

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JULY 17, 2003**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:15 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on July 17, 2003.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; 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; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Susan Castle, Chairperson, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Jim Muscarella, President, Colonial Education Association; Gary Grenier, Executive Director and Susan Merves, The Lincoln Center; Rob Walper, Fox Rothschild; Glenn Williard and Kristin Kilker, Public Financial Management; Ed Murphy, Dolphin & Bradbury; and Nancy Mortimer O'Brien.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He announced that the Board had cancelled the normally scheduled work session for July and held a mini-retreat to review current activity and plan for the future. He advised that the Board would both review and act on agenda items at the meeting that evening. He also announced that the Board had met in executive session prior to the meeting to address personnel and legal matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow requested Board review and action on the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 06/16/03; the Work Session of 06/16/03, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 06/18/03, the General Meeting of 06/19/03, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 06/03/03, and the Personnel Committee Meeting of 07/02/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5. Mr. Yunker asked the status of a request made at the Curriculum Committee Meeting for a rationale for the high school principal at that time approving weighted credit for an 8th grade student taking a course at the high school. Dr. Cotter advised that the Administration would follow up on the request. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the minutes as amended. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow requested Board review and action on the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #6 through #17. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 07/03, 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 06/30/03; the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report of 07/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending

06/30/03. Mr. Orlow noted that the Bond Fund report included the high school boiler project which had been funded by the capital reserve. Mr. Bickleman advised that he would correct the report. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Grenier thanked the Board for the opportunity to provide a brief update on the Genesis Alternative School at the high school and to comment on the future direction of the Lincoln Center. He placed high value on the relationship between the center and the district and reported on the emphasis that the center was placing on its move to becoming an institute for Transformation Education in the region and the country. Mr. Grenier reported on the center's participation in an international conference on alternative education. Mr. Yunker asked about the fluctuating census in the Genesis Program and Mr. Grenier noted that it was caused by a number of factors, including students leaving the school or the district or returning to regular classes. He also noted that it was not likely that great numbers of students would return to regular classes because they had shown a need for an alternative approach to learning. He could not confirm that evening whether the changes in student population resulted from changing the threshold for admission or the process for identifying need but reported that he would look into the issues. Mr. Davis asked Mr. Grenier to thank Janice Young, the Coordinator of the Genesis program, for her thorough report.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Williard of PFM who walked board members through a planned refinancing of a number of 1999 bonds. Mr. Williard noted that, although interest rates had been rising, PFM had been able to meet the district's savings guidelines as it negotiated the refinancing. He briefly covered each page of the bond sale document contained in the updated materials distributed to the Board that evening. He stressed that the refinancing was structured both to refund debt and give the district about \$830,000.00 of new money up front to be used for capital projects. Mr. Williard noted that the wording of the resolution was broad enough to cover any capital project that the district might undertake. (Refer to Attachment #1 to these minutes.) Mr. Murray reviewed the Bond Purchase Agreement. (See Attachment #2 to these minutes.) Mr. Walper briefly reviewed the Bond Resolution with the Board. (See Attachment #3 to these minutes.) All of the speakers responded to questions from board members who sought clarifications of the details of the documents before them. Mr. Slutsky sought and received assurance from Mr. Bickleman that he was satisfied with the numbers contained in the documents. He also commented on the positive financial impact of refinancing the debt and thanked Mr. Bickleman for his work on the refinancing. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the refinancing and the Bond Resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow recognized Mrs. Castle of the Colonial Foundation. Mrs. Castle requested Board acceptance of two mini-grants and one major grant. She noted that the latter, a grant that would culminate in the establishment of an Academic Hall of Fame

at the high school, would be the second foundation grant to a student. The other two grants were for a Summer Reach program to support incoming 9th graders from low socioeconomic and/or low achievement backgrounds and an opportunity for high school journalists to attend a high school press convention at Columbia University. See Enclosure #19. Mrs. Castle also announced that the coming year would mark the foundation's 10th anniversary and that a number of special events were being scheduled. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the proposed grants. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly walked board members through the recommendations contained in his report as it was shown in Enclosure #29. Mr. Yunker and Mr. Orlow inquired about the professional staff positions that remained open. Mr. Berger reported that the position in tech education would be the most difficult to fill because of the special credentials that it required. He expected to fill the remaining eight to ten positions by the August Board Meeting. Mr. Yunker 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.

Student Board Representatives Report: None.

