

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, AUGUST 16, 2004**

President Orlow convened the Work Session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:48 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on August 16, 2004.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Thomas Davis, Gary Johnson, Hope Luken, Susan Moore, William Ryan, Pascal Scoles, and Mitch Zimmer.

Board Members Absent: Steven Slutsky.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; John Quinn, Director of CITV; John A. O'Brien 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 prior to the meeting.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 07/12/04, the General Meeting of 07/15/04, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 07/19/04, the Special Meeting of 07/20/04, the Finance Committee of 07/28/04 and the Personnel Committee Meeting of 07/29/04. See Enclosures #1 through #6 of the agenda for Thursday, 08/19/04. Mr. Orlow noted that the minutes of the Special Meeting of 07/29/04 would be available on Thursday. Board members had no questions or comments.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports. They included 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, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 07/31/04, as shown in Enclosures #7 through #17. Board members had no questions or comments on the reports.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Notice was provided that Dr. Gorodetzer would have a report on Thursday evening on the district's summer programs at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Old Business: Dr. Cotter reported that the proposed revision of Policy #715, Use of District Parking Lots, had been updated to reflect current district practice and to permit

commercial drivers education programs to use district lots in off-hours only after filing a facility use application and receiving district authorization.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow reported that the district had received a clean report from its independent auditor for the 2002-03 fiscal year. He noted that the report contained no citations and that board members had received copies of the report for their review. Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would take formal action on the report at its general meeting on Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow advised that the district had received a donation of \$100 from the Odyssey Softball Organization in appreciation of district cooperation in making fields available for the NSA 14U Eastern State Championships in May. He indicated that the Board would take action to accept the donation at its Thursday meeting. See Enclosure #19. Dr. Cotter reported that Odyssey Softball was an AAU organization.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter reported on the personnel actions listed in Enclosures #20 through #23 of the agenda for Thursday evening. He noted the 31 personnel actions being recommended, the current annual list of extra-duty/extra-pay assignments for 2004-05, commented on the initial listing of classes and instructors for the Adult Evening School for Fall 2004, and provided an enrollment update. Mr. Orlow asked if the vacancies that still existed on the extra-duty/extra-pay schedule were because of timing or because the positions were difficult to fill. Mr. Berger responded that both factors impacted on filling vacancies and advised that updates would be provided throughout the year, as usual. He noted that 249 vacancies were filled and only 17 were vacant as of the current report. Mr. Berger reported that he would be updating the list on Thursday evening to include a recommendation to hire and set compensation for a coach for the established Mock Trial Team at the high school. Dr. Cotter noted that adult evening classes were subject to enrollment and that tuitions were set to cover program costs. Dr. Cotter reported that average class sizes as of Monday evening were 11-20 at the kindergarten level, 15-19 for 1st and 2nd grade and 17-19 for 3rd grade. Mr. Orlow asked if kindergarten enrollments were up. Mr. Berger indicated that he had requested updated numbers and would have a full report on Thursday evening. He advised that the projected number was 315 and expected to approach that number by the start of school. He also advised that the district had not filled one kindergarten position pending confirmation of the need. Dr. Cotter noted a history of late enrollments in certain schools.

New Business: Mr. Orlow announced that committee assignments would be on the agenda for Thursday evening as Enclosure #24. He asked board members to take a final look at the planned assignments. He noted that committee assignments had changed because of resignations from the Board and asked board members to contact him with any questions or suggestions.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Administration had proposed updates to Board Policy #004, Board Committee Functions to reflect current committee/liason responsibilities and to change the name of the Buildings and Grounds Committee to the Facilities Management Committee. He noted that the proposed changes had been reviewed by the Community

Relations and Student Life Committee and asked that board members contact Dr. Cotter if they had any suggestions. See Enclosure #25 of Thursday's agenda.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be considering a revision of Board Policy #225, Student Activities, on Thursday evening. See Enclosure # 26 of Thursday's agenda. He noted that the revisions centered on updating the level of funding allocated for the purchase of student awards. Dr. Cotter reported that the money was deposited in team accounts so that the team could purchase plaques and other forms for recognition for team members. He noted that students did not receive monetary awards.

Mr. Orlow advised that three transportation contracts would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday. They included a contract for transporting two students to Devon Preparatory School at a cost of \$11.00 per student per day and another for transporting 21 students to St. Joseph's Preparatory School for \$5.50 per student per day. These renewal contracts represented modest increases over the prior year. The third contract was for an unnamed student that was to be transported at the IRS rate of \$0.375 per mile from home to Harrisburg and back once each week to pick up transportation to and from the Pittsburgh School of the Deaf. This special needs student had an IEP that called for his attendance at the Pittsburgh school. The other students did not require special accommodation but were attending non-public schools within a ten-mile radius of the district. All three contracts provided the most efficient and cost effective method of meeting the students' transportation needs.

Mr. Orlow reported that the high school was recommending approval of an exchange student who had requested the opportunity to attend the high school during the 2004-05 school year in 11th grade. He noted that board members had information on the student at their places as well details on appropriate sponsorship. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter if student exchanges were common in the district. Dr. Cotter indicated that the district did not receive many requests but did receive some from time to time. He reported that such exchanges were not only great opportunities for the foreign student but also opportunities for enriching the lives of PWHS students and staff.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to a request from Dr. Sullivan, PWHS Principal, for two students to become delegates to the PA School Boards Association Conference in Hershey from 09/29/04 through 10/01/04. See Enclosure #29 of the agenda for Thursday evening. Mr. Orlow noted that the district had not sent students to the conference in recent years. Dr. Cotter acknowledged that it had been about 10 years since students last attended the event but felt that it was a good opportunity for the students to learn and for the district to showcase their talents. He noted that the district would have the names of the students for the Board on Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be acting on Thursday evening on the annual list of professional conferences requests from Cabinet and CASEA members. See Enclosure #30.

