

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 15, 2003**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:40 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 15, 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; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Colleen Dougherty and Stephanie Cousounis, Board Student Representatives; Terese Boegly, Principal, Colonial Elementary School; Darlene Davis, Principal, Conshohocken Elementary School; Donna Drizin, Principal, Whitemarsh Elementary School; Sandra Newman, Principal, Colonial Middle School; Monica Sullivan, Principal, Plymouth Whitemarsh High School; Carol Klein, Board Member, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Dr. Debbie Levine, Montgomery County Community College; Lee Albert; Jeanneane Bozzelli; Robert Carroll; James Gulezian; Alan Mizgorski; Kenneth S. Morgan; Michelle Mowad; Justine L. Neuman; students receiving certificates of achievement and their sponsors, families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that the Board would be recognizing a number of district students for outstanding achievement in different areas and took the opportunity to recognize Colleen Dougherty, a graduating senior, for her two years of faithful service to the Board as a Board Student Representative. The Board congratulated Ms. Dougherty for our outstanding service and wished her well as she graduated and moved on to higher education. Several Building Principals and activity sponsors joined the Board in recognizing students for their academic, literary and musical talents and accomplishments. A complete list of students and sponsors is attached as Attachment #1 to these minutes.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 04/21/03, the Work Session of 04/21/03, the General Meeting of 04/24/03, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 05/06/03, and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 05/08/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #4 and #39. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek 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 #5 through #15. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 05/03,

the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report; General Fund and 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 04/30/03; the Budget Analysis of 05/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 04/30/03. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that the purchase of a new presentation screen at the high school had been handled under a state bid. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Mr. Carroll addressed the Board on the subject of the preliminary budget. Mr. Orlow confirmed that no changes had yet been made to the document. Mr. Carroll presented a figure of \$14,570 as the cost for educating a public-school student in the district and noted that the figure for the previous year had been \$13,346. He generated this figure by dividing the total budget for the district by the number of students that he believed were enrolled. He also argued that district residents were being taxed before there was a need to be taxed because the district carried large budget surpluses at the end of each fiscal year. Mr. Orlow refuted several of Mr. Carroll's assertions. He noted, in particular, that the total budget included costs, such as non-public transportation, that were not part of the cost of educating public school students. Mr. Carroll took issue with Mr. Orlow's report that the number of students in the district had risen steadily in recent years and stated his belief that enrollment had remained fairly stable. Mr. Orlow challenged Mr. Carroll's figures and reiterated that there had been an increase in enrollment over the years. Dr. Lipshutz, Mr. Davis and others also addressed inconsistencies and inaccuracies in Mr. Carroll's data and line of reasoning on the preliminary budget. Mr. Slutsky noted the significant contractual increases in retirement costs and the increases in medical premiums that almost all employers were facing. Mr. Orlow noted that the preliminary budget called for extremely modest increases and stressed the district's unwavering commitment to student achievement. He also highlighted the district's long-standing practice of using most of any fund balance at the end of one year to fund the following year's budget. Mr. Orlow reminded all in attendance and watching the meeting at home that the district had done a good job of controlling expenses and that budget deliberations would continue until the final budget was adopted on 06/19/03.

Staff Report: Mr. Bickleman gave a PowerPoint presentation of the 2003-04 preliminary budget. His report highlighted the \$67,412,000 total budget, an 8.2% projected increase in expenditures that included significant increases in contracted salaries, benefits and certain services. He reported that local revenues made up 82.9% of the total revenues of the district and that they included \$2,500,000 of the projected fund balance for the current year. Mr. Bickleman also reported that the preliminary tax increase was 1.96% or \$28 per \$100,000 of assessed property value. He noted that the only School Districts in the county that had lower projected increases in real estate taxes were North Penn and Abington and that they, unlike Colonial, had local income taxes in place.

Dr. Davis, Principal of Conshohocken Elementary School gave an update on programs and initiatives at her school. She outlined an exciting and challenging year in which staff at the school had reflected, set out to meet the needs of all students, and exceeded state and district goals. She highlighted a number of school programs, including *Mentor Me at CE*, *Read to Succeed*, *Math Camp*, *Reading Camp*, *Homework Club* and *PECO Literacy Program*. Board members had questions about the programs. Dr. Davis noted the collaborative nature of all the school initiatives. She reported that students were not turned away from any programs for which they qualified or expressed an interest. She reported that teachers recommended students for programs and that communication with families was an integral part of the educational process at the school. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Davis what all-day kindergarten had meant to the school. She reported that she had testified on just that issue at the state capitol and that data showed that the extra time that was part of the all-day program allowed teachers to better meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students. Mr. Davis asked if all schools could expect to see the same results. Dr. Davis reported that at-risk students had the most to gain but that all students benefited from the extra time and attention that an all-day kindergarten program offered.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the second reading of three proposed Board Policies, as shown in Enclosures #16 through #18. Mr. Davis briefly left the meeting.

