

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

Vice-President Lipshutz convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:12 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on December 18, 2003.

Board Members Present: Thomas Davis, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Susan Moore, Steven Slutsky and Pascal Scales.

Board Members Absent: Marc Orlow, Lynn Glodek and William Ryan.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia A. 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, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Stephanie Cousounis, Student Board Representative; Jim Muscarella, President, CEA; Bob Slagle; Lee Andrews, Pat Lieberman, George Wadlin of the PWHS Physical Education staff; and Nancy Mortimer O'Brien.

Dr. Lipshutz announced that the Board had met in executive session on 12/17/03 and 12/18/03 for legal and personnel matters.

Minutes: Dr. Lipshutz asked for Board action on the minutes for the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 11/17-20/03, the Reorganization Meeting of 12/01/03, the Special Meeting of 11/20/03, and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 12/15/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #3 and #20. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On a roll call vote, all in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: None. Dr. Cotter advised that the financial reports would be on the agenda for the regular meeting in January.

Student Board Representatives Report: Ms. Cousounis reported on auditions for the spring musical, the dance-a-thon in support of a local charity, the Principal's Advisory Council, the annual talent show showcasing students and staff, the winter concert with students and staff, and the start of the winter sports season.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Ms. Lieberman spoke on behalf of the physical education staff of the high school and voiced concern about plans to lower the requirement for physical education (PE) classes at the high school from three credits to two as part of proposed changes in the curriculum and graduation requirements. She recognized the importance of improving students test scores on the PSSA tests but noted that the change in

physical education requirements would affect many students. She provided information on links between physical education and student performance on tests and the part that physical training played in good student health and in counteracting the growing trend of obesity among the nation's youth. She also noted the links between a healthy body and a healthy mind. Ms. Lieberman believed that the plan to reduce the number of required PE classes had not gone through Curriculum Council and that a planned town meeting with students on the issue had not occurred. She wondered why the changes were coming so quickly and asked that they be phased in over time if they were indeed necessary.

Mr. Johnson advised that the changes would be effective for the class of 2007. Dr. Gorodetzer provided the background and history of the proposals to change the diploma policy and graduation requirements. She noted that the proposed changes had originally been recommended by building administrators to facilitate student achievement. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that the number of credits for graduation was to be raised from 28 to 30 and that several course requirements were to be added or modified. These included the addition of a writing course to 9th grade English, a requirement that all students take Algebra II, the lengthening of a number of AP courses from one semester to two semesters, and the change in 9th grade science from one semester to two semesters. She noted that these changes had been raised in Curriculum Council and with the Curriculum Committee of the Board. Dr. Gorodetzer indicated that board members had raised questions about the changes in the PE requirements and the possibility that the students might be shut out of electives in the PE area. Dr. Gorodetzer expressed the hope that the PE staff would create new electives to attract students. Dr. Cotter reported that no staff would be lost as a result of the changes. Dr. Lipshutz noted that the curricular changes being proposed were to address the needs of underachieving students and not just to increase scores on standardized tests. He also noted that the student meeting had been changed to a faculty meeting to allow faculty to speak out frankly on the issues and that the Board had had ample opportunity to receive input from the community on the issues under discussion. Dr. Lipshutz also reported that the district had looked at the course offerings in other districts with block schedules at the high school level. He noted that only one of those had a requirement for three PE credits. He also noted that block scheduling allowed for a better PE experience. Mrs. Moore expressed the hope that the PE Department would be able to develop courses that would encourage students to choose PE as an elective.

Staff Report: None.

Old Business: Dr. Lipshutz reported that several drafts of the school calendar for 2004-05 were on the agenda for Board review. He noted that a number of board members had been unable to attend the meeting and suggested that Board action on the calendar be deferred until January. Dr. Cotter noted that the options included several that called for a start date before Labor Day. He reported that some construction issues had prompted further discussion of a post-Labor Day start. He advised that there was a draft calendar option for starting classes after Labor Day in yellow pages before the Board. Mr. Slutsky noted his earlier support for a post-Labor Day start and indicated that potential construction problems would reinforce his support for a later start date. Dr. Scoles noted that, if there

were construction problems, the Board might want to have further discussion on the start date. Dr. Cotter advised that he would develop some additional calendar options for a start date after Labor Day.

Dr. Lipshutz directed the attention of board members to four policies that were on the agenda for action on a second reading. See Enclosures #5 through #8.

- **Policy #297, Military Recruiters:** Dr. Lipshutz asked if the policy was basically the same as it was on first reading. Dr. Cotter noted that it had been changed to allow a student over the age of 18 to decline to release his/her personal information. Mr. Shipman reported that the revised policy reflected district practice. Dr. Lipshutz asked for confirmation that the language offering an *opt out* was a requirement of *No Child Left Behind*. Mr. Shipman indicated that it was required and that *opt in* language was not permitted. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the policy on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- **Policy #213, English Language Learners:** Dr. Lipshutz reported that the policy had been drafted to comply with federal legislation mandating *No Child Left Behind*. Dr. Lipshutz asked if there had been any significant changes since the first reading of the policy. Dr. Cotter noted that the language had been changed following Board direction to reflect that the Board was directing the Administration to handle the details of complying with the legislation. He noted that the Board would be taking action later that evening on hiring an ESL teacher. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the policy on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- **Policy #217, Diploma Policy and Policy #217.1, Graduation Policy:** Dr. Lipshutz suggested that the Board take action on the two policies together. He noted that the policies had been discussed during public input earlier in the meeting and asked Dr. Gorodetzer if the Administration had anything to add to the earlier discussion. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that language in the diploma policy had been changed to address the requirements for awarding diplomas to transfer students. She also reminded the Board and the community that the new graduation policy would require that members of the Class of 2007 have 30 rather than 28 credits to graduate, that the change in the PE requirement would be in effect for the class of 2007, and that the change in Language Arts requirement for freshmen would be effective for the class of 2008. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policies on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Dr. Lipshutz advised that the district had received correspondence from Michael J. McCormick, Vice-President, O'Neill Properties requesting Board support for the concept of Tax Increment Financing for the company's proposed Millennium Project