Mr. Orlow and Dr. Cotter highlighted an initiative that involved the Pupil Services Department negotiating a tuition contract with the Martin Luther School/Silver Springs to provide programs for students admitted to the residential facility during the 2004-05 school year. They explained that the negotiations took place among the district, the school and the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit to meet the needs of special needs students, mostly from Philadelphia, who were temporarily housed at Colonial Elementary School in I.U. classes but eventually admitted to programs at the Martin Luther School. The proposed contract would streamline the process of getting the students into an appropriate setting and program and eliminate I.U. classrooms in Colonial Elementary School where classrooms were needed to house increased enrollment in district classes. Dr. Cotter noted that the Philadelphia School District would cover the cost of Philadelphia students who attended the Martin Luther School and advised that the district was tightening up on timelines to make sure that full reimbursement was made in accordance with applicable regulations. He characterized the arrangement as a win for all parties.

Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Berger to provide an overview of a proposed contract with the Educator's Clearinghouse – PA-Educator.net for services that would supplement the district's other efforts to locate suitable candidates to fill professional vacancies in the district. Mr. Berger noted that the cost of the contract would be \$3,000 for the period 06/08/04 through 06/30/05 and that the program would be an additional source of candidates beyond PAREAP. He confirmed that the annual fee for PAREAP was \$950 but noted that the Educator's Clearinghouse offered on-line access to other educational documentation and references in addition to resumes. Mr. Berger advised that the district had tried the proposed program and believed that it would allow it to move toward a paperless recruiting process. See Enclosure #31 of Thursday evening's agenda.

Mr. Orlow reported that an RFP and three bids would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. He asked Mr. Bell to walk board members through the four bids. Mr. Bell outlined the Request for Proposal process that the district had followed for securing proposals for a point-of-purchase system in the middle school and high school cafeterias that would allow students with bar-coded identification cards to purchase meals without cash. He noted that the system would make it faster and easier for students to move through the serving lines, permit students in the free and reduced lunch program to purchase meals without others knowing that they were enrolled in the program, and enable the district to more accurately track participation in the free and reduced meal program, a key factor in assessing student progress under *No Child Left Behind*. Mr. Orlow questioned the district's determination of the lowest responsible respondent. Mr. Bell provided information on the process and data used in reaching the determination that the solution offered by Food Service Solutions, the apparent lowest respondent, was actually more costly than the solution offered by the second lowest respondent, Schoolhouse, once all specifications were met. Mr. Orlow requested that the information be provided to the solicitor for his review and opinion.

Mr. Bell noted that the three bids had been provided to multiple vendors but only one bidder had responded to each bid request. The Administration recommended the awarding of the ice cream and milk and juice bids, as outlined in Enclosures #32 and #33,

to Nelson's Ice Cream and Rosenberger's Dairies, respectively, at the totals reported in the enclosures and the wood lathe to Forest Scientific Corp. at \$14,999.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: Mr. Ryan reported that the Board might be taking action on Thursday evening on an Incurred Debt Resolution in order to incur planned debt under a new bond issue earlier and meet a possible deadline for booking the debt. He noted that the action might be taken so that the added debt could be excluded from future calculations involved in back-end referendums under new tax reform legislation.

Mr. Davis advised that all district schools met standards for Average Yearly Progress (AYP) under *No Child Left Behind*. He reported that all grades taking PSSA tests scored above the state average. Mr. Davis also announced that approximately 50 teachers new to the district had attended the recent induction program. Dr. Gorodetzer advised that the district would share information on student performance in recent AP tests at the Board's September meeting. She also reported that the Administration was analyzing recent data from PSSA and Terra Nova testing. Mr. Orlow asked when a complete analysis of Above and Beyond goals would be complete. Dr. Gorodetzer advised that the district already had data on meeting the goals but had just received hard copies of the data from the state that day. She reported that upcoming programming would allow the district to go in and manipulate the data and expected that staff would have disaggregated data by October. She noted that preliminary information was very encouraging. Dr. Cotter indicated that the district was working on stable data and gave as an example the need to screen students that were only with the district for a short period.

Additional Public Comment: Mr. O'Brien expressed his point of view on the process that the Board used to fill recent Board vacancies. He stated that his views were his alone. He questioned Ms. Luken's role on a political action committee that supported the Republican candidates in the last school board election. He opposed her recent appointment to the Board because he considered her too partisan for the position. Mr. O'Brien had a number of suggestions for further opening the process of selecting replacement board members up to the community and urged all at the meeting to write to their legislators to demand proportional representation for elections to school boards in Pennsylvania. He also stated his opinion that Mrs. O'Brien should have been named to the Board because she had finished ninth in the most recent election to fill eight Board seats and was, therefore, the people's choice.

Mr. Orlow outlined the state mandated process for filling vacant seats on school boards when board members leave office mid-term. He noted the role of board members as officers of the state with a responsibility to conduct business in accordance with the school code and applicable laws and regulations. Mr. Orlow reminded Mr. O'Brien that the meeting, at which eight candidates had been interviewed for a seat that Ms. Luken was selected to fill, had been properly advertised and was open to the public. Mr. Orlow reviewed the deliberations that had taken place at that meeting prior to the unanimous vote by the five board members present to appoint Ms. Luken to the Board. He advised Mr.

O'Brien to contact the state legislature with his suggestions regarding proportional representation on school boards across the state.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**