

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, FEBRUARY 20, 2003**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:05 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on February 20, 2003.

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

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Research, Assessment and Technology; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Stephanie Cousounis and Sabrina Rosenberg, Student Board Representatives; Jeffrey Sultanik, District Solicitor; Thomas Sigafos, Principal, Ridge Park Elementary School; Darlene Davis, Principal Conshohocken Elementary School; Terry Yemm, Facilities Manager; Blaine Chipola, Professional Roof Services; Susan Castle, President, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Robert Slagle, CEA; Whitney Covalle; Robert Franz; Nancy Martin O'Brien; and students receiving certificates of achievement, their families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He also announced that the Board had met in executive sessions on 01/08/03, 01/22/03, 02/12/03 and 02/18/03 for informational purposes and to discuss personnel and legal matters. The Board awarded certificates of achievement to the winner of a holiday card art contest at the high school, the ant-tobacco campaign leaders at the high school and the poetry contest winners at Colonial Elementary School. A complete list of those recognized is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Mr. Orlow indicated that, since Board members had not been able to review minutes and financial reports at a work session earlier in the week because of the latest snow storm, they would need some time to do so during the meeting. He asked for public comments on the agenda earlier. Mr. Franz, a local resident, asked for some information on the district's upcoming presentation to the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors on 02/27/03 on land behind Colonial Elementary School. Mr. Orlow provided a brief history of the agreement between the township and the district on the division of condemned property in front of the school and on discussions to having Whitemarsh Township provide acreage behind the school in lieu of additional acreage in front of the school.

Mr. Orlow specifically cited the restrictive covenants involved, the planned use of the property for passive and active recreational use by the district, and the extension of a landscaped buffer between playing fields and the property of neighboring home owners. Mr. Franz requested and Mr. Orlow provided assurance that the meeting between the district and the township was to be the beginning of a dialog with residents on the topic.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 01/13/03, Work Session of 01/13/03, the General Meeting of 01/16/03, the Finance and Audit Committee Meeting of 01/23/03, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 01/27/03, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 02/05/03, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 02/05/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7 and #39. Mr. Yunker pointed out a typographical error in the Curriculum Committee Minutes and asked that Mr. Bickleman include the amount of the projected fund balance (\$3,225,429) in the Finance Committee Minutes. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the minutes pending revision. 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 #8 through #19. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 02/03, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report; General Fund and Program Bills, General Fund/Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Report; Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 01/31/03; the Budget Analysis of 02/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 01/31/03. Mrs. Moore inquired about repairs to the tennis courts that were listed in the Bond Fund Report. Mr. Bickleman reported that they were for repairs to the former courts some time ago and reminded the Board the bond fund report was a history of activity over time. Mr. Yunker suggested that Mr. Bickleman indicate the school year on project activity on the report. Mr. Orlow inquired about Title I transfers. Mr. Bickleman reported that funds had been moved to the proper account. Mr. Orlow inquired about the \$12,000 decrease in food service revenues attributed to student absences in December. Mr. Bell and Mr. Bickleman reported that there were other causes as well, including lost revenue on snow days. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Sigafos who reported on the Rise and Shine program at Ridge Park Elementary School. The program is one involving the tutoring of students in math and language arts. The effort is part of the school's goals for the current school year. It was designed to help students identified by data on scores in standardized testing to breach the proficiency threshold on the tests and, subsequent to intervention, score at the proficient or advanced level in the

current year. He reported that students enjoyed the before school program and that he would be able to assess the impact of the program once the results of the current year's testing were in hand. Mr. Orlow asked how students were selected for the program. Mr. Sigafos reported that students encouraged to participate had scored as "nearing proficient" based on the previous year's Terra Nova tests. Mr. Davis asked if there would be a follow-up evaluation of the program. Mr. Sigafos indicated that there would. Dr. Lipshutz asked if any students who were encouraged to attend declined to do so. Mr. Sigafos reported that four students declined to participate. Two did not participate because their parents considered the program remedial. Two were unable to participate because of scheduling problems.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** M. Orlow recognized Mrs. Castle, who introduced Whitney Covalle, a teacher at Conshohocken Elementary School who had received a foundation mini-grant for her work on expanding the school's hand-bell musical program. Ms. Covalle had used her grant to purchase additional hand-bells so that more students could participate in the program. She showed a video of students participating in the program and reported on the positive impact that it had on student self esteem. She thanked the foundation for its \$500 grant in support of the program. Dr. Lipshutz asked if there were any plans to extend the program to other schools. Ms. Covalle indicated that she had thought about doing so but noted that there would be considerable equipment costs and some teacher expenses involved if the program were adopted in other schools.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter briefly recapped his report as it was shown in Enclosures #21 through #23. Mr. Slutsky asked if the increase in the substitute rate for staff nurses was in line with what was happening in the marketplace. Dr. Cotter reported that it was and noted the district's difficulty in securing substitute staff nurses. Dr. Lipshutz noted that the position of writing clinic specialist had been removed from the report. Mr. Berger reported on the need to repost the position because a new salary had been proposed for the position. He advised that interviews would be conducted. He hoped to have a decision shortly thereafter, perhaps as soon as the following Monday. Mr. Yunker asked for an explanation on how and why the new rate for the position was established. Mr. Berger explained that the position was not the same as that of a regular instructional aide and that the district had had difficulty in securing a qualified candidate at that rate. Mr. Yunker asked if the timing of the five-day posting had considered the holiday the previous Monday. Mr. Berger reported that it had. Mr. Orlow asked if the district would be paying a higher rate than that allowed by the collective bargaining agreement with the aide group. Mr. Berger and Mr. Sultanik reported the position had been classified correctly and was in its own job classification. Mr. Sultanik noted that the new classification would be memorialized in a memorandum of understanding. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve

the Superintendent's Report as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. Cousounis and Ms. Rosenberg reported on extracurricular activities and winter sports at the high school. They noted that a number of teams were into the tournament rounds. They also reported on the orchestra festival and the upcoming theater production of Footloose. The representatives welcomed Dr. Sullivan as school principal, thanked the custodians and grounds crews for their snow removal efforts, inquired about the possibility of converting the building at Victory Fields into locker rooms, and supported the proposed renovation of the high school library. Ms. Glodek inquired about purchasing a CD of the orchestra festival and was advised to contact the orchestra director.

**Action of Pending Bids:** Mr. Orlow noted the presence of Mr. Yemm and Mr. Chipola and asked that the Board address the issue of pending roof bids earlier in the agenda. Mr. Yemm and Mr. Chipola provided a wealth of information on the roofs in question and the bids provided. They noted that the roofs ranged from 18 to 49 years old. They indicated that the new roofs would have 20-year warranties that would not be prorated. They reported that most of the roofs would be torch-applied to avoid the odor problems associated with hot applied roofs. They noted that the roof over the main front corridors of Colonial Elementary School was the one exception because water would pond on these roofs. Mr. Chipola reported that a hot-applied roof was necessary under such conditions. He also reported that placing a new roof over the existing roof at Whitmarsh Elementary School would save the district \$60,000. Dr. Lipshutz noted past problems with roofing projects at Colonial Elementary School and asked if the roof there would be done before the start of school. Mr. Chipola reported that it would. He explained the late penalty clauses contained in the specifications. Mr. Yunker asked if the Facilities Management Department was checking to see if the district was having any problems on its roofs following the recent snow storm. Mr. Yemm indicated that district personnel were checking the roofs but had not taken any measurements of the snow depth. Mr. Orlow sought clarification of how many pounds of snow per square foot a roof could handle before it collapsed. Mr. Chipola reported that roofs locally were built to handle snowfalls of 30 inches and weights of 70 pounds per square foot. He noted that one inch of rain was the equivalent of seven inches of snow and stated his belief that district roofs were not in danger of collapsing. Gary Johnson advised the Board that approval of the roof bids would have the district spending \$2.7 million on roofs by the end of the summer. He also noted that the district would ultimately spend about 50% of current bond proceeds on roofs. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the administration's recommendation on the roof bids as shown in Enclosure #33. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on proposed funding for the annual consortium of the arts as outlined in Enclosure #24. He gave a brief history of the program and the district's funding level. Dr. Cotter noted that the \$6,300 contribution subsidized the program and that parents also paid tuition for their children who attended the summer program at Upper Merion this year. Dr. Iannelli reminded the Board that the program had been reorganized last year and that few district students had been able to attend because of the late decision to move forward with the program. She reported that the district could send up to 50 students to the summer consortium and that it had visual art as well as performing art components. Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve funding for the consortium. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to Enclosure #25, a proposed Board Policy 801, Public Records. He reported that Act 100 required that school boards adopt a written policy on the process and procedures for handling the release of requested public records. Dr. Lipshutz asked why there were alternative provisions checked off in the policy rather than an inclusion of only those provisions that the Administration was recommending. Mr. Orlow reported that the district was working with a PSBA draft of a proposed policy that presented the Board with some options. He noted that the Board could drop the options on second reading if they wished to do so. Mr. Yunker asked the deadline for adopting the policy. Mr. Sultanik reported that the deadline had already passed. Mr. Yunker requested that the policy be cleaned up before the Board took action on it on first reading. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Orlow noted that the Board was able to approve a proposed policy on first reading while noting changes that it wished to make in the draft before second reading. They also noted the desirability of moving the policy along because of time constraints.