New Business: Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the administrative recommendation to admit a student to school early under the provisions of Board Policy #201. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to admit the student. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on two conference requests. Enclosure #21 was a request from Pat Tamborello, the college counselor at the high school, to attend the conference of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in Long Beach, CA from 10/02/03 through 10/04/03. Dr. Cotter noted that Ms. Tamborello would be attending some pre-conference meetings starting on 09/30/03. Mrs. Moore moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve attendance at the conference. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the attendance of Erika Miller, the high school librarian, at a library conference in Kansas City, MO from 10/22/03 through 10/26/03. See Enclosure #22. Dr. Cotter noted that it was a great opportunity for the district to support the efforts of the new librarian at a point where the district was moving forward with library initiatives and a planned renovation of the facility in the summer of 2004. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a bid for replacing the stadium fencing and renovating the varsity baseball infield and upgrading the associated backstop, team and outfield fencing. Mr. Johnson responded to board queries about a staggered replacement of sections of the stadium fencing by reporting that the approach would be too costly. Mr. Bell explained the fencing and netting associated with the renovation of the infield. He

noted that the changes would bring the field in line with other recently renovated or newly constructed local sports facilities. Mr. Bell was asked but could not report the exact timing of the renovations. He advised that he would check with the facilities manager and report back at a later date. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the bid as outlined in Enclosure #28. On a roll call vote, call voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: **Intermediate Unit Board:** Dr. Ryan reported that board elections had been certified and that he was now a member of the I.U. Board. He advised that the Board would be meeting the following Wednesday.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that members of the Boards of the home districts were invited to the Center for Technical Studies the following Monday evening to discuss planned renovations to the facility and financing for those renovations. He indicated that it would be an informational meeting at which voting procedures and financing options would be discussed. Board members had questions about the process for approving renovations and the associated financing. Mr. Yunker noted the added concern that the Articles of Agreement would run out in 14 years. Since financing arrangements would likely exceed that period of time, he felt that it was important to discuss renewing the Articles.

Personnel: Mr. Davis noted that the minutes of the last committee meeting had been approved that evening. He advised that the Board was in receipt of a tentative three-year labor agreement with the Food Service Bargaining Unit. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Davis reported that the district was in negotiations with Teamsters Local No. 384 on a contract with Facilities Management employees.

Finance: Mr. Slutsky noted that the Board had acted that evening on a refinancing of a prior bond issue and commended Mr. Bickleman's on his fine work during the process.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Lipshutz reported on the district's continuing effort to improve and implement the curriculum. He highlighted work on revising report cards. He explained the process and announced that the new cards would be discussed with parents at back to school nights. Dr. Lipshutz also reported that standardized testing reflected the progress that students at the middle school were making in math since the connected math program had been implemented in grade 6. He looked for continued improvement in the future.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson reported that the committee had reviewed the proposed contract between the district and Polatnick Zacharjasz Architects for the provision of full architectural services to the district on a project to construct additional classrooms for an all-day kindergarten program. Mr. Johnson noted that the

contract addressed concerns raised by the solicitor. Mr. Bell indicated that the firm had left the mechanism for resolving disputes unchanged. In response to Board queries, he also reported that the paperwork before the Board worked in conjunction with the standard agreement that the district already had with the firm for the provision of a wide range of architectural services on projects that were referred to the firm. Mr. Bell noted that the matrix included in the materials in front of the Board was the key to the documents. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the contract as presented in Enclosure #29. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Community Relations and Student Life: Ms. Glodek complimented Kim Newell in CITV on the many improvements in CITV programming. She also announced that the district calendar was at the printers and would be available shortly. Ms. Glodek advised that the next committee meeting would be on 08/14/03 and that a number of student issues, including a student trip to France, would be on the agenda.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan reported that four bills had been passed in each house of the legislature but none had been passed in both houses. He indicated that the big bill was one that would allow districts to adopt more income taxes if they reduced property taxes. Dr. Ryan advised that the last two PSBA legislative meetings had been cancelled and that the annual policy meeting had been scheduled for October. Mr. Orlow asked about PSBA's position on tax reform. Dr. Ryan reported that the organization opposed provisions for annual referendums on budgets. Mr. Yunker asked what would happen if a referendum failed and specifically wanted to know if programs would have to be cut. Mr. Sultanik noted that there would be some exceptions built in to any final law but advised that these had not yet been defined. He also noted the likely need to reopen the budget if any of the reform plans were adopted.

Additional Public Comment: Ms. Mortimer O'Brien acknowledged that the recently adopted budget included no tax increases but wondered how the \$3,800,000 surplus had developed. Mr. Orlow reported that increased revenues and reduced spending had contributed to the surplus. Ms. Mortimer O'Brien also noted local parental interest in all-day kindergarten but asked about studies that supported its implementation. Mr. Orlow briefly summarized the steps that the district had taken in recent years to review the data on all-day kindergarten, the curricular needs of the students and the facility needs of the district.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary

