

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 17, 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 November 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; 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; and Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer and Pascal Scoles, incoming board member.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters on 11/17/03 and for informational purposes 10/29/03 and on 11/12/03.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 10/13/03, the Personnel Committee of 10/16/03, the General Meeting of 10/16/03, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of 11/06/03 and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 11/18/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #3 of the agenda for Thursday evening and a handout provided. Mr. Orlow pointed out an omission in Enclosure #3. Mr. Bell advised that he would add the missing item for Thursday evening.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 11/03, 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 10/31/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 10/31/03, as shown in Enclosures #4 through #15 on Thursday's general meeting agenda. Mr. Orlow inquired about budget transfers involving funds for school improvement teams. Mr. Bickleman reported that the funds were placed in salary accounts until the funds were awarded and then they were placed in appropriate accounts based on the nature of the expenditure. Mr. Orlow asked if the funds could be placed in a special account for school improvement teams. Mr. Yunker supported that concept and noted that putting the funds in one account and moving them to another could give a false impression of the funding that the district was allocating to certain areas. Mr. Bickleman indicated that he would check with the district's independent auditor for ideas that met standard accounting guidelines and addressed the concerns raised. Mr. Slutsky asked if the district was on track for collecting taxes. Mr. Bickleman reported that, for the most part, the district was a bit ahead of schedule

compared to the previous year. He noted, however, that interim taxes might appear to be lagging because the district had received a larger than usual amount of interim taxes the previous fall.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: None.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: None.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter walked board members through his report as shown in Enclosures #16 through #20 of the agenda for action on Thursday evening. He noted departures, leaves, promotions, transfers and employment and additions to the substitute lists. Dr. Cotter outlined a recommendation to move nine long-term substitutes to temporary professional status, reviewed current average class sizes in the districts elementary buildings and the middle school and advised that there would be a Resolution for Termination on Thursday's agenda for Board action. Mr. Orlow asked for and received confirmation that the long-term substitutes would be moving to temporary professional status. He asked that the heading of Enclosure #19 be corrected to reflect that move accurately. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter to provide an update on kindergarten registration for the coming year. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Shipman reported on enrollments then on file in central registration. Mr. Shipman also provided an update on the many ways that the district was trying to alert the community to the registration drive underway so that the district could determine enrollment for the all-day kindergarten program in the coming year. He thanked Mr. Sherman for his assistance in getting information out to district families.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Board was looking at a number of draft calendars for the 2004-05 school year and would be setting the date for the beginning of the school year on Thursday evening. See Enclosure #21. Dr. Cotter noted that the drafts offered a couple of options for starting school before Labor Day and after Labor Day. He indicated that a number of facility issues would impact on the decision and reported that the Buildings and Grounds Committee would be looking at the schedules for those projects at a meeting the following morning. The projects included the construction of classrooms at Ridge Park and Whitmarsh Elementary Schools in support of all-day kindergarten, the replacement of the curtain wall at Conshohocken Elementary School, and the renovation of the District Office and the high school library. Dr. Cotter also noted that the district's contract with its teachers would expire on 08/15/04. In response to Board queries, Dr. Cotter reported that the CEA had reviewed the contract and preferred a start date after Labor Day. Mr. Davis asked if the teachers were aware that snow days could push the end of classes into the fourth week of June. Dr. Cotter indicated that they were aware of that possibility. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter about the scheduling of in-service days. Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer preferred in-service early in the year and periodically throughout the year. Mr. Slutsky stated a preference for a calendar that put the start date after Labor Day, contained adequate in-service days and provided a full spring break.

He noted that the down-side of his preference was the potential for snow make-up days late in June. Others noted the possibility of a modified spring break and the community's preference for the standard break. Dr. Lipshutz asked the Administration to consider moving full-day in-service days to national election days for security reasons. Dr. Cotter indicated that the move could be made but noted that the district had security staff at all schools that served as polling places on election day and that building modifications had made district schools more secure. Board members inquired about the impact of facility projects on the calendar. Dr. Cotter suggested that the Buildings and Grounds Committee undertake its review the following morning and make a recommendation to the Board on Thursday evening. Several board members expressed their preferences for start dates before Labor Day. Others expressed concern about the impact of facility projects on an early start date and options for scheduling in-service days.

Mr. Orlow summarized the district's long-standing anti-vandalism programs at the middle and high schools and noted that awards to the Student Councils of both schools and a renewal of the program would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening as Enclosure #22. The proposed awards were \$2,360.00 for the high school and \$1,500.00 for the middle school. Those amounts represented one half of the unexpended funds set aside in the preceding year for repairs necessary following vandalism. Funding recommended for the current year would remain unchanged at \$5,000.00 for the high school and \$3,000.00 for the middle school. Mr. Orlow asked if the district had any data to show the effectiveness of the program. Dr. Cotter indicated that the Administration did not have figures available that evening but advised that the program served as positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. He also noted that the award was a high profile event in the schools and that the funds were used for a number of beneficial activities in the schools.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be acting on a resolution dealing with the covenants, conditions and restrictions that were a part of the district taking ownership of Whitemarsh Meadows, the tract of land behind Colonial Elementary School, in lieu of additional acreage adjacent to Victory Fields. He noted that transfer of the land would settle outstanding land issues between the district and Whitemarsh Township and that the open space would be used for active and passive recreational purposes. See Enclosure #23 of Thursday's agenda.

Mr. Orlow noted that there would be a transportation contract on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. Dr. Cotter advised that Enclosure #24 was a contract to transport one student from the Lincoln Center for Family and Youth at a cost of \$5.75 per day.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be taking action at Thursday evening's meeting on a number of Board policies on first reading. Policy #207, Military Recruiters, was drafted to comply with "No Child Left Behind" legislation regarding the access of military recruiters to the high school student population. See Enclosure #25. Mr. Slutsky inquired about the access requirement. Mr. Orlow noted that the legislation required the same access as that given to colleges and universities. Board members had questions as to whether students, parents or both had to agree to access. Mr. Yunker questioned the wording of the access provisions and preferred an "opt in" rather than an "opt out" approach in order to protect student privacy.

Mr. Shipman reported that the legislation required both the publication of a policy and the granting of access. He confirmed that the proposed policy reflected current district practice. Mr. Slutsky asked to have the policy state that the access was required by federal law. Mr. Shipman noted that the district draft was based upon boiler plate guidelines for the required policy. Mr. Orlow asked if the policy addressed the issue of preventing access for colleges and universities and Mr. Shipman reported that it did not address that issue. Mr. Yunker asked what information the district provided to colleges and universities. The Administration did not have the information available that evening.

Mr. Orlow reported that “No Child Left Behind” required local districts to adopt student privacy policies in consultation with parents and that one of those was a policy on physical examinations or screening of students. Draft Board Policy #208, Student Health Examinations was drafted to set the district’s position on such examinations. See Enclosure #26. Dr. Lipshutz asked what an invasive physical exam was. Mr. Shipman gave an example from past litigation history in the state that indicated that a gynecological exam would be invasive under the policy. A suggestion was made that the district develop, in conjunction with its solicitor and physician, an administrative regulation defining what an “invasive” examination would and would not include or what a district physical examination would routinely include. After some discussion, board members reached a consensus on having the Administration flush out the details involved and bring a revised policy back for review at a later date.

Mr. Orlow noted that “No Child Left Behind” required districts to develop a parental involvement policy for parents of children participating in language proficiency programs. He referred board members to Enclosure #27, Board policy #209, English Language Learners. Dr. Cotter noted that the state would be conducting an ESL audit of the district and that the language in the proposed district policy would be discussed. Mr. Shipman reported that the district had also undertaken a self-assessment. He felt that the district needed a sound policy with some flexibility in implementation. Mr. Yunker asked that the draft policy be amended to reflect that the Board had delegated to the Administration the responsibilities included in the first three paragraphs under the heading entitled “Delegation of Responsibility”.

Mr. Orlow reported that two proposed policies, #217, Diploma Policy and #217.1, Promotion and Graduation were related policies and that he would like the Board to consider them together. Dr. Iannelli provided an overview of the minimum requirements for earning a diploma, particularly the proposed requirement for 30 rather than 28 credits and the provision that special needs students that completed the programs outlined in their IEP’s would be eligible for graduation. She also outlined the provisions under which students that had not received their entire high school education in Colonial School District could receive a diploma. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the high school administration had worked on cleaning up the language of the policy and had altered some of the provisions of the graduation requirements to address needs that were evident in data that the district had been collecting on student achievement at the secondary level. Mr. Orlow noted that Dr. Sullivan, Principal, PWHS would be at Thursday’s meeting to provide additional information on the policies.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to two student trip requests. He noted that the request contained in Enclosure #30 was for a trip by high school cheerleaders to a state competition at the University of Pittsburgh from 11/21/03 through 11/23/03. He asked for Board action on the request that evening since the trip was scheduled for later in the week. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Ryan left the meeting at approximately 9:50 p.m.

Mr. Orlow noted that a French teacher at the high school had proposed a French exchange trip from 01/16/04 through 02/03/04. He indicated that this French exchange trip was similar to a Spanish Exchange in the previous year. Mr. Yunker asked for the end date of the first semester and learned that it fell on 01/23/03. He also asked why the plans for the trip called for parents to pick students up at the airport when a bus would be scheduled to take them to the airport. Other board members believed that it was arranged so that parents could get students home more rapidly following a long trip. Mr. Orlow noted that the paperwork seemed to indicate that both the French and Spanish exchanges were part of a single request and asked if both were up for approval that evening. Mr. Johnson asked why the French trip had to be approved that evening. Ms. Glodek reported that the teacher had to contact the receiving school soon in order to confirm arrangements. She noted that the French trip was new and that a long-term arrangement did not exist. Mr. Orlow deferred action on the Spanish Exchange until the Thursday meeting. Mr. Yunker made a motion authorizing the French students to make the trip provided that they had completed their first semester work prior to their departure. Dr. Lipshutz seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Dr. Ryan was not present for the vote.

Mr. Orlow announced that two teacher conference requests would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday. Enclosure #32 was a request from T.C. Boegly and Julie Pustilnick of Colonial Elementary School to attend the National Council of Social Studies Educators Conference in Chicago from 11/13/03 through 11/16/03. Enclosure #33 was a request from Maureen Haegele of the high school to attend the Annual Conference of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development in New Orleans 03/18/04 through 03/22/04.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be taking action on Thursday evening to approve the Administration's response and action plan to the Auditor General's Audit Report for the years ending 06/30/1999-2000-01-02. See Enclosure #24.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: No reports.

Additional Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**