

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 17, 2002**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:53 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on September 17, 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; and Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer.

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 General Meeting of 08/15/02, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 08/20/02, and the Special Meeting of 08/28/02, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #3 on the agenda for Thursday evening, 09/19/02. Board members had questions or comments on the minutes.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #4 through #17. They included the Bond Fund Report and Capital Projects Report for the month ending 08/31/02; General Fund and Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report, Food Services Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 08/31/02; the Budget Analyses of 09/02; the Accounts Payable Accrual List and the Contracted and Hourly Payroll Accrual Lists for 06/30/02, and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 08/31/02. Mr. Orlow asked if the payroll accruals had affected the fund balance as of 06/30/02. Mr. Bickleman reported that the planned fund balance basically came in as planned. Mr. Orlow asked about the \$112,000.00 in delinquent taxes in the report. Mr. Bickleman reported that they had been recognized last year and included in the projected fund balance. Mr. Slutsky learned that the money from the Tobacco Fund had come from the county.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None

**Staff Report:** Dr. Cotter, Dr. Gorodetzer and Dr. Iannelli gave a brief report on District Program Goals. They reported, in what was to become Enclosure #31 of the agenda for Thursday evening, that the goals centered on: #1 - curricular initiatives in language arts and math that had begun at the elementary level and would be extended into the secondary level, #2 - implementation of the Tetra Data Warehousing System, #3 - the creation of standards for teaching, supervision and evaluation, and #4 - the integration of data into decision making and program evaluation. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the curricular goals represented a continuation of work that had begun the previous year and a move into the secondary level. Mr. Orlow asked a number of questions about data warehousing. He also inquired about back mapping, and Dr. Gorodetzer explained the process of looking at exit standards and the going back to set goals to reach those standards. Mr. Orlow asked if Econsult data was usable with the warehousing program and learned that the district got data from Carbon Lehigh but that it was not as complete as the original data. In response to another query, Dr. Gorodetzer explained that the reason for having the best practice fair come later in the school year was to get information on what was working well earlier in the year. Mr. Yunker asked about the implementation of the writing program. Dr. Gorodetzer responded that the program had been documented last year and was being implemented in the current year. Dr. Cotter reported on the accountability built into the standards for teaching and evaluating performance. He noted that the standards had been developed through collaboration and that they were linked to the Pathways program and other initiatives in the classroom. Dr. Iannelli reported on the emphasis on objectivity as the district moved forward with its data-driven decision making strategies.

**Old Business:** Dr. Iannelli addressed the district's strategic plan on second reading, as shown in Enclosure #18 of Thursday's agenda. She noted that the document had been posted for the required 30-day period for district and community feedback. Mr. Yunker had a number of questions and suggestions on incorporating references to the district goal of enhancing student achievement into the language of the plan. He was particularly concerned with pages 3 through 5. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board had adopted formal goals in 2001 and should not minimize what had already been done. Mr. Yunker wished to tie the language of the plan more closely to student achievement. Mr. Slutsky noted that no formal numbers on student achievement were required until the following year. There was considerable discussion on the structure and wording of the plan but the Board reached no consensus on additional changes to the plan. Dr. Cotter noted that much of what had been planned had already occurred and that the infrastructure now had to be put in place before the district could get to the goals set for 2003 and 2004. He noted that all of the things that the district was doing were connected to systemic change. Mr. Orlow stressed the collaborative effort involved in developing the document and counseled against altering it unilaterally. He advised that the Board would need to take action on the plan on Thursday evening.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed with the Board his report contained in Enclosures #19 and #21 of the agenda for Thursday evening. He advised the Board that the Personnel Report that contained 12 one-on-one aides, two psychologist interns, and two leaves of absence at no cost to the district. He reported that most of the resignations had come as teachers accepted positions in other districts. Dr. Cotter also provided a verbal recap of class sizes in all of the district schools noting that the ranges were 13 – 22 in kindergarten, 12 – 19 in 1st grade, 15 – 22 in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 20 – 22 in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and an average of 22 in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 23 in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 25 in the middle school. He noted that a couple of middle school classes exceed the average. Dr. Cotter noted that the information on *No Child Left Behind* had been provided for information purposes. He explained that the law covered a number of areas, including testing, employment practices, school choice, and many more, and advised that the administration was looking at revising its regulations to come into compliance with the law. He noted how the district had already taken a leading role in staff accountability. Dr. Cotter also reported that a number of the extra-duty, extra-pay positions had become available as the result of recent resignations and that procedures for evaluating those in extra-duty, extra-pay positions were in place. Dr. Lipshutz asked about the process for determining whether applicants had the time to do the work involved in these positions. Dr. Cotter reported that Mr. Forster at the high school and Mrs. Newman at the middle school handled these matters. He also indicated that the administration would be calling the special committee set up to work on the positions back into service and that it would have representatives from both the District Office and the schools.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow advised that a revision of Board Policy #217, Diploma Policy, would be on the Board agenda for Thursday evening as Enclosure #22. He noted that the change was based on passage of House Bill #186 on awarding high school diplomas to eligible veterans of World War II. Dr. Cotter replied to a question from Mr. Davis by noting that eligibility for the diplomas was limited to veterans serving in designated years. Dr. Lipshutz suggested that there was nothing to preclude the district from extending the program to others. Mr. Yunker noted that the concept may have been based on the nature of that war. Mr. Slutsky suggested that the district look at this change and then look at other sections of the policy that may need revision. Mr. Yunker noted that the policy contained a lot of old language. Dr. Cotter suggested that the Board move forward with the current process while the administration looked at other components of the policy. Mr. Orlow noted the need to address the housekeeping issues that had been raised in regard to the language issue elsewhere in the policy. See Enclosure #22 on the agenda for Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to two bids that were contained in Enclosures #23 and #24 on the Thursday agenda. He asked Mr. Bell to provide

an overview of the bids. He explained that the extent to which the high school boilers were in need of repair or restoration was unknown at the time that the budget was prepared. He indicated that, for this reason, funding for the repairs would have to come from the capital reserve budget. Mr. Bell advised that Mr. Yemm's careful inspection of the three boilers and the water lines that supplied them suggested major problems with the boilers. Mr. Yemm had an outside engineering firm check the boilers, and that firm reported that all three boilers needed to be rebuilt to seal the combustion chambers and that modification had to be made to the piping systems to keep water temperatures more stable. The project was bid and the administration was recommending that the bid be awarded to Mechanical Piping Corporation in the amount of \$128,300.00, including the alternate to install two new sections to the boiler. Mr. Bell reported that the work should be completed around mid-October. There was some discussion as to whether the project should be funded through the bond issue or the capital reserve. Mr. Bickleman stated that the language of the bond issue would allow use of the bond fund. Mr. Bell noted that the Board created the capital reserve in order to provide an alternate funding stream to the bond.

Mr. Bell reviewed the bid for the head units for the public address systems in all school but the high school. He reminded the Board that the project had been re-bid because of a problem with opening a late bid. He advised that the administration was recommending the award of the bid to Intellicom Systems Inc. in the amount of \$46,014.00. Mr. Bell noted that the bids were lower during the second round. Mr. Yunker requested that the administration provide the earlier bid figures for Thursday evening.

Dr. Cotter advised that the administration would be bringing forward on Thursday a request for approval of a Spanish exchange program.

Mr. Davis inquired about a proposal to provide transportation for students who walk to district schools. Mr. Orlow responded that the subject was under review but would not be an action item for Thursday evening.

**Solicitor's Report:** No report.

**Committee Reports:** No report.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary

