

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

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:15 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on July 15, 2002.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Director of Educational Services, K-3; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services, 6-12; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Charles Graham, Director of Technology and Joseph Comber, candidate to fill a Board vacancy.

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 06/12/02, the Work Session of 06/17/02, the General Meeting of 06/20/02, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 06/10/02, and the Special Meeting of 07/11/02 as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5 on the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday and the handout given to each board member. There were no questions or comments on the minutes.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #5 through #15 on the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. They included the Bond Fund Report and Capital Projects Report for the month ending 06/30/02; General Fund and Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report, Food Services Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 06/30/02; the Budget Analyses of 07/02; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 06/30/02. Mr. Orlow inquired about the good faith deposit in the Bond Fund Report. Mr. Bickleman reported that it was a credit on the sale of the new bonds. Mr. Orlow asked if the bill for Fitness Center equipment was for equipment originally planned for the center or new equipment. Mr. Bickleman and Mr. Bell advised that they would check on the purchase and report back to the Board.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow reported that Dr. Iannelli would be providing an update on the state-mandated strategic plan for the district on Thursday evening and providing the annual report on the Genesis II Alternative School as well.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the three policy changes in Enclosures #16 through #18 would be on the agenda for Board action on second reading on Thursday evening. Board members had no questions on Policy #202.1, Education of Children Residing with an Adult Other than a Natural Parent, or #17, Activities Admission – Senior Citizens (Gold Card) Revision. Mr. Orlow asked if the Board had received answers to the questions raised about policy #604 and its potential impact on district borrowing. Dr. Lipshutz and Mr. Bickleman indicated that the Board had been advised the previous month that the district's auditor saw no impact of the policy on the district's ability to borrow.

Correspondence: None.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #19 and #20 on the agenda for Thursday evening. He briefly explained the routine personnel actions and update of the summer school instructional program. Dr. Cotter noted that the personnel actions included hiring activity to fill vacant positions. He also indicated that the summer school update included the addition of two music teachers for the summer instrumental program and one teacher for the high school graduation project. Mr. Yunker inquired about the summer student help in the Technology Department. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Graham reported that the workers provided the labor for unloading and moving equipment for the department. Mr. Orlow asked if Ms. Shamborsky had been out ill. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Berger reported that she had. Mr. Berger indicated that she had used sick time and had not asked for any other type of leave. Mr. Orlow asked if Hay Points had been assigned to the position of Staff Developer. Mr. Berger replied that points had not yet been assigned to the position. Mr. Orlow inquired about the position of Research Specialist at Colonial Elementary School. Dr. Cotter reported that the position was not new and had been created to help students learn research skills.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Administration was recommending the early admission of one student to kindergarten. See Enclosure #21 of the Thursday agenda. In response to Board queries, Dr. Cotter advised that the solicitor had recommended not including the student's name in the agenda. At Mr. Orlow's request, he circulated the name to board members. Dr. Lipshutz asked if a student who had completed an accredited kindergarten program would automatically be admitted to first grade. Mr. Shipman indicated that he/she would. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Shipman outlined the thorough screening process that students went through before being granted early admission. They noted that early admissions were relatively rare. They reported that the screening process included testing by school

psychologists, guidance screening, and input from the pre-school and day-care programs that the students had attended. Mr. Shipman also reported that building principals reported on the impact of early admissions on class sizes in their buildings. Mr. Yunker asked if there was any formal process in place to evaluate early admission students after admission. Mr. Shipman indicated that there was not a formal process. He reported that a childcare team would be activated if normal reporting mechanisms indicated a problem.

Mr. Orlow noted that a request would be on the agenda for Thursday evening in Enclosure #22 for Board approval for two tuition students at the high school. Mr. Shipman briefly reviewed the details of the request. Dr. Ryan inquired if there was a cap on the number of tuition students that were accepted. Mr. Orlow indicated that there had not been a formal cap in the past but noted that their admission could not throw class sizes out of the desired range. Board members raised a series of questions. Dr. Cotter responded to them by noting that the district had held requests for action at one time to be sure that the total would not impact the district adversely. He also noted that the district was recommending these two admissions this year because they had applied very early. Dr. Cotter also reported that administration was looking into not recommending additional admissions in the future. He reported that an increase in the number of applications and an increase in requests for services for students with special needs made it difficult to continue receiving outside students without having an adverse impact on district students. He believed that a variety of factors caused the increase in applications. He reported that the uncertain situation in the Philadelphia School District was one of those factors. Dr. Cotter indicated that the majority of the out-of-district applicants were students from the Philadelphia or Norristown Area Districts or from foreign countries.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the four-year license and service agreement with Tetra Data Corporation contained in Enclosure #23 of the agenda for Thursday evening. He noted that the Board and Administration had reviewed the issue of data warehousing extensively and believed that it was important to improve data collection and analysis.

