking action that evening. Mr. Yunker reported that the agreement called for a 5% increase in salaries in each of the next three years (plus an additional 5% in the first year for staff nurses who were RN's) and, in the third year, the same health care plan, premium and co-pay as for members of the Colonial Education Association. He advised that the salaries for part-time secretaries would gradually rise over the course of the contract to the point where the hourly rate would be the same as that of the full-time, ten-month secretaries. Mr. Yunker also reported that employees who switched from family medical coverage to individual coverage would receive a \$500 rebate from the district and those eligible for family coverage that opted out of the medical insurance program would receive a \$700 rebate. He noted that in the third year the employee's prescription plan would match that of the members of the Colonial Education Association. The first and second years called for a \$10/\$20 co-pay versus a \$5/\$10 co-pay. Mr. Berger noted that staff nurses would receive seniority back to the time that they joined the district. Mr. Orlow indicated that compensation for members of the bargaining unit would be in the top third of the county. Mr. Yunker reported that the full-time, salaried members of the bargaining unit would receive long-term disability insurance similar to that received by members of other district bargaining units. Mr. Berger reported on professional development opportunities and efforts to standardize language throughout the agreement. Mr. Orlow noted that past contracts for the bargaining unit had been handled by the former Director of Personnel but that the proposed

contract had been negotiated by a group of board members with the assistance of the district solicitor. Mr. Yunker reported that the agreement would be effective as of July 1, 2002. Mr. Berger confirmed that unit members would receive any back pay for which they were eligible on September 13, 2002. Mr. Yunker indicated that members would also pay medical co-pays back to July 1, 2002.

Board members discussed the merits of the proposed agreement and the philosophy underpinning such agreements. Dr. Lipshutz reported his intention to vote against the collective bargaining agreement. He felt that the proposed agreement neither helped nor hurt the students and could not be argued as unfair to the employees. He did feel, however, that the proposed contract was unfair to taxpayers. He noted that salary increases of 5% per year would total approximately 16% over the three-year contract, far above recent inflation rates. He asked board members where they would draw the line. Mr. Slutsky raised the issues of competitive positioning and the basic philosophy of the district in terms of where it would like to see its employees in relation to others in the marketplace. Other board members shared questions and perspectives on where the bargaining unit employees were in relation to their peers in other districts and where proposed increases were in relation to those granted to other district employees. Several expressed concern about the differing impacts that percentage increases had on employees in different wage brackets. Dr. Lipshutz expressed an interest in avoiding swings by the Board between opposite ends of the spectrum on wage and salary issues. Mr. Berger shared, at Board request, some insights on these issues outside the public school setting. Mr. Orlow noted the importance of the “me too” clause on benefits in containing health care costs in the future. Mr. Yunker agreed. He noted the positive impact that the proposed salary increase would have on morale because of the perception of fairness and the boost that the contract’s healthcare position would give the Board as it addressed healthcare issues with other bargaining units in the future. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bargaining unit agreement as presented. On a roll call vote, all but Dr. Lipshutz voted in favor. Dr. Lipshutz voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Other Comments from Board Members: Mr. Slutsky noted that information on SAT scores in Pennsylvania had been carried in the local media. He asked if the district had summary information on the district’s scores. Dr. Cotter reported that the district had the individual scores of students but might not have the data reported in the media. He advised that information indicated that math scores had risen more than verbal scores. Mr. Orlow asked the Curriculum Committee to take a look at the latest data available.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be going into executive session following the meeting to discuss personnel issues.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None

Their being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**