Mr. Yunker raised issues with some of the timelines in the policy. He questioned provisions that required an individual who wished to appeal a denial by the district to release a record to file an appeal within 15 days while it allowed the district 30 days to respond to the appeal. He suggested that the district be required to meet the same 15-day timeline as the requestor. Mr. Orlow agreed. Mr. Slutsky raised the issue of who was able to request public documents. Mr. Sultanik advised that the law permitted residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to request public records. The Board discussed this issue and reached a consensus to spell that fact out in the policy. Mr. Yunker and Mr. Orlow raised a number of scenarios in an attempt to clarify what would be considered a public record. Mr. Sultanik responded to each scenario and pointed out that Act 100 had not changed the definition of a public record, only the procedure for securing access to a public record. He noted that a lot of information that board members received, reviewed and discussed would not reach the standard of a public record. He suggested that the Board not limit itself in the policy and keep its right to decide what a public record was. In response to queries from board members, Mr. Sultanik indicated

that the policy would not limit the Board if it wished to release information other than public records. He noted that raw data was not a public record under the law. Mr. Yunker suggested that the Board be advised anytime the administration denied a request for the release of a document. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board could then decide to release the requested document even if it were not a public document. The Board reached a consensus to require in the policy that the Administration notify the Board if it denied a request for a record. Dr. Cotter noted that the legislation for No Child Left Behind called for the release of certain information to the public.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the draft policy on first reading the revision of the policy to eliminate unselected options in the first draft, require that both the requestor and the district meet a 15-day timeline when handling an appeal, define an eligible requestor as a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and require the Administration to notify the Board when it denied a request for the release of a record. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a Certified Corporate Resolution for Depository Authorization as shown in Enclosure #26. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that the document was needed to add the new principal at the high school to the approved list of signatories in that building. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson 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 student trip by members of the high school ski club from 02/28/03 through 03/02/03 and the National Career Development Conference from 04/25/03 through 04/30/0. See Enclosure #27. Ms. Glodek moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trips. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the planned trip for members of Future Business Leaders of America at the high school to attend the FBLA State Competition in Champion, PA from 04/07/03 through 04/09/03. See Enclosure #28. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a request from the middle school art teachers for a student trip to the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ on 04/09/03. See Enclosure #29. Dr. Cotter indicated that he was seeking Board approval because the trip was out of the state. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a proposed trip of the high school marching band to Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD from 05/17/03 to 05/19/03. He noted

that trips to the national capital in times of heightened tensions could be problematic. Dr. Cotter reported that the Administration would handle the trip as it had handled similar trips in the past and seek parent involvement and input. He also confirmed that parents would be notified of their potential financial risk should the trip need to be cancelled after the cancellation deadline had passed. Mr. Slutsky asked if the trip would be close to final examinations. Dr. Cotter reported that it fell the week before the exam prep week. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trip. See Enclosure #30. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request for a student at the high school to attend the State Regional Competition at Souderton High School from 03/13/03 to 03/15/03. See Enclosure #31. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Davis 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 Enclosures #32, a request for attendance at a national conference. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the attendance of Barbara Grugan, a middle school teacher, at the Connected Classroom Conference in New York, NY on 03/26/03 and 03/27/03. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. Sultanik requested the authority to approve expulsions based on the stipulations before the Board on cases 97287 and 000001716. The cases involved violations of the district's drug and alcohol policy at the high school and the discipline code at the middle school. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to provide the requested authority. On a roll call vote all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit Board: Mrs. Moore reported that the I.U. Board had reviewed a first draft of the annual budget that would reduce the contributions of local districts. She also reported on the I.U.'s plan to increase the number of board members and require all district's to nominate members for the board. Mr. Orlow sought and received confirmation that the Board had time to act on the I.U. budget at its March meeting.

**CMCAVTS:** No report.

**Personnel:** Mr. Davis referred board members to the committee meeting minutes approved that evening and advised that the committee would be meeting on the first Wednesday of each month.

**Finance:** No report.

**Curriculum and Program:** Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee would be meeting the following week.

**Transportation/Buildings and Grounds:** Mr. Johnson advised that the committee would be meeting shortly to review priorities for facilities projects to be funded under the 2003-04 operating budget and would be scheduling school visits as part of the budget process.

**Community Relations:** Ms. Glodek advised that a proposal had been made to rename the committee to include student life issues in the tasks of the committee. She indicated that the committee would be bringing a recommendation forward to the full Board.

**Legislative:** Dr. Ryan reported on bills to fund *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and establish a commission on rural education. He also noted that the last PSBA legislative meeting had been the best attended in PSBA history and had dealt with accommodations and other technicalities of *NCLB*.

**Additional Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell**  
Board Secretary