- **Policy #810 – Transportation (Revised):** The proposed revision clarified the state definition of a hazardous road, included language on Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for students with special needs, established walking distances to bus stops and limits student time on regular bus runs. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the revision. On a roll call vote, all present voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- **Policy #004.1 – Membership – Student (Amended):** This proposed revision called for alternate Board Student Representatives to serve as ex-officio members of the committee. Mr. Davis returned to the meeting. Ms. Glodek moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the revision. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- **Policy #440 – Military Leave of Absence:** This new policy provided, pursuant to federal and state law and school code, leaves of absence for military training and active duty service. Mr. Orlow reiterated that this policy had been shortened since its first reading to provide for what the law and labor contracts required. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the policy. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow recognized Dr. Klein, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation who, in turn, introduced Ms. Bozzelli and Mr. Mizgorski, teachers at Whitemarsh Elementary School. The teachers outlined a program called *Classroom Assistant* in which students used five PDA's to explore applied math. The program included learning the functions of the PDA's, using them to solve

problems in class and then visiting a local bank and supermarket to see how some of what they had learned in the classroom actually worked in the real world. Mr. Slutsky said that he was astounded by the project and wondered if there were plans to expand it to other classes. The Board learned that Ms. Bozzelli would be retiring after 32 years with the district but would stay involved by becoming a member of the Colonial Foundation. The Board wished her well in her new role. Dr. Cotter advised that the Administration would review the benefits of the innovative program.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the annual invoice for PSBA dues as shown in Enclosure #19. He noted that the Board had discussed the invoice on Monday evening. Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve payment of the invoice. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly reviewed his report as it was shown in Enclosures #20 through #21. He noted some additional retirements including one that had been handed to the Board that evening. Mr. Yunker moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the superintendent's report and the retirement request received that evening. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: Ms. Dougherty thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as a student representative and to share the experience with Ms. Cousounis. She highlighted in her report AP exams, the selection of graduation speakers, the visit of 8th graders to the school, the National Honor Society's blood drive, graduation projects, academic awards, class and student council elections and the senior prom. Ms. Cousounis reported on the spring concerts, the Soph Hop, Triangle Club Awards, the junior prom, Exchange Club activities and senior athletes. She also paid tribute to Ms. Dougherty as a student, a Board representative, a mentor and a friend.

New Business: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the election of Mr. Bickleman to serve another year as Board Treasurer at a rate of \$7,664.00. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to elect Mr. Bickleman to the post for the coming fiscal year at the rate shown. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a recommendation to reappoint Mr. Sultanik as solicitor for the coming year on a retainer of \$20,603.00 plus out-of-pocket expenses (an increase of 3%), and at a litigation rate of \$150.00/hour (an increase of \$5.00 over the current year). Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the appointment. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on designating First Union/Wachovia as the primary depository for district funds and requested approval of a list of investments banks, trusts and savings and loan institutions for solicitation of interest rates on school investments for the coming year, as shown in Enclosure #23. Mr. Slutsky so moved and Mr. Davis seconded his motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board had interviewed two students for the position of Student Board Representative to replace Ms. Dougherty. He also noted that, following Board practice, the elected student would become Board Student Representative and the other would become the Alternate Board Student Representative. Dr. Lipshutz reported that both students were qualified for the position and that the choice would be difficult. He recommended that Ryan Moore be named Student Board Representative and Julie Benn his alternate. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded his motion. On a roll call vote, all except Mrs. Moore, voted in favor. Mrs. Moore abstained. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a recommendation for setting Mr. Bell's rate as Board Secretary at \$6,114.00 for 2003-04. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to set Mr. Bell's rate at that amount for the coming school year. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the 2003-04 federal program allocation as shown in Enclosure #24. Ms. Glodek moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the allocation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to act on a list of textbook titles that were outlined in Enclosure #25. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the list. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be taking action on recommended changes to the policy on Activities Code of Ethics and the student handbooks at the high school and middle school. It was noted that the Board had a hard copy of the proposed middle school handbook. The Board reviewed this document and briefly discussed some normal changes that occurred annually and some alteration in the use of the activity period. Board members reviewed the impact of changing the way in which the activity period was handled. Mrs. Newman stressed that the change in the schedule would give all students the opportunity for periods of sustained silent reading and offered students participating in music programs more time for that activity.

