

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, OCTOBER 17, 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 October 17, 2002.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Thomas Davis.

**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; Colleen Dougherty and Stephanie Cousounis, Board Student Representatives; Sue Castle, President, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Bob Slagle, President, CEA; Tom Gibson; Steven Greenspan; Kim Higgins; Randolph Lawlace; Michelle Mowad; and Scott Schearer.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the minutes of the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 09/09/02, The Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/17/02, the Work Session of 09/17/02, The buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/19/02, General Meeting of 09/19/02, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 10/01/02, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 10/01/02, The Curriculum Committee Meeting of 10/07/02 and the Finance Committee Meeting of 10/10/02 as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8 on the agenda. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. 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 #19. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 2001-02, the Bond Fund Report and Capital Projects Report for the month ending 09/30/02; General Fund and Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 09/30/02; the Budget Analysis of 10/02; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 09/30/02. Mr. Bickleman reported that he wished to add a payment to Enclosure #10 to pay Bayport Construction for all but the retainage on the renovation project at Plymouth Elementary School during the summer. Mr. Orlow sought and received confirmation that the company was the general contractor for the project. Mr. Bickleman advised that the retainage was \$6,489.00. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek 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:** None

**Staff Report:** None.

**Bond Refinancing Report:** Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Shearer who summarized for the Board the difficulties associated with the district's attempt to refinance bonds in chaotic markets. He presented the information shown in Attachment #1 to these minutes. He reported that there had been no legitimate bids and one late bid. Mr. Shearer attributed the lack of bids to the significant changes in interest rates. He suggested that the district had a couple of choices: Work toward acceptance of a bid with the firm that responded late, continue to monitor the market and post a bid later when conditions were more favorable, or attempt to negotiate with several select underwriters as conditions improve. Mr. Sultanik suggested negotiating as market conditions improved. Mr. Shearer sought Board guidance on savings goal at which the Board would like to negotiate a sale. The Board reached a consensus to set that savings goal at its original goal of \$220,000 and to negotiate with investment bankers at that point.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a revision of Board Policy #217, Diploma Policy, to reflect the Passage of House Bill #186 which authorizes local school districts to award diplomas to eligible veterans of World War II, as shown in Enclosures #20 and #20A. He briefly recapped discussions that had taken place at the work session the previous Monday. He noted that the Board would be acting on adopting Enclosure #20 on a second reading, thereby authorizing the award of diplomas under Act #186 and would then be acting on Enclosure #20A to revise the language of the policy to make it consistent with current and desired practice. Dr. Lipshutz asked how the awarding of diplomas under Act #186 would be handled. Dr. Cotter explained that the district had a draft application that it would post on the web. He explained that the criteria of Act #186 were very specific and that applications would be handled within the framework of the act. He indicated that the district would not otherwise be advertising the program. Dr. Cotter anticipated that the Board would award the diplomas at public Board meetings. Mr. Slutsky moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the revised policy contained in Enclosure #20. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Cotter walked board members through the proposed revisions that would update the language and clarify the procedures for awarding diplomas. Those changes were highlighted in Enclosure #20A. Note was taken that one of the paragraphs dealing with exceptions to the policy failed to specify ineligibility for senior academic awards. Dr. Iannelli noted the necessary change and was prepared to update the draft prior to the following Board meeting. Dr. Cotter noted that the policy contained a cross reference to the Board's policy on tuition payments. He also advised that the revised draft allowed the building principal some latitude in dealing with students who had attended international programs and that a Guidance Committee was looking at the issue of early graduation and would have a recommendation for Board consideration shortly. Mrs. Moore moved and

Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve Enclosure #20A on a first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow recognized Mrs. Susan Castle, President of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation who requested Board approval of five mini-grants and one major grant. The grants are outlined in Attachment #2 to these minutes. Mrs. Castle noted that the foundation had awarded more than \$130,000 in grants to the district since the foundation's creation and was recommending almost \$5,000 in grants that evening. She also explained the policy to limit mini-grants to \$500 or less but noted the accommodation that was being made for the teacher at Whitemarsh Elementary School to allow split funding for a project that fell outside that limit. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the grants. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter updated his report contained in Enclosures #21 through #25 of the agenda. He recapped the major appointments contained in the Personnel Report and highlighted recommendations to adjust the salary of the Director of Support Services as of 03/20/02 to reflect new responsibilities and to fill the vacant position of Transportation Director. He also noted some resignations, leaves of absence and appointments of highly qualified aides. Dr. Cotter also reported on title changes for extra-duty/extra pay positions and reported that student enrollment remained stable at all district schools. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the superintendent's report as shown in Enclosures #21 through #24. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Slutsky and Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Slutsky and Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Dr. Cotter responded to questions raised on Monday evening concerning the value of proposed salaries for the coaches of the winter track program if the program were to be reinstated as proposed in Enclosure #25. He reported that the positions were valued at 13.7 units and were comparable to those for the spring track program. Dr. Cotter reminded the Board that the programs had been budgeted but that the personnel actions had not gotten done during the change of administration at the high school. Mr. Orlow received confirmation that acting on Enclosure #25 would approve both the reinstatement of the program and the associated salaries for the coaches. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the program and salaries. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. Cousounis updated the Board on the World Affairs Club, Freshman Dance, PSSA and PSAT tests, fall theater productions and student council blood drive. Ms. Dougherty highlighted the performance of volley ball teams, PWHS sponsorship of the tennis quarter finals, field hockey seeding, homecoming and the many activities of homecoming week, including the bonfire, hot dog day, color wars, spirit day, powder puff game, homecoming court, and the Halloween dance.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the two trip requests in Enclosures #26 and #27. The first was a request from the high school lacrosse coach for an overnight field trip to Cocoa Expo Sports Center in Florida from 04/13/03 through 04/19/03. Mr. Johnson 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. Yunker moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve an overnight trip of the ski club to Killington, Vermont from 01/10/03 through 01/12/03. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow recapped preliminary discussions held on Monday regarding the school calendar for 2003-04 in general and the start date for the new school year in particular, as shown Enclosure #28. He reminded the Board and the community that it was the district's practice to set the start date of the school year the previous fall in order to give parents ample time to plan. He advised that the proposed start date for 2003-04 was Tuesday, 09/02/03, the day after Labor Day. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve that start date. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Fundraising budgets were on the agenda as Enclosure #29. They had been provided as information items only. There was no discussion of the budgets at the meeting.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a conference request for four teachers to attend the Eisenhower Consortia Lesson Study conference outlined in Enclosure #30 and discussed the previous Monday. He asked Dr. Gorodetzer if the conference focused on primary or secondary math. She responded that it covered both. Ms. Glodek 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 another conference request had been added to the agenda as Enclosure #40. It was a request for authorization to send two high school teachers to the NCTM math conference in Boston on 11/14-16/02. He noted that the high school had budgeted for the trip in its staff development program. Mr. Orlow asked why the Board was receiving the request late. Dr. Cotter reported that he had received it late. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. Sultanik requested Board approval of Student Disciplinary Waiver #89753, as presented to the Board. The case involved a violation of the district's drug and alcohol policy. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the waiver. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Sultanik requested Board approval of a proposed settlement of Tax Assessment Appeal #98-22711 involving a property at 255 Washington Street in Conshohocken. The settlement called for payment of 50% of the taxes due and withdrawal of the appeal. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the settlement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board:** Mrs. Moore noted that issues at the intermediate unit would be raised under the legislative report.

**CMCAVTS:** Mr. Johnson reported that the Joint Committee was still discussing the possibility of changes to the Articles of Agreement on funding capital projects. He and Mr. Yunker noted that the outcome of the discussion would make little difference to Colonial School District.

**Finance:** Mr. Slutsky noted that the Board had discussed the issue of refinancing bonds earlier in the meeting. He also reported on the committee's deliberations on the appointment of bond counsel and announced that Fox Rothschild O'Brien and Frankel had been selected to serve in that capacity.

**Curriculum and Program:** Dr. Lipshutz and Mr. Orlow presented information on the SAT preparation program that would begin in the second semester at the high school and run for six weeks in order to prepare students for the April SAT. Dr. Lipshutz noted that it would cost \$25 and be a non-credit course. He also reported that the committee had a long discussion on the gifted program at the middle school. He indicated that the current program would continue for six months as the district studied the program, heard from the middle school and the Pupil Services Department on its effectiveness, and decided on whether to make any changes for the coming school year. Dr. Lipshutz also reported that the committee had heard from Mrs. Acconciamesa on the roll out of the math program at the middle school and on the decision to change the name of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math program back to *Introduction to Algebra*. He noted that the committee had looked into the issue of using theme readers. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that the district was looking into best practices and that Ms. DeRosa had met with a Language Arts Committee to discuss the writing process and the role that theme readers might play in that process. She indicated that they could serve as a resource that was in accord with the district's curricular plans and objectives. Dr. Lipshutz reported that the Curriculum Committee had also looked at offerings in honors and AP courses and advised that, although the district was now on a five-year curriculum cycle, the district would not adhere to the cycle rigidly and would address curricular issues when it made sense to do so. He announced that the graduation project program had been restructured to allow students to do their research by the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade and make their presentation then if they wished to do so. He also reported on a new emphasis on the project advisor.

**Buildings and Grounds/Transportation:** Mr. Johnson sought Board action on municipal enforcement of laws, ordinances and district policies/procedures and made a motion to have the superintendent request such enforcement based on the guidelines presented in Enclosure #32. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mrs. Moore moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to authorize Polatnick Zacharias Architects completing a feasibility study on the renovation of the District Office at a cost of \$12,500.00, as shown in Enclosure #33. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Dr. Lipshutz inquired about the status of the lease

with Montgomery Early Learning Centers. Mr. Bell indicated that the district had advised the center again that it would have to vacate the premises at the end of its current lease on 12/31/02. Mr. Yunker asked if the contract had been reviewed with the solicitor. Mr. Orlow advised the solicitor had reviewed the original contract upon which the contract for the study was based.

**Community Relations:** Ms. Glodek advised that the committee had held a meet and discuss session with staff at Ridge Park Elementary and Colonial Middle Schools.

**Legislative:** Dr. Ryan reported that the regular legislative meeting scheduled for 10/30/02 had been deferred for a symposium on tax reform. Mrs. Moore advised that the legislature had done away with diploma seals in favor of proficiency certificates separate from the diplomas.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary