

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, AUGUST 18, 2003**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:40 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on August 18, 2003.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Susan Moore, and Steven Slutsky.

**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; and Nancy Mortimer O'Brien.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters on 07/14/03, 07/17/03 and 08/18/03.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 07/14/03, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 07/14/03, the General Meeting of 07/17/03, the Special Meeting of 05/28/03, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 08/04/03, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 08/06/03, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 08/11/03 and, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #6 of the agenda for Thursday evening. Board members had no questions or comments on the minutes.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were provided as handouts for the meeting. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 06/03, 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 07/31/03; the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report of 08/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 07/31/03. Mr. Orlow noted that board members had received the reports just before the meeting. He gave board members a few minutes to review the documents and suggested that they contact Mr. Bickleman if they had questions later.

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

**Staff Report:** Dr. Gorodetzer provided an update on a variety of reading programs offered to the district's elementary students. These included the *Read to Succeed* program at Conshohocken Elementary School, the Colonial Elementary School program housed at

Conshohocken Elementary School and the less intensive reading program at Ridge Park Elementary School. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that all of the programs had been offered in prior years and that the data collected on the programs showed student growth in reading and writing of 35% to 60% depending on the program. She advised that the *Read to Succeed* Program was a federally funded program that was in its final year and that the district would have to review funding for the upcoming year and decide how the district might wish to address student needs in years to come. Dr. Gorodetzer also briefed the Board and the community on the district's summer school program for secondary students that had been enhanced for outcomes. She noted Dr. Garlin's role in supervising the program and advised that the revamped program had both remedial and enrichment opportunities for students. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that, with the exception of two students who had been dismissed from the program, all students had successfully completed their courses. Mr. Orlow asked if the district followed up on summer school students during the school year. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that teachers monitored the students and found that they generally retained what they had learned during the summer. She advised that the district was looking at ways to use the data collected to promote sustained growth in the students.

Dr. Iannelli provided information on the summer instrumental music program in which students in grades 4 through 8 were offered one-hour lessons to extend their skills. The program's objective was to generate greater interest in music that might develop into greater participation in the district's music programs. Dr. Iannelli also provided her annual report of the Consortium of the Arts which was held at Upper Merion School District. She noted that the program began 18 years ago and was focused on the performing and creative arts. The current year's production was *A Wonderful Town*, a theatrical piece that allowed students to develop multiple skills through singing, dancing and an opportunity to play major roles. Dr. Iannelli reported that 17 district students had participated in the consortium and that some initiatives were being planned to encourage greater participation in coming years.

Drs. Gorodetzer and Iannelli closed their presentation with a short video on the summer programs. Dr. Gorodetzer responded to questions from the Board and reported that approximately 150 elementary and 75 secondary students had taken advantage of the summer programs.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter walked board members through his extensive report as shown in Enclosure #8 through #12 of the agenda for action on Thursday evening. He noted that four people had left the district, including Ted Kennedy a veteran and much-loved driver for the district who had passed away the week before. He extended the condolences of the entire district staff to the family and many friends of Mr. Kennedy.

Dr. Cotter highlighted the leaves, promotions and hirings that were taking place as the new school year approached. Mr. Orlow and Dr. Cotter advised that Dr. Davis was leaving her position as Principal at Conshohocken Elementary School to assume the position of Pupil Services Director at Norristown Area School District. Dr. Cotter reported that Al Erb, a seasoned professional, former district administrator and principal at Conshohocken Elementary School, would be filling in at Conshohocken until a permanent replacement had been found for Dr. Davis. He noted that both Dr. Davis and Mr. Erb would be on duty until after the school's open house in mid-September.

Dr. Cotter provided a list of extra-duty, extra-pay assignments for the coming year and highlighted several vacancies, notably for boys' swimming and tennis and for several band and drum-line assistants. Mr. Berger noted that a recommendation for a re-evaluation of the compensation for the high school cheerleading positions was pending. Mr. Orlow asked the meaning of the pay schedule letters on the extra-duty, extra-pay list. Mr. Berger advised that they dealt with the frequency and timing of the payments given the coaches and sponsors. Dr. Cotter also covered the conference requests of cabinet and CASEA members and the latest enrollment figures for the district. He noted that average class size was 11 to 17 students in kindergarten; 13 to 22 in grades 1 through 3; 22 to 23 in grades 4 and 5; and 21, 23, and 21 in English classes in grades 6, 7, and 8 respectively at the middle school. He reminded board members and the community that class sizes at the high school varied widely based on the courses.

**Board Student Representatives Report: None.**

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow reported that the district transported approximately 6,000 students to more than 140 schools each year. He noted that there would be three transportation contracts on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening: Devon Preparatory School at \$10.00 per student per day (\$9.25 the previous year), Lakeside Youth Services at \$28.00 per student per day (\$26.00 the previous year) and St. Joseph's Preparatory School at \$5.75 per student per day (\$5.10 the previous year). Mr. Bell reported that the contracts still represented the best and most cost-effective way to transport the students involved. Dr. Cotter also noted that the Lakeside students had some behavioral issues and were difficult to transport. Mr. Orlow asked the location of the Lakeside School. Dr. Cotter reported that it was located in Horsham. The supporting information on the contracts was in Enclosures #13 and #14 and information shared with the Board.

Mr. Orlow advised the Board that it would be acting on giving its approval for the district to move forward with Whitemarsh Township on submitting a joint petition for court approval of a transfer of property behind Colonial Elementary School that is known as Whitemarsh Meadows from the township to the district. See Enclosure #15. Mr. Orlow provided the history behind the proposal to swap Whitemarsh Meadows for land due the district on the former WFIL Tract. He noted that the district's agreement with the township called for the district to receive land equal to its payment for property when the condemnation was finalized and that the county's Open Space Board had disallowed the

transfer. He advised that transfer of Whitemarsh Meadows in lieu of land on the former WFIL Tract would rectify the situation.

Mr. Orlow indicated that there would be a bid for elementary music instruments on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. In response to Board queries, Mr. Bell confirmed that the instruments were not for lease to students. Dr. Iannelli confirmed that the instruments were classroom instruments.

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

**Committee Reports:** None.

**Additional Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell**  
**Board Secretary**