Board members discussed at length a proposal to remove the requirement that students and parents sign the pledge that had been associated with the Activities Code of Ethics in the past. The point was made that failure to sign the pledge in no way absolved the students from the requirements contained in the code of ethics. A number of board members were reluctant to abandon the requirement for signing the pledge. Others noted the difficulty the Administration faced in securing the signatures of students and parents on the pledge and the reality that students and parents already had to sign the handbook containing the code of ethics. Dr. Cotter noted the exclusionary nature of the pledge. The Board Student Representatives confirmed the inconvenience of having to sign the pledge.

Board members suggested some changes in handbook language and recommended including information on the size of student lockers in the middle school book. At the

conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Yunker moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the middle school handbook with four changes: An update on the language of the proposed change on page #13 to include the dimensions of student lockers, a revision of the dress code on page #19 to prohibit all students from wearing jeans with holes, etc., the elimination of the recommendation on page #50 that students sign the pledge on page #54 of the draft, and the elimination of the pledge on page #54 from the handbook. On a roll call vote, all, except Dr. Ryan, voted in favor. Dr. Ryan voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Dr. Iannelli walked the Board through proposed changes in the Student Handbook at Plymouth Whitemarsh High School. She noted the coming year would be the 50th anniversary of the high school and that the handbook cover would reflect this anniversary. Board members noted that the draft document still had a number of issues that had not been fully addressed. Mr. Orlow suggested that the document be finalized and brought back to the board for approval in June. Dr. Cotter advised that the Administration would review the document in light of the Board's recommendations for the middle school handbook. Mr. Slutsky noted that the policies in the middle school and high school handbooks should be consistent. Mr. Yunker noted the need to address the issue of the code of ethics and the pledge in the high school handbook. He also asked if the PIAA regulations in the handbook were consistent with block scheduling. Dr. Cotter believed that they were phrased to meet the minimum requirement. Mr. Yunker also inquired about lateness and the minimum time in school required of students in order to participate in after-school activities. Dr. Cotter advised that he would seek confirmation of the current requirement. Mr. Orlow noted the need to look at external courses and get a recommendation on the topic from the middle school for the Community Relations/Student Life Committee. Mr. Yunker suggested that the guidance counselors read the handbook and follow the current written guidelines in the book. There was agreement that the policy on Activities Code of Ethics (Enclosure #42) would need to be revised to reflect the updated rules in the handbooks.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the 2003-04 MCIU Special Education Services Report in Enclosure #26. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a trip request for a high school student to attend the American Region Math Race Competition at University Park on 05/30/03 and 05/31/03, as shown in Enclosure #27. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that a number of bids would be on the agenda for Board action.

- Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bids for instructional supplies (elementary and secondary art supplies, general supplies, industrial art supplies, and science supplies) contained in Enclosures #43 through #47. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

- **Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bid for CMS athletic, health education, and physical education supplies listed 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 approve the bid for janitorial supplies in Enclosure #48. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**
- **Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve Enclosures #29 through #32: Ridge Park carpeting, PWHS carpeting, CMS trench drains, and PWHS chimney stack removal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**
- **Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to reject all bids for the CES HVAC upgrade that were contained in Enclosure #49 and to re-bid the project. Mr. Sultanik confirmed that the Board could reject the bids and re-bid. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson advised that the Joint Operating Committee would be seeking resolutions from home boards on the issue of funding a \$20,000,000 renovation of the facility. He noted that Mr. Bickleman would have the opportunity to meet and discuss financing. He also advised that the committee was not discussing changes in the articles of jointure. Mr. Yunker reported that the committee wanted to move forward with renovations and wanted to get the sending districts on record as to whether they wanted to go forward or not. That was the intention of the resolutions being requested. Mr. Davis stressed that the issue had to be faced.

Personnel: Mr. Davis referred to the committee minutes approved earlier that evening. He also announced that the committee had met with CASEA and that there was agreement on an approach to outstanding issues.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: No report.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson advised that board members had received a draft contract with Sague Auto Services for transportation services for certain non-public students. He suggested that the board act on the contract at its June meeting.

Community Relations: No report.

Legislative Committee: No report.

Additional Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 11:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**