

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, APRIL 15, 2004**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:02 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 15, 2004.

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

**Board Members Absent:** None. Mr. Davis arrived a few minutes late from a meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Supervisors.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Accountability and Compliance; 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; Julie Benn and Ryan Moore, Student Board Representatives; Monica Sullivan, Principal, Plymouth Whitemarsh High School; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; Robert Franz and several members of the teaching staff.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the minutes of the Buildings and Grounds Committee of 03/15/04, the Work Session of 03/15/04, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 03/18/04, the Finance Committee Meeting of 03/18/04, the General Meeting of 03/18/04, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 03/29/04, the Finance Committee Meeting of 03/29/04 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 04/12/04, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7 and #41. Mr. Slutsky moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Davis was not present for the vote. On a roll call vote, all present voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the financial reports. They included the Budget Transfer Reports for 03/04; the Bond Fund Reports, Capital Projects Report; General Fund and Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Reports; Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summaries, Comparisons of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 03/31/04; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 03/31/04, as shown in Enclosures #8 through #18. Mr. Orlow asked for an explanation of the negative balance listed in the student activity account for the girls swim team. He noted that a negative balance meant that the team's activities were being funded by other groups. Mr. Bickleman indicated that he would look into the issue. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the reports. Mr. Davis was not present for the vote. On a roll call vote, all present voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

Mr. Davis joined the meeting.

**Budget Report:** Dr. Lipshutz provided the Board information on hiring and enrollment projections that would impact the 2004-05 operating budget. He noted a projected increase in enrollment of 70 students and a net increase in professional staff of 8 positions due to an increase in kindergarten teachers for all-day kindergarten and a decrease in high school positions because of a decline in enrollment in certain elective classes. Dr. Lipshutz also reported an increase of seven positions for non-teaching staff, an increase of \$18.1% in healthcare costs and an increase of 12.2% in retirement costs. An outline of Dr. Lipshutz' presentation is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1. Mr. Orlow noted that Dr. Lipshutz' report concluded a series of committee reports on the upcoming year's budget. He noted that the Board and the Administration were still working on the budget.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow reported that Mr. Davis had requested a public update on *No Child Left Behind*. Dr. Iannelli gave a presentation on the program's impact on district policies and instructional programs. She provided general information on student performance in four categories: advanced, proficient, basic and below basic. She reported that the district was working diligently on meeting requirements, that all district teachers were highly qualified under program guidelines, and that the district had adopted or amended policies to comply with the legislation. Dr. Iannelli highlighted the district's performance well above the current mandates, the rewards for meeting and penalties for not meeting the goals set by the legislation, and the requirement that all students, regardless of special needs, would have to be proficient by 2014. Mr. Orlow asked about funding the initiatives. Dr. Cotter noted that much of *NCLB* amounted to unfunded mandates to which the district was bound. He stressed the district's emphasis on the delivery of curriculum in advance of *NCLB* legislation. Dr. Gorodetzer reported on new mandates for English as a Second Language and conflicts between *NCLB* and *IDEA* legislation. Ms. Glodek asked what penalties the district faced if it failed to comply. Dr. Iannelli noted that there were labels placed on schools that failed to meet goals and options given to parents that had children in those schools.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Carol Votto of the middle school provided an overview of a Merck grant awarded to the school to create an outdoor classroom for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school planned to use \$4,962.50 to landscape the space. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to accept the grant. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. See Enclosure #19.

Pat Tamborello and Marianne Paparone of the high school highlighted their foundation grants from the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation for at-risk 9<sup>th</sup> graders and a summer sports camp for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively. Ms. Tamborello described a program to which 30 students from economically disadvantaged homes were invited and 80% participated. The program was conducted during the resource period

and provided study skills, relaxation techniques and career information so that students could get an early start on productive high school careers. Ms. Tamborello noted that the School Improvement Team would fund the program in future years and thanked the foundation for giving the school the seed money to begin the program. Ms. Paperone explained how her summer sports program provided younger girls an opportunity that they normally would not have to be exposed to sports and gave older students an opportunity to learn leadership and organization skills. The program started as a graduation project and the foundation funds paid for the equipment used in the program. Revenue from the program went to the girls sports programs.

Mr. Orlow recapped his remarks on Monday about Montgomery Early Learning Centers' request for a 4% increase in tuition for the before and after-school programs that the organization conducted in the district's elementary schools. He requested Board action on the request contained in Enclosure #20 and noted that the increase had no financial impact on the district. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the increase. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter recapped for board members his report in Enclosures #21 and #22. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter to give the Board a timeline for the actions that needed to be taken in connection with the reduction in staff resolution. Dr. Cotter suggested that the Board defer action on the resolution while the district verified projected enrollment figures. He recommended that the Board take action on the resolution at its May meeting and authorize the Administration at that time to forward to the Department of Education the reasons for recommending the reduction. Dr. Cotter indicated that those reasons included a need to shore up instructional offerings in certain areas in order to improve student achievement. He also advised that the district needed Department approval prior to notifying the teachers of the reduction on or before 06/30/04. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the actions recommended in Enclosures #21 and #22. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. The Board took no action of the Reduction in Staff Resolution.

**Student Board Representatives Report:** Ms. Benn reported on the pop concert, the success of the lacrosse teams, the anti-vandalism program project involving the painting of several restrooms in the high school, and the voter registration drive. Mr. Moore highlighted the senior trip to Florida, the junior fashion show, college information night and the election to select candidates for student board representative.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on leases for the Head Start program and several Montgomery Early Learning Center programs, as shown in Enclosures #23 through #26. He noted that the leases had been reviewed on Monday evening. Mr. Slutsky asked if the solicitor had reviewed the leases. Mr. Bell reported that the solicitor had reviewed the boiler plate leases upon which the current leases were based and confirmed that the district, not the lessor, generated the leases. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the leases. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the summer reading programs in Enclosure #27 and noted that the programs had been reviewed on Monday evening. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the programs. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the summer instrumental music program outlined in Enclosure #28. Mr. Slutsky asked if the program was self-supporting and Dr. Iannelli confirmed that it was. She also reported that the program had been available to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the past but would also be available to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders this year. Mr. Slutsky moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the program. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the professional conference requests contained in Enclosures #29 and #30 for Thursday evening. The requests were for Dr. Monica Sullivan to attend the Harvard University three-day learning lab on systemic change for student success and for Liz McKeaney and five master teachers to attend the Training of Trainers Institute in Boston later in the month. Dr. Gorodetzer confirmed the composition of the team attending the latter conference and the availability of funds to cover both trips. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trips. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request by the high school music department for two students to attend the PMEA All-State Band and Chorus, as outlined in Enclosure #31. Ms. Glodek moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve attendance. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Mr. Orlow reported that board members had been considering two options for temporarily relocating the District Office so that students and staff from Conshohocken Elementary School could move to the Colonial Elementary School Building while their building was undergoing renovations for six to seven months. See Enclosures #32 and #33. He noted that the Board was waiting for a report from the Facilities Manager on the decision of the Whitmarsh Township Board of Supervisors on the district's request for a waiver of land development for the modular option. Mr. Yemm, the Facilities Manager arrived at that point. The Board went into a brief Executive Session in the adjoining room to hear Mr. Yemm's report and returned to the Board Room shortly thereafter. Mr. Orlow briefly recapped the situation. Dr. Cotter briefly reviewed costs and advised that the lease had been thoroughly reviewed by the solicitor's office. There was a consensus on the Board to move forward with the lease of office space in a local office center, as outlined in Enclosure #33, for a period of 14 months beginning on or about 05/01/04. Mr. Sultanik suggested the motion to approve the lease of that space be conditioned on final review of the lease by the solicitor and the Administration. Mr. Johnson so moved and Mrs. Moore seconded that motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to notify GE Capital that the district had been unable to secure all local approvals for modular space on a timely basis and would, therefore, not be moving forward with its original plans to lease modular office space. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a Reaffirmation Resolution that would confirm the awarding of the general construction and mechanical construction bids for the curtain-wall project at Conshohocken Elementary School, acknowledge the withdrawal of the original electrical contractor and award the electrical construction bid to the second lowest bidder for the project. Mr. Sultanik recommended adoption of the resolution. Mr. Johnson reported that the Buildings and Grounds Committee had reviewed the issue and supported the resolution. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.**

**Solicitor's Report: None.**

**Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: Dr. Ryan noted that ten seats on the Board would be up for election. He also reported that there were three finalists for the position of Executive Director.**

**CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson briefly reviewed the proposed budget for the Center for Technical Studies for 2004-05 and highlighted the 10% increase in debt service. Mr. Orlow asked that action on the budget be deferred until May.**

**Personnel: Dr. Lipshutz reported that negotiations were in progress with the CEA and that the state mediator was involved. He characterized the negotiations as professional but noted the sides were still far apart on a number of key issues. He also noted that a small group meeting would be scheduled to see if more progress could be made.**

**Finance: Mr. Slutsky noted that no community members had attended the last committee meeting and once again encouraged community involvement in the budget process. He announced that a televised discussion of the issues at hand was being planned for CITV. Mr. Slutsky also reminded those in attendance and watching the meeting at home that the district was facing significant increases in health insurance costs, pension contributions, unfunded mandates under *No Child Left Behind* and a significant decrease in the rate of growth of the district tax base - issues over which the Board of School Directors had little or no control. Mr. Slutsky advised that the Board would be looking hard at both revenues and expenditures and making some strategic decisions.**

**Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: No report.**

**Community Relations and Student Life: No report.**

**Legislative Committee: No report.**

**Additional Public Comment: Mr. Franz raised concerns about the staffing of coaches and other activities sponsors and the cost to the taxpayers for funding the wide-range of extra-curricular activities that the district offered. He suggested limiting coaches to one per team and reassessing whether such programs should continue to be offered free of charge to participants. Mr. Franz suggested that the district carefully evaluate any move to an**

**earned income tax. Mr. Orlow advised that the district was doing just that. Mr. Franz expressed his belief that the district has acting in a responsible manner.**

**There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:18 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James M. Bell  
Board Secretary**