along the river in Conshohocken. See Enclosure #9. He noted that the Board would be discussing the request at upcoming meetings.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter walked the Board through his report on recommended personnel actions, including a resignation and two appointments; additions to the substitute list; and appointments and changes on the extra-duty/extra-pay list. See Enclosure #10. He highlighted key elements of the reports including the hiring of an ESL teacher at the high school and a Tech Ed teacher at the middle school. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

New Business: Dr. Lipshutz advised that the solicitor for the Central Montgomery County Area Vocational-Technical School had provided resolutions on the renovation of the Center for Technical Studies. He noted that they had been drafted in collaboration with bond counsel and required Board action. Dr. Cotter advised that the resolutions had been drafted by Mr. O'Hara, the solicitor of the Tech school and reviewed by the district's solicitor. Dr. Lipshutz asked the solicitor if all of the Board's questions had been answered. Mr. Sultanik indicated that they had. Resolution #1 reaffirmed the adoption of the amended Articles of Agreement and the approval of the planned major renovation project. It also approved the retention of all of the professionals required to undertake the project. Resolution #2 acknowledged that the Joint Board delegated to the Joint Operating Committee of the Vo-Tech School the authority to operate, administer, finance and manage the project. See Enclosures #13 and #14. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the resolutions. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Bell distributed ballot sheets on which the board members recorded their votes.

Dr. Lipshutz reported that there were three student trips on the agenda for Board action.

- Enclosure #15 was a request from the sponsors of the Ski Club for students to participate in a ski trip to Killington, VT from 02/27/04 through 02/29/04. Dr. Cotter confirmed that no school days would be missed. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- Enclosure #16 was a request from the Director of the PWHS Marching Colonials for the band to perform at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, VA from 03/15/04 through 03/17/04. Dr. Cotter noted that the trip was from Saturday through Monday and that one student day would be missed. He also confirmed, in response to a Board query, that only students in good standing would be permitted to take the trip. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- Enclosure #21 was a request from the Chair of the Music Department at the high school for students to attend the PMEA District 11 Orchestra from 01/15/04 through

01/17/04 and the District 11 Band from 02/12/04 to 02/14/04 and for qualified students to attend the Region Orchestra from 02/26/04 through 02/28/04, the Region Band from 03/25/04 through 03/27/03, and the All-State Orchestra/Band from 04/22/04 through 04/24/04, at the locations indicated or to be announced. Dr. Lipshutz asked if the Board had approved the latter trips so far in advance before. Dr. Cotter replied that it had not done so but reminded the Board that notices had often arrived at the last minute in the past. Several Board members indicated that they did not have a problem approving the trips in advance but wanted to be kept up to date on selection and performance of district students. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trips. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Lipshutz announced that there were two bids for Board action: The construction of classrooms at Ridge Park and Whitmarsh Elementary Schools to meet the demand for additional classrooms for the all-day kindergarten program that would begin in September 2004 and modular office units to house the District Office during the time that the students and staff of Conshohocken were relocated there during construction on their home building. See Enclosures #17 and #22.

- Mr. Johnson noted that the district had bid options for either four or six new classrooms at the two elementary schools. Mr. Bell provided information on the need for the rooms and the Administration's recommendation to move forward with six classrooms at each school. He noted that, because the ultimate enrollment in the all-day kindergarten program was unknown and potential existed for residential developments in the district, the Administration felt it prudent to plan for additional students. Mr. Bell also advised that the bids were higher than anticipated in part because the architect had not updated the construction estimate until just before the bids were opened and because construction was booming in the public school sector. He also noted that the district had allowed two vendors to withdraw their bids within state timelines because they had not correctly responded to the scope of the project. Mr. Sultanik noted that the Board had the right to hold the bidders to a hearing. He recognized that the time requirements for withdrawing had been met and that the original bids appeared to have been offered in good faith and advised that the Board could allow the withdrawal of the bids. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to accept the bid withdrawals of the Keating and McHugh companies and to approve the apparent lowest responsible bidders as outlined in the bid analysis in Enclosure #17, conditioned on receipt of all governmental approvals, certificates of insurance, bonds and contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.
- Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the bid for the modular office spaces. Mr. Sultanik asked if the monthly lease arrangements were for straight rentals or required financing. Mr. Bell reported that it was his understanding that the district would pay month to month for the months that it actually used the modulares and that no financing arrangements were necessary.

Mr. Sultanik suggested that the Board approve the bid subject to the solicitor's review and approval of the lease arrangements. Mr. Johnson so moved and Dr. Scoles seconded that motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik requested Board approval of Stipulation #1716 as outlined in information before the Board. He noted that the stipulations were for violation of the district's drug and alcohol policy. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the stipulations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: None. Mr. Davis noted that all matters discussed at the last Curriculum Committee Meeting had been addressed by Board action earlier in the meeting. Mr. Bell noted that Dr. Ryan was absent for medical reasons. Dr. Lipshutz reported that the same was true for Mr. Orlow.

Additional Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Dr. Lipshutz adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**