

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JUNE 17, 2004**

President Orlow convened the General Meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:45 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on June 17, 2004.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Accountability and Compliance; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; and Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Secretary, Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant for Community Relations; John Quinn and Kim Newell, CITV; Amy LaRue and Ellen Reilly, professional staff; Jim Muscarella, President, CEA; Amy Cohn; Dante DelVecchio; Cheryl Dolin; Gayle Doyle; Robert Franz; Rachael Heary; Kelie McMaster; Theresa Ruppenthal; Nancy O'Brien; Kate Tamney; Bridget Watton; Thomas Yunker; Mitchell Zimmer, students being recognized and their coaches, sponsors, families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters on 06/14/04 and for informational purposes on 06/16/04.

Recognition and Awards: Dr. Cotter introduced Mr. Sherman, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the presentation of Certificates of Achievement. Ms. Ellen Reilly and Ms. Amy LaRue assisted him in making the presentations. Staff were recognized in television production and students were recognized in the fields of athletics, social studies, and music. John Quinn and Kim Newell were honored for winning Telly Awards for their productions, the PWHS Girls Lacrosse Team for a league championship and being undefeated in regular league play, members of the high school track team for individual league victories and the school's first state awards in girl's track, a number of high school students for awards in the National Social Studies Competition, and a number of high school musicians and vocalists for achievements at local, regional and state events. A complete list of the students recognized by the Board is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 05/17/04, the Work Session of 05/17/04, the General Meeting of 05/20/04, and the Personnel Committee Meeting of 06/04/04. See Enclosure #1 through #4. Dr. Cotter advised that Mr. Bell had corrected an error in reporting a second to a Board motion in the minutes of the general meeting in May. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Davis 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 directed Board attention to the financial reports. They included the Budget Transfer Reports for 05/04; the Bond Fund Report, Capital Project Report; General Fund and Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Report; Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparisons of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report, Reconciliation of Cash Accounts and the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report for the month ending 05/31/04; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 05/31/04, as shown in Enclosures #5 through #16. Board members had no questions or comments on the reports. Mr. Slutsky moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Community Update: Mr. Orlow provided an update on the status of negotiations between the Board and the Colonial Education Association (CEA). He reported that informal discussions toward an early bird contract had started in November 2003 and that regular negotiations began in January 2004 and were continuing. Mr. Orlow advised that the parties were bargaining in good faith and had made some progress but were still far apart. He reported that the state mediator became involved in the process in February 2004 and that the membership of the CEA had authorized a strike in May 2004. Mr. Orlow stressed that negotiations would continue, that the parties were in contact with the mediator and that the Board intended to keep the community informed. He advised that the Board had to plan for the possibility of a strike and would be taking steps to arrange for day care, transportation to non-public schools and college counseling for high school seniors. He indicated that these steps were being taken so that the Board would be ready to provide essential services if the CEA gave 48 hours notice of a strike.

Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter to provide an update on strike planning. Dr. Cotter reported that the district would be sending out surveys on the need for day care services in mid-July. He noted that any services required would be housed at Plymouth Elementary School and that an on-site district administrator would oversee contracted services. He also reported that the district would contract with a local authority to assist seniors with college admissions and take steps to see that non-public and special education transportation is provided as needed. Dr. Cotter also advised that the district would evaluate options for handling student activities and take the necessary steps to see that students were able to attend their scheduled I.U. classes outside the district as well as classes at the Center for Technical Studies. He committed to making security a priority in district buildings and to communicating on a regular basis, both internally and externally, with all of the district's many constituencies. Mr. Orlow stressed that district residents should not be alarmed about the need to develop prudent plans for the possibility of a strike. He reminded everyone that both sides were working seriously on fair contract and hoped to avoid a strike.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Mr. Franz noted differences between the preliminary budget and the budget being proposed for final adoption. He suggested that the Board

consider what it would cut if a local referendum on the budget were conducted and the community rejected the budget. He asked the Board to consider adjusting the current proposal as if its budget had been rejected. Mr. Franz specifically cited significant costs in athletics and again suggested the possibility of an activity fee. He also wondered about the impact of retirements on the final budget figures. Mr. Orlow explained that the difference between the preliminary budget and the proposed budget came mainly in two areas, money saved and added to the budget as a result of the district's early retirement incentive and potential revenue from roll-back taxes on a TIF project that were removed from the budget because receipt of the funds was uncertain. Mr. Franz felt that the Board had acted prudently in these areas.

Ms. Ruppenthal, Ms. Heary, Ms. Tamney and Ms. McMaster expressed concern about the pace and progress being made in negotiations between the Board and the CEA in an effort to reach a new bargaining agreement between the parties. They expressed their belief that more could be done and that the community needed to be updated regularly. Mr. Orlow explained the process, the role of the mediator, the collective efforts to find mutually agreeable meeting dates, the ongoing availability of members of the Board's negotiating team, the professional and serious approach that both sides were taking during negotiations, and the Board's efforts to keep parents and the community at large informed. He also explained some serious realities that the Board faced, in particular, flat growth of the district's tax base, rising costs in areas beyond the Board's direct control, reductions in state subsidies and the potential of the state enacting back-door referendums on school budgets. He noted that the district had to be very careful in its planning to avoid future crises while it worked to be fair in addressing competing interests. Mr. Sultanik explained the schedule of the mediator and the reality that contracts were settled when the time, place and circumstances were right for a settlement. He felt that meeting constantly was not necessarily a productive approach. Mr. Slutsky noted the Board's interest in community input. He reminded the community that there were parents of students on the Board and noted that board members welcomed and encouraged parent input. Ms. Glodek suggested that all PTO's send representatives to Board meetings and report back to their groups on subjects under discussion at the Board level. Dr. Cotter and Mrs. Moore suggested that parents take advantage of monthly meetings of Parent Council and reported that meetings alternated between mornings and evenings so that parents who worked could attend. Mr. Orlow reminded the group of the district's email subscription service that allowed residents to get recent news on issues in the district and encouraged interested individuals to enroll. Dr. Gorodetzer provided accurate information on other issues raised and corrected the misinformation that the parents had on course offerings and staffing at the high school. Mr. Sultanik reported that the district's community outreach efforts surpassed those of other districts with which he was familiar.

Staff Report: None.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow requested board action on a new policy required by *No Child Left Behind* legislation, Policy #107.1, Assessment of Education Program. He noted that the Board had reviewed on Monday evening and approved last month on first reading. See Enclosure #17. Mr. Orlow noted that language in the policy had been changed to refer to

“one semester/one half year” on page #1 of the policy to cover both secondary and elementary schools. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to adopt the policy on second reading. On roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow reported with regret that the district had received a letter of resignation from board member, Lynn Glodek, effective that night and noted that the Board would take action on the resignation at the close of the meeting. See Enclosure #18.

Superintendent’s Report: Dr. Cotter updated his report of Monday evening to include additional personnel actions (including the resignation of the Director of Pupil Services and the hiring of a new Physics teacher at the high school), the original list of long-term substitute teachers who were returning to the list of per diem substitutes, and eight teachers who had been selected from a group of 20 applicants to become master teachers in 2004-05. He also reported a stipend for the Principal of Ridge Park Elementary School for handling federal programs in the coming school year and a Furlough Resolution that would address the curtailment of programs at the high school. See Enclosures #19 through #22 and #41. Dr. Cotter noted Mr. Shipman’s years of service to the district in Pupil Services. Ms. Glodek noted that the meeting that evening would be Dr. Iannelli’s last and wished her a happy retirement. Dr. Cotter stated that an additional teacher had been added to the list of Master Teachers as a result of a review following an appeal. Mr. Orlow noted that Master Teachers received a stipend and more responsibility during their two-year terms. Dr. Cotter emphasized their role as mentors and leaders. Mr. Orlow had questions about two listings for new hires where salary figures did not seem to match credentials. Mr. Berger noted an inaccuracy in one listing that failed to show a master’s degree and advised that years of experience was a factor in the other. He also gave some examples of the district’s commitment to its education program in the hiring of more experienced teachers when the need arose. Mr. Orlow reminded the Board and the community of the issues surrounding a furlough resolution that was discussed at meetings in May and on Monday evening. Mr. Sultanik confirmed that the district had an obligation to offer to rehire furloughed teachers if vacancies occurred in the district in their areas of certification. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the personnel report, list of long-term substitutes returning to per diem substitutes and the federal program stipend. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the eight master teachers. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the furlough resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: None.

New Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the 2004-05 School District Budget as outlined in the agenda. Mr. Slutsky recapped his comments on Monday evening and earlier in that evening’s meeting. He stressed the Board’s commitment to its educational programs and reported that Colonial School District’s tax rate was the second lowest in the county. Mr. Slutsky moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the budget of \$69,564,000, a real estate tax rate of 14.98 mils, a real estate transfer tax of 1%, an

amusement tax of 10%, a real estate tax certificate at \$20.00 and a tax billing date for 2004-05 of 07/01/04. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the reappointment of district physicians and dentists at the rates specified in Enclosure #22. He noted that there had been no change in providers and that the district was pleased with their services. The issue had been discussed on Monday evening. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the reappointments at the rates listed in the enclosures. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a number of contracts related to special education services. They included renewals of contracts that were included in Enclosures #23 through #26 and involved Brook Glen Behavioral Hospital (formerly the Progression Group), Central Montgomery County MH/MR, Carol Scheuerman, PT and Kim Hartranft, OT. Mr. Orlow noted that the contracts had been discussed on Monday evening. Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the contracts as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Montgomery County I.U. had rejected the original joint purchase bid for oil, fuel and gasoline and that the items had been re-bid. Mr. Bickleman shared the bid results that had become available that morning. The lowest responsible bidder was Petron for diesel fuel at \$1.0631/gal. and diesel winter blend at \$1.1031/gal. and Sunoco for heating oil at \$1.1508/gal. and gasoline at \$1.2487/gal. Mr. Bickleman noted that the new bids resulted in some savings over the rejected bids but advised that the hike in fuel prices was estimated to cost the district an extra \$173,000. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to accept the recommended bids. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the Carbon Lehigh I.U. Data Processing Agreement in Enclosure #27. He noted that the rate was set by an existing contract. Mr. Slutsky advised that costs to the district would be lower than last year because of an anticipated decrease in the need for the district to contact support services. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that district staff were more familiar with the software and would not need the same level of support. Mr. Slutsky moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the contract renewal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a professional conference request from Ms. Tamborello at the high school to attend the NACAC conference from 09/30/04 through 10/03/04. See Enclosure #28. Ms. Glodek moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the annual Senior Class Trip to Florida in 2005, as outlined in Enclosure #29. He noted that the trip request had been discussed on Monday evening. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on renewing its Observatory Usage and Support Agreement with the Delaware Valley Astronomers for use of the district's observatory to house the group's telescope, as outlined in Enclosure #30. Mr. Slutsky voiced support for the program. Mr. Orlow noted that board members had reviewed the request on Monday evening. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the renewal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action to adopt math and computer science textbooks as listed in Enclosure #31. Dr. Lipshutz asked how parents were to be brought up to speed on math initiatives in 8th grade at the middle school and in all grades at the high school. Dr. Gorodetzer advised that the district planned to roll out the programs much as it had done at the elementary schools and the lower grades of the middle school. She reported that the district would have an ongoing dialogue with parents by meeting with them and by sharing information on the district's website. Mr. Davis moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to adopt the textbooks. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on proposed bid awards for the high school yearbook and middle school athletic and physical education supplies. Dr. Cotter indicated the financial impact of the yearbook bid on students would be approximately \$2.00. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the bid award to Jostens as outlined in Enclosure #32. 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 athletic supplies to the vendors outlined in Enclosure #42. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik sought Board approval of two proposed tax settlement appeals. They were an appeal on Parcel #05-00-02350-00-3, Keystone River Crossing for an additional \$4,400 in annual taxes for the district and Parcel #65-00-10658-00-5, Axewood Corporate Center for a one time refund of \$60,661 to the taxpayer for overpayments from 1996 through 2004. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the settlements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Dr. Ryan briefly covered the \$47,300,000 I. U. budget that would come up for approval the following week. He also announced that the new Executive Director would officially start on 07/01/04 but would be on site for a transition period beginning on 06/23/04.

CMCAVTS: No report.

Personnel: Dr. Lipshutz reported on proposed salary levels for several individuals and groups for 2004-05: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, administrators, non-bargaining unit staff and substitutes. He advised that the committee recommended a salary of \$145,803 and a bonus of \$12,891 for the Superintendent and a salary of \$124,455 and a bonus of \$5,382 for the Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Orlow noted that the bonuses for performance were part of the contracts for the two administrators and were capped at

10% and 5% respectively. Dr. Lipshutz reported that the salaries of other administrators were in accordance with the CASEA agreement and based strictly on performance. He noted that all salaries were available for review in the Office of the Director of Human Resources. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the salary and bonus of the Superintendent as recommended by the Personnel Committee. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the salary and bonus of the Assistant Superintendent as recommended by the Personnel Committee. 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 salaries for administrators, non-bargaining unit staff and substitutes as recommended by the Personnel Committee. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow raised the issue of possible revisions of the school calendar for 2004-05 because of labor uncertainties. He sought Dr. Cotter's input on changing the schedule of in-service days at the beginning of the school year. Dr. Cotter noted the value of having in-service days at the beginning of the year. He advised that staff could get by with one of the planned four days of in-service at the beginning of the school year but recommended two at the beginning in order to get a good start on the year and two more at the end. Mr. Orlow announced that he would accept public comment on the issue since the subject had not been placed on the formal agenda. Mr. Muscarella questioned the advantage of moving two days to the end of the year and expressed his belief that the move would have an adverse impact on students. Mr. Orlow felt that the Board had to judge when the days would be most productive and plan for contingencies in the event of a work stoppage. He considered it prudent to move some of the days to the end of the year. He noted that the Board could always revisit the calendar if a new contract were in place before the start of the school year. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Sultanik to ask the state mediator who was involved in the negotiations process to look again for potential dates when the parties could meet prior to the currently scheduled negotiations session on 07/20/04. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to change the calendar for 2004-05 to place two in-service days at the start of the school year and two at the end. On a roll call vote, all but Ms. Glodek voted in favor. Ms. Glodek voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis referred to the minutes of the last committee meeting. See Enclosure #1 to the agenda.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson advised that he, Mr. Bell and Mr. Yemm had walked the construction sites at Ridge Park and Whitemarsh Elementary Schools to observe progress on the classroom additions at each school. He reported the significant progress at Whitemarsh and the catch up needed at Ridge Park. Dr. Cotter noted two issues at Ridge Park, the need to drill deeper than expected for caissons that were part of the foundation and delays in receiving steel for the structure. He and Mr. Bell noted that once the addition was under roof, there would be an opportunity to catch up.

Community Relations and Student Life: Ms. Glodek announced that the Hall of Fame in the lobby of the high school science wing was in and dedicated. She praised district maintenance staff for their fine work. She also congratulated Mr. Quinn and Ms. Newell on their Telly Awards, thanked Mr. Sherman for his efforts in community relations during her tenure as chair of the committee, and thanked Dr. Iannelli for her years of service to the district.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan spoke about different funding bills in the state house and senate and possible delays in passing a budget. He expressed his opinion that the issue of school budget referendums was off the table until after passage of the budget.

Additional Business: Mr. Orlow raised the issue of Ms. Glodek's letter of resignation. He reported that Ms. Glodek would be moving out of the district and would no longer be able to serve on the Board. Mr. Orlow spoke of Ms. Glodek's long service to the community and the district and her service on PTO's, the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee, the Colonial Foundation and the Board of School Directors. He thanked her for input over the years and presented her with a parting gift from the Board. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to accept Ms. Glodek's resignation. On a roll call vote, all except Ms. Glodek voted in favor. Ms. Glodek abstained. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board had interviewed a number of candidates to fill the vacancy on the Board that was created by Ms. Glodek's resignation. He expressed his belief that Mitchell Zimmer was the best candidate to fill the vacancy and cited his many years of involvement with district students through youth sports and his service on the PWHS Scholarship Fund. Mr. Orlow noted that the person elected to fill the vacancy would serve until the next School Board election when a two-year position would be on the ballot to return the seat to the normal four-year cycle. Dr. Scoles moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Zimmer to the vacant position on the Board. On a roll call vote, all serving board members voted in favor. Ms. Glodek was no longer serving. The motion was carried. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bell to swear Mr. Zimmer into his new post. Mr. Bell had not anticipated the ceremony that evening and had not brought a bible for the occasion. Mr. Orlow made arrangements to hold the ceremony at a later date.

Additional Public Comment: Parents of students attending Ridge Park Elementary School asked if the new classrooms would be ready by the start of classes in September. Dr. Cotter reported that the district would be doing all it could to have the new addition ready by that time.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary