

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 21, 2002**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on November 21, 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; 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; Sue Castle, President, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas A. Ferraioli and family; Steven S. Brown; Lisa Fisher Hark; Sherri Glantz Patchen; Kim Higgins; Kelly Hunter; Lisa Kline; Michele Mowad; Dan Ronca; Mike Schreckenbach; and Jon Weiss.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He advised that the Board had met in executive session on 10/23/02, 11/06/02, and 11/14/02 to discuss personnel and legal matters.

Awards/Recognition: Mr. Orlow summarized the provisions of House Bill #186 on awarding diplomas to World War II veterans who left school to serve their country. Dr. Cotter highlighted the steps that the district had taken to implement the act. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to award a diploma to Nicholas A. Ferraioli. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried and the diploma was awarded. The Board thanked Mr. Ferraioli for his service and offered its congratulations.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee Meeting of 10/10/02, the Work Session of 10/14/02, the General Meeting of 10/17/02, the Special Meeting of 10/23/02, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 10/01/02, The Curriculum Committee Meeting of 10/07/02 and the Finance Committee Meeting of 10/24/02, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 11/04/02 and the Special Meeting of 11/12/02, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #9 through #20. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 11/02, 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 10/31/02; the Budget Analysis of 11/02; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 10/31/02. Mr. Orlow requested a summary of the changes. Dr. Cotter noted the update of pool information on the Bond Fund Report and engineering work on Capital Reserve Fund Report. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Weiss who commented on information contained in Enclosure #24 under Correspondence later on the agenda. Mr. Weiss asked for an investigation into who prepared the envelope containing a campaign letter from two board members in support of a candidate for the state legislature. He also asked if School Board members were aware of the letter and inquired why there was not a Board policy that would have prevented the letter from going out with an envelope linking the campaign literature to the Board during the last election and might also prevent such an occurrence in the future. He felt that the campaign material had had an undesirable impact on the election. Mr. Orlow replied that he and Dr. Lipshutz who had given the personal endorsement took Mr. Weiss' comments seriously and shared his concern about the mislabeling of the envelope. Mr. Orlow outlined the steps that he had taken to express his outrage at the error made by the campaign personnel. He also indicated that, while he found nothing illegal or unethical in endorsing a candidate, he had reconsidered the issue and would not be making such an endorsement again personally. Mr. Weiss expressed his position that the endorsement was inappropriate and pressed for both a follow-through on the issue until the person or persons who had sent the campaign material out had been identified and a board policy was in place to prevent any recurrence of the problem. Mr. Yunker queried Mr. Weiss on how he thought the Board should address the policy issue. No definite plan resulted from the discussions. Mr. Orlow thought that there was sufficient concern about the issue to take a look at it and decide what would make sense. Mrs. Patchen also stated that she was outraged by the incident. She asked Mr. Orlow to make his communications with the Republican Party public. Mr. Orlow indicated that the correspondence was on his personal stationery but expressed his willingness to make it public. Mr. Brown, author of a letter to a local newspaper on the issue, disagreed with Mr. Orlow's position that the campaign piece was ethical and labeled the letter influence peddling. Mr. Orlow responded that sending the endorsement might represent poor judgment but it was an ethical act as defined by the State Ethics Commission. He indicated that all of the comments made represented fair opinions and would be taken seriously.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow recognized Dr. Iannelli who provided an update and overview of the district's testing programs. She provided information on the progress that the district was making on the Terra Nova, PSSAS, SAT AP and Merit Scholarship tests and provided some overview of the various test instruments and some highlights of student achievement to illustrate her points. Dr. Iannelli noted the important part that testing, along with other factors, played in measuring student achievement. She emphasized that what the district did with the data that it collected was extremely important. Dr. Iannelli noted the value in seeing who was doing what and determining the needs of each student. She pointed out that data analysis helped the district gauge the effectiveness of its current educational

programs and provided direction for the development of new programs. She advised that it also helped the district keep parents informed and the community updated on the status of our schools and our educational effort. Dr. Cotter provided an overview of curricular efforts under the *Above and Beyond* program. He noted that the district had started the program at the elementary level in language arts and math and was now expanding it into the middle school. He reported that the district was close to reaching its goal of having student achievement at the 85 percentile and that the district continued to see small increments of growth. Dr. Cotter, Dr. Gorodetzer and Dr. Iannelli outlined the value in analyzing test data, assessing achievement, aligning the curriculum with state standards and then monitoring educators' efforts to implement the curriculum in the classroom. All of the speakers acknowledged the accountability built into the *Above and Beyond* program.

Old Business: The Board did not revisit the issue of its Diploma policy that evening. See Enclosure #22.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow recognized Ms. Susan Castle, President of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, who introduced Kelly Hunter and Lisa Kline. Ms. Hunter and Ms. Kline discussed a data-driven assistance program for failing students that they had been conducting with mini-grant funds from the foundation. They outlined their efforts within the district's *Pathways* program to work with 10th-grade students and encourage them to adopt strategies for doing better in their classes. They spoke of the one-on-one attention that they provided and the incentives that they were able to offer to encourage students to take advantage of the program. Ms. Hunter and Ms. Kline thanked the foundation for the funds to pay the teacher and purchase supplies and snacks for the students in the program.

The Board took no action on the request for a waiver of tax penalties in Enclosure #23. The Board took no further action on Enclosure #24. Mr. Orlow had offered Mr. Weiss the opportunity to address the Board earlier in the meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly updated for the Board his report in Enclosures #25 through #29. He ran through the resignations, promotions and transfers contained in the Personnel Report and noted additions to the substitute lists. He also provided enrollment figures for the English classes at the high school. They averaged 21 to 24 students per class. Dr. Cotter noted the adjustments to the pay for the Girl's Athletic Director at the high school and the drama coach at the middle school and the recommended temporary professional employee and professional employee contracts. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Student Representatives Report: Ms. Dougherty highlighted the recent productions of the Colonial Players, the planned production of *Footloose* in the spring, the fall recital, the Board's town meeting at the high school, the successful Red Cross blood drive, the MCIU Student Forum, and staff appreciation day. She also reported that she would be going to Penn State in the fall. Ms. Cousounis highlighted the homecoming dance, band visits to the

elementary schools, parent conferences, the mock election, voter registration, the sophomore dance and food for the needy, the start of winter sports, and the upcoming football game on Thanksgiving Day.

New Business: Mr. Orlow and Dr. Cotter noted several initial drafts of the school calendar for 2003-04, as shown in Enclosure #30. Mr. Orlow noted that, in accordance with district past practice, the Board had set the start date for the coming school year as Tuesday, 09/02/03. Dr. Cotter recapped the options then before the Board. He reported that draft #1 was a traditional calendar with a traditional spring break while the other drafts were less traditional and had modified spring breaks. He also reported on an update of the first draft, labeled Draft 1A, and expressed his belief that it met the needs of all parties. Dr. Cotter explained the key elements of the draft, noting that 01/02/04 would be a holiday and that there were flex in-service days after the close of school in June. Dr. Gorodetzer confirmed that this model was manageable. She noted that flex days were good days for instruction in technology management. Dr. Cotter noted that in-service days had also been front-loaded at the beginning of the school year. He reported that he had discussed the draft with the principals and the CEA and was recommending its adoption. Mrs. Moore moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to adopt Draft 1A as the school calendar for the 2003-04 school year. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow provided a brief recap of the anti-vandalism programs at Colonial Middle School and Plymouth Whitemarsh High School. He noted that the program in Enclosure #31 had been discussed on Monday evening and requested Board action on the item. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to reauthorize the program for the 2002-03 school year at existing levels of support and to award \$1,500.00 and \$2,378.00 of unspent funds for 2001-02 respectively to the student councils of the middle school and high school. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on Enclosure #32, a proposal to revise the Board's Internet Use Policies #452 and #552 to include email accounts. Dr. Cotter reported that language changes requested on Monday evening had been included in the draft. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policy revision on first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that a request from Mr. Donofrio, the boys basketball coach, for authorization to take his team to Baltimore, MD for a holiday tournament on 12/27-28/02 had been discussed Monday evening. Mr. Yunker moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trip request as outlined in Enclosure #33. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow reminded board members of a proposed donation of books to the Family and Consumer Science Program at the high school. See Enclosure # 34. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request to add Sovereign Bank to the list of approved institutions for district investments. See Enclosure #35. Mr. Bickleman indicated that no formal resolution was required but that a board vote was necessary. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker 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 a request from the acting high school principal for approval for Donald Scholl, a science teacher at the high school, to attend a national meeting of Physics teachers in Dallas, TX from 01/11/03 to 01/14/03, as outlined in Enclosure #36. He noted that the request had been discussed at Monday's meeting. Dr. Cotter reported that the information in the original request had been updated to include \$105.00 for meals in the original request. Mr. Bickleman reported that substitute coverage would be funded by the school's professional development budget. Dr. Cotter indicated that the trip would not adversely impact exams at the end of the semester. Mrs. Moore moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the bid award for scanners outlined in Enclosure #37. Dr. Cotter confirmed that the scanners were optical readers for standardized tests. He indicated that four scanners would be used at the high school and two at the middle school for scoring and item analysis in support of the district's curriculum initiatives. Mr. Bickleman reported that the cost for the scanners was within budget. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the bid at a cost of \$19,980.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Sultanik recommended Board approval of a proposed settlement of a tax assessment appeal for parcel #49-00-00000-959 that would result in an assessment of \$3,600,000.00 effective 01/01/02 and an assessment of \$3,045,600.00 as of 01/01/03 due to the change in the common level ratio. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the settlement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Sultanik recommended approval of residency stipulations as contained in the 09/30/02 memorandum from Karl A. Romberger, Jr. of the solicitor's office and authorization for an invoice to the family in the amount of \$18,416.12 and any other required non-resident tuition as appropriate. Mr. Yunker moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the stipulations and the issuance of the necessary invoice(s). On a roll call vote, all voted in favor, except Dr. Ryan. Dr. Ryan voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: No report.