Mr. Graham highlighted the benefits of the data warehousing option being recommended. He noted that it would pull together all of the sources of data, such as PSSA and Terra Nova scores, into one database that those working with the system could search compare data up and down all levels. He confirmed for the Board that users could manipulate the data and make inquiries. Dr. Iannelli explained the district efforts to input data into the system. She reported that data could be input electronically, as in the case of standardized test results, and manually. She advised that people were already working on the latter. She noted that the district now had four to five years of data to warehouse. Mr. Davis asked if the district had piloted the system. Mr. Graham responded that it had not. He asked what question the district intended to ask first as it began to make inquiries of

the warehousing system. Mr. Graham responded that such questions would come from the curriculum department.

Dr. Gorodetzer indicated that one of the first priorities was to share data with classroom teachers so that they could assess the effectiveness of classroom strategies. She noted that analysis at the district level would focus on assessing the effectiveness of program changes and improvements. Dr. Cotter indicated that analysis was all about patterns. Mr. Orlow inquired about timelines for the effort. Mr. Graham reported that the district was a little behind where it had hoped that it would be. He believed that there would be a 90-day process that included data discovery and training. Mr. Orlow asked if 12/01/02 was a good target date. The administrative team indicated that it was but expressed the hope that preliminary information would be available in October for the Pathways program. Board members raised questions about how the district was charged for the software program. Mr. Graham reported that it was charged based on annual student enrollment. Mr. Orlow asked if the district was developing a standard set of questions for the system and Dr. Cotter responded that it was. Dr. Gorodetzer indicated that the district had looked at the various warehousing options available and had chosen Tetra Data based on its flexibility. Dr. Lipshutz sought confirmation that the district would still have the data and software at the end of the proposed four-year lease. Mr. Graham reported that it would still have the data but that the lease was for the software. He noted that the district could keep a database and would not lose the data. He also reported that the district was entitled to three upgrades per year.

Mr. Orlow requested that the latest version of the lease be sent to the solicitor for his review. Mr. Yunker sought and received confirmation from Mr. Graham that adding fields would not be considered a redesign of the infrastructure and therefore would not be billable as an extra cost. Dr. Iannelli noted that Mr. Yunker's input and understanding of both the big picture and details were very important to the evaluation process. She thanked him for his efforts. Dr. Cotter thanked Mr. Yunker, Dr. Gorodetzer and Dr. Iannelli for their hard work. He reported that his preliminary reading of the updated copy of the contract seemed to indicate that all of the issues raised by the solicitor had been covered. He advised that he would continue his review.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to the field trip requests shown in Enclosure #24 and #25 of the agenda for the general meeting the following Thursday. The request from the middle school Choir Director was for approval for three students to participate in the American Choral Directors Association Junior High State Honors Choir Competition at Hershey Middle School on 11/22-23/02. Participants would miss one instructional day. Registration costs would be \$100 per student. The request from the sponsor of the Future Business Leaders of America was for approval for four students to attend the FBLA Leadership Conference at Penn State's main campus from 10/26/02 to 10/28/02. Fundraisers would cover the cost of the trip. Students would miss one instructional day.

Mr. Orlow reported that the district had an unusual opportunity to re-open its budget because the state budget for the 2002-03 fiscal year raised basic education funding by 3.2 per cent and the state was mandating that the district choose among three options for using the increased subsidy. These options were to abate local taxes, reduce or retire indebtedness, or restore funding for educational programs reduced or eliminated in the 2002-03 school year. See Enclosure #26 on Thursday's agenda. Mr. Orlow reported that the district would be receiving \$175,348 in extra subsidy. Mr. Davis asked if the district would be putting things back into the budget. Dr. Cotter reported that the district had looked at and made cuts from the preliminary budget but had not deleted any programs that had been in existence the previous year. Dr. Lipshutz noted rebates, if issued, would be very small and that the costs of processing and mailing them would be significant. Mr. Orlow advised that rebates would be due all taxpayers, both commercial and residential. He felt that the most logical option was to reduce indebtedness. Dr. Cotter reported that he would issue yellow pages for Thursday evening's general meeting that would contain a recommendation for retiring debt.

Mr. Orlow noted that a resolution for Board certification of the roof replacement at Colonial Elementary School would be on the agenda for Thursday evening as Enclosure #27. Mr. Bell advised that he had learned that he could complete the certification form using information on the Board's original approval of the roof bid and that no further action would be required. Dr. Cotter stated that the item would be deleted from the Thursday agenda.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: None.

Other Business: Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would take a brief recess and would then reconvene to interview a candidate for a current Board vacancy. The Board interviewed Joseph Comber.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 11:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary