

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, AUGUST 21, 2003**

President Orlow convened general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:05 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on August 21, 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; Robert Franz; Tom Gibson 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 08/21/03.

**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. Mr. Yunker requested that the minutes of the general meeting in July be amended to reflect that the approval of the minutes for the month of June had been adopted as amended not as presented. Mr. Bell was to make the necessary change. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**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, as shown in Enclosures # 18 through #28. Mr. Orlow asked why the replacement of a security camera was listed in the Bond Fund Report. Mr. Bell and Mr. Bickleman reported that a contractor on a bond issue project had damaged the camera, was being billed for the damage and would be reimbursing the bond fund for a bill that the district charged against the bond project contractor for the damage. Mr. Orlow also sought and received confirmation that the HVAC work done in the computer labs at the

high school was funded by the capital reserve and not the bond fund. Mr. Bickleman said that he would revise the Bond Fund Report.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Mr. Franz requested that acronyms in conference requests be spelled out so that all parties could look at the requests in context. He also noted a typographical error in one request. Mr. Franz also sought and received clarification of the resolution concerning the proposed land swap of Whitemarsh Meadows for additional land on the former WFIL Tract. He wanted assurance that the swap would resolve outstanding issues between the district and Whitemarsh Township arising from their joint condemnation of the WFIL property. Mr. Orlow reported noted that the resolution would allow the district and the township to petition the court to approve the swap and confirmed that the swap, if made, would resolve the issues between the parties.

**Staff Report:** None.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow noted that Enclosure #29 was a request from Karen Weiss, Plymouth Township Manager, for a tax waiver for the period from 07/19/03 through 06/30/04 for property that the township had purchased adjacent Plymouth Community Center Park. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the waiver. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed with board members his extensive report as shown in Enclosure #8 through #12. He highlighted changes in the Personnel Report and extra-duty/extra-pay roster since Monday evening. He noted that there were still coaching and sponsor positions open and encouraged community members interested in the vacant positions to apply. Mr. Yunker asked the meaning of the acronym ASCD and Dr. Gorodetzer reported that it meant Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Both Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the organization was for those involved in curriculum supervision and advised that the local conference in Philadelphia specifically addressed the subject of what was working in schools and focused on best practices. They noted that, while other topics would be covered at other meetings across the country, this topic was particularly important to Colonial because the district was curriculum driven. Dr. Cotter also referred to the enrollment report and Resolution of Termination which the Board had reviewed on Monday evening. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** None.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow reported that the three transportation contracts on the agenda for Board action that evening represented the most efficient and effective way to provide the required service. He noted that services to Devon Preparatory School would be \$10.00 per student per day (\$9.25 the previous year), to Lakeside Youth Services would be \$28.00

per student per day (\$26.00 the previous year) and to St. Joseph's Preparatory School would be \$5.75 per student per day (\$5.10 the previous year), as shown in Enclosures #13, #30 and #14. Mr. Yunker moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board approval for the district moving forward with Whitemarsh Township on 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 noted that Board action was the next step in the process in resolving outstanding land title issues with Whitemarsh Township. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve moving forward with the court petition. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a bid for elementary music instruments as shown in Enclosure #31. Mr. Bell provided some information on the instruments being purchased and on the bid specifications and process. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the bids. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik request Board authorization for the solicitor to proceed with a number of appeals of assessments that we significantly lower than the fair market value of the properties involved. He also asked Board approval of a proposed settlement of an outstanding taxpayer appeal and an authorization to get a preliminary appraisal report on another property under appeal. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to authorize the solicitor to move forward with the district's assessment appeals. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor, the motion was carried. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the proposed settlement of the appeal on property #65-00-09754-009 as outlined in correspondence before the Board. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Yunker moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to authorize Coyle, Lynch and Co. to prepare a preliminary appraisal report on property #49-00-02742-305. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: Dr. Ryan provided information on I.U budgeting for early intervention and announced that H. Bruce Gordon was the new president of the I.U. Board.

Mr. Johnson explained the resolutions that were before the Board in Enclosure #32 on the issue of funding capital improvements to the Center for Technical Studies. Mr. Sultanik noted that the funding would be contingent on all parties agreeing. Following a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Sultanik started that a 2/3 majority of all of the board members of all of the member Boards and two of the three member Boards would have to approve one of the resolutions in order to address funding for the project. Board members discussed the three options for funding the renovations of the facility: One to fund on the basis of the current market value of real estate in each member district, one to fund on the basis of all member districts equally sharing the costs and one to fund on the basis of student enrollment. Board members discussed the pros and cons of the options. Mr. Orlow noted

the need for the Board to take a position on moving forward. Mr. Johnson noted that any change in the articles of Agreement would subsequently have to come back to the Boards of the sending districts for approval. Mr. Sultanik suggested that the Board phrase its motion as one of support for a particular mechanism for funding the project but not as an actual approval on any of the options or as a change in the Articles of Agreement. Board members discussed the genuine need for the renovations and some of the facility problems that might conceivably arise before the facility was renovated. They felt that contingencies would have to be set in place to handle students in the home districts if the Center had to close for an extended period because of facility emergencies. Mr. Yunker placed two other issues on the table: (1) the need to determine who gets seats in classes where enrollment is limited and (2) the need to draw a line between maintenance and capital projects and develop a method for addressing facility needs without always having to come back to the Boards of the home schools. At the end of the discussion, Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to support the funding of capital projects based on the three sending districts equally sharing the costs. Mr. Sultanik sought and received confirmation that the motion did not involve changes in the Articles of Agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Personnel:** Mr. Davis outlined a one-year agreement between the district and the members of CASEA, the district's administrative group. He noted that the agreement was the same as the previous year's agreement with the exception of the method of calculating salary increases. He noted that the new calculation involved a cost of living increase factored on the mid-point of the salary range and a performance increase based on a matrix. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the agreement subject to a final review of the wording by the administration and solicitor. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Davis reported that the district had reached a new agreement with the Teamsters local representing the district's Facilities Management employees. Mr. Orlow noted that the most significant changes over the previous contract were in the area of health care contributions. The new contract called for co-pay of \$7.50 during the first year of the contract (\$5.00 in the previous contract) and contained language that would give bargaining unit members the same coverage, deductibles and co-pays as the teachers in the last two years of the contract. He reported that the co-pay in year #2 would be capped at \$20.00 and in year #3 at \$40.00. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the contract subject to a review of the final wording by the administration and solicitor. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Finance:** No report.

**Curriculum and Program:** Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee had met the previous Monday evening. Committee members reviewed the results of 2003 AP tests and noted that students were doing very well in science and math but not as well in English and social studies. Dr. Lipshutz reported that the building principal would be coming back to the committee with recommendations for the AP classes. He also reported that the district's

SAT scores, at an average score of 1073, were the highest in recent memory and above the district goals under the *Above and Beyond* program. He attributed the dramatic change to the district's SAT Prep program and curriculum initiatives. Dr. Cotter reported that a preliminary review of the district's PSSA and Terra Nova scores looked good. He provided the Board with information on the district's average yearly progress under the *No Child Left Behind* program. Dr. Cotter reported that Colonial Elementary School had the highest scores in the district and that all schools in Colonial School District were showing progress far ahead of state targets that called for all children to be proficient by the year 2014. He also reported a problem with sub-group analysis. He alerted the Board to a state finding that the special education children in a disaggregated group at Colonial Elementary School had not advanced as much as the state felt they should have in a one-year period. Dr. Cotter reported on the debate about the numbers and the group's significant improvement of 14% in reading and 11% in math. He felt that the group should have qualified for *safe harbor* treatment and advised that the district had filed an appeal with the state. He also noted that Colonial Elementary School had reached the 85<sup>th</sup> to 90<sup>th</sup> percentile with the disaggregated group in the school's progress statistics. Dr. Cotter emphasized the district's belief that all children could learn. Mr. Davis asked if other districts had filed appeals. Dr. Cotter indicated that the mail between districts and the Department of Education had become very heavy since the release of the report. Dr. Lipshutz noted that the district was doing a good job with curriculum and instruction.

**Buildings & Grounds:** Mr. Johnson announced that the committee would be seeking Board action in September on a contract with Gilbert Architects to provide full architectural services for the replacement of the curtain wall at Conshohocken Elementary School. Mr. Bell used preliminary design drawings of the planned renovations to show the Board the scope of the work. Board members had questions about heat loss and solar gain under the proposed design. Mr. Bell noted that estimates on energy efficiency were available from Gilbert and that efficiencies resulted from less glass and more insulated panels in the curtain wall replacement. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Bell shared additional information. They noted that the structure was sorely in need of work and could soon become a safety issue. They advised that replacement of the HVAC system was part of the project because it was an integral part of the current curtain wall. They also noted that the facility would be air conditioned because of the summer programs on site. Mr. Johnson noted that the cost of the project had originally been estimated at \$2,700,000.00 but had been reduced to \$2,058,000.00 by reducing the scope of the work to be performed by contractors. He noted that the committee would be looking to move forward with the project following the solicitor's review of contract language. Mr. Yunker asked the administration to check if the estimated costs were in line with earlier estimates by the Breslin firm.

**Community Relations:** Ms. Glodek reported that the committee had met on 08/04/03. She reported on the status of the French exchange program, graduation projects and a proposal for a display area for them in the science wing of the high school, and the publication and mailing of the Annual Report in late October.

**Legislative:** Dr. Ryan gave a brief report on activities in the state capital. Mr. Orlow asked when the district would feel the impact of the lack of an approved state budget. Dr. Cotter indicated that there would be no immediate impact on the district. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that the district would have no problems through March or April of 2004. Mr. Yunker noted that the district received relatively little funding from the state.

**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