CMCAVTS: No Report.

Personnel: Mr. Yunker advised there had been discussions about a new administrative position and a vacancy in the position of principal at the high school as well as pending negotiations. He also reported that the committee would be meeting again on 11/26/02.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee had met on Monday evening to discuss the SEAC program at Colonial Elementary School. The committee also heard from Building Principal Terese Boegly and Supervisor of Student Services, Rosemary Mentesana. Dr. Lipshutz commended Dr. Iannelli for a fine presentation on the district's program for managing data collection and analysis of student achievement. He also reported that the committee was working on the issues related to early graduation, theme readers and graduation projects.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Gary Johnson reported that the committee had approved a feasibility study on the facility impact of an all-day kindergarten program. Board members had questions on space utilization. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Orlow indicated that the committee was looking at solutions that might result in adding classrooms to Ridge Park and/or Whitemarsh Elementary Schools. Mr. Johnson asked the Board to approve a feasibility study for remodeling the high school library to meet goals set during the high school reaccreditation process. He moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the study. Board members had a number of questions and expressed varying points of view during the lengthy discussions that followed. The two key points made during the discussion were (1) the desire on the part of many board members to identify curricular needs before moving forward with renovation plans and (2) the desire on the part of others to make modest renovations to the library now to encourage better use of a more flexible facility while taking a more detailed look at long-term needs. In the process, board members and District Office staff discussed the history of the facility, some of the physical advantages, disadvantages and needs of the facility, the impact of the reaccreditation process on the need for upgrades, and research on state-of-the-art libraries by the curriculum coordinator for library services, Denise Marks. At the end of the discussions, the Board reached a consensus to meet with Ms. Marks, high school administrators and library staff to identify curricular needs and best practices before moving forward with a feasibility study for addressing those issues. Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Moore withdrew their motion and second, respectively. The Board referred the discussion of the curricular issues to the Curriculum Committee. Mr. Orlow suggested that the committee meet in the library to get a first-hand look at the space.

Mr. Johnson asked for Board approval to name the field complex on the former WFIL Tract *Victory Fields*, the name receiving the most votes in a recent poll of the district's high school students. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to that effect. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Legislative Committee: Dr. Ryan reported that no legislative action was underway in Harrisburg. He provided information on PSBA legislative initiatives in support of greater

state participation in funding special education, opposition to vouchers and referendums on district budgets, and support of periodic reviews of state mandates. Mr. Orlow reported on a meeting of local districts with Fox Rothschild and Massey Powell to form a coalition to help districts have greater impact when lobbying on legislation.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**