

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 23, 2004**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:06 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on September 23, 2004.

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

Board Members Absent: Mitch Zimmer.

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; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Ryan Moore and Jessica Klein, Board Student Representatives; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; John Quinn, Director of CITV, Lenore Ciccolone, Security Officer and Dante DelVecchio.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Moore, board member and Mr. Moore, student representative were not present at the start of the meeting.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 08/16/04, the General Meeting of 08/19/04, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/02/04, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 09/09/04, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 09/14/04 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 09/20/04. See Enclosures #2 through #5, #33 and #34. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all board members present voted in favor. Mrs. Moore was not present for the vote. The motion was carried.

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 08/31/04, as shown in Enclosures #6 through #16. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the reports. All board members present voted in favor. Mrs. Moore was not present for the vote. The motion was carried.

Mrs. Moore and Mr. Moore joined the meeting.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer spoke on the district's program goals for 2004-05 in the areas of technology, data analysis, curriculum and instruction, public relations and standards for teaching. They reported that the district would continue to emphasize the use of data in decision making, develop and follow action plans for improving student performance, stress evaluations in the area of staff accountability, work through the Community Relations and Student Life Committee on outreach efforts to the community and press forward with standards of teaching at the secondary level. Drs. Cotter and Gorodetzer noted that the district had started implementation of its *Above and Beyond* program at the elementary level and made significant progress in improving student achievement. She also commented on the roll out of the connected math program in 8th grade at Colonial Middle School and the Carnegie math program in the high school. They reported that the district would focus more on the secondary level during 2004-05. Dr. Cotter provided background of the *Above and Beyond* program, noting that the program had real teeth, was backed by contractual language, was backed by the use of data to assess student strengths and weaknesses and set goals for improving student achievement. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the district continued to provide staff training in data collection and analysis and was focused on making data management more user friendly. Both noted the role that the district's new Chief Information Officer would have in refining the level of technological support of the process. Dr. Cotter reported on the goal-setting process. He noted that the goals began with a dialogue involving the Board and District Office administrators and were shared after a consensus had been reached with building principals. Dr. Cotter indicated that the goals outlined efforts beyond what the district was currently doing. He reported that the goals were discussed with staff and these discussions resulted in action plans at the school level.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on updates of Board Policies #004, Board Committee Function and #225, Awards – Student Activities. See Enclosures #17 and #18. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve Board Policy #004. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve Board Policy #225. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: The agenda reflected an email from Andrew Mount on the current labor impasse between the Board and the Colonial Education Association.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter updated the personnel actions and enrollment information listed in Enclosures #19 through #22. He noted the resignation of a Special Education Supervisor since Monday evening and additions to the list of new hires and substitutes and changes in extra-duty/extra-pay assignments. Dr. Cotter also reported a small drop in kindergarten enrollment at Plymouth Elementary School that eased slightly the class-size concerns in that building. Mr. Orlow asked how the district had handled the instrumental music position in the high school between the start of school and the hiring of a long-term substitute. Mr. Berger reported that a substitute and a retired district teacher who were certified music filled in during that period. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter and Mr. Sultanik to update the community on the district's contingency plans in the event of teachers' strike and the fact-finding process, respectively.

Dr. Cotter reported that the district had contracted with Montgomery Early Learning Centers (MELC) to provide day care services at Plymouth Elementary School during a strike. He noted that MELC could accommodate 600 students in 27 classes and advised that the district was exploring the options for housing all of the classes in a single building. He noted that one site was preferable because it made management and the provision of transportation easier. Dr. Cotter advised that Plymouth Township and Conshohocken Borough had pledged assistance in providing activities at the Fellowship House and Recreation Center during a strike. He reported that administrators and other support staff were ready in the event of a work stoppage but noted that it would take a couple of days to get up and running once a strike was announced. Dr. Cotter also reminded the Board and the community that non-public transportation would continue during a strike in the district's public schools.

Mr. Sultanik reported on the timeline for fact-finding. He confirmed that the report was due to the parties the following Monday and that the Board and the Colonial Education Association would have ten days to review the document before they had to take an up or down vote on it. He noted that the report would not be made public during that period. Mr. Sultanik advised that, if both parties accepted the report, it would become an agreement between the parties. If one or both of the parties rejected that report, the Labor Board would release the report to the media, and the parties would have another ten-day period to review the report and vote to either accept or reject it. If both parties voted to accept the report, it would become an agreement between the parties. If one or both of the parties rejected the report, the no-strike period would end and the CEA would be able to call a strike with 48 hours notice to the superintendent. Mr. Sultanik expressed the hope that the report would narrow or resolve the issue between the parties.

Board Student Representatives Report: Ms. Klein reported on the fall play at the high school and noted that new directors would be overseeing the production. She also reported that fall sports were underway, Back-to-School Night had gone well and the Band Cavalcade was planned for the first weekend in October. Mr. Moore highlighted the freshman orientation under new leadership, the 9th grade parent orientation, the senior dance, and plans for the senior trip next spring.

New Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on three special education placements on the agenda. He noted that the placements at the Quaker School and Upper Merion School District and for extended school year services had been reviewed on Monday evening. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the placements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a recommendation from Mrs. DeLong for an early admission to kindergarten. He noted that the recommendation had been reviewed on

Monday evening. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the early admission. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request from Maico Azcona, Assistant Principal at Colonial Middle School, for authorization to attend the Effective Schools Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona from 03/10/05 through 03/13/05 at a cost not to exceed the allotted allocation for administrators. See Enclosure #23. He reported that the Board had approved the requests of other administrators in August and that the delayed report from Mr. Azcona had been reviewed on Monday evening. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board approval on a first reading of the three policies in Enclosures #24, #25 and #26. He noted that the policies further delineated the obligation of district staff and students in the handling of copyrighted materials. Mr. Sultanik reported that some school districts were facing copyright audits. The policies had been reviewed on Monday evening. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the policies on a first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on two field trip requests from the high school wrestling coach. The requests were for tournaments at Central Mountain High School in Mill Hall, PA on 12/10/04 and 12/11/04 and Governor Mifflin High School in Shillington, PA on 12/28/04 and 12/29/04. See Enclosure #27, which had been reviewed on Monday evening. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trips. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a Not-for-Profit Corporate Banking Resolution reviewed on meeting. See Enclosure #28. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik requested Board approval of two settlements of tax assessment appeal. The settlements were for parcels #65-00-0542-00-9 and #49-00-00000-95-9. The former involved a property at 1101 Hector Street and set the assessment of the property at \$3,000,000 for the 2004 and 2005 tax years. The latter involved a property at 102 Allenwood Road and set the assessment of the property at \$4,000,000 for 2004 and 2005. Mr. Slutsky 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: Intermediate Unit Board: Dr. Ryan briefly summarized two meetings and highlighted the hiring of new teachers, the creation of a new Public Information Office, a presentation on instructional materials services and a video conferencing capability between the I.U. and member schools.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that the CMCAVTS Joint Operating Committee had approved drawings for the renovation of the facility that would be bid in February.

Personnel: Mr. Johnson reported that the committee had reviewed enrollment and class size, especially at Plymouth Elementary School. He noted that the district would add aides to kindergarten classrooms if they exceed the recommended level.

Finance: Mr. Slutsky reported that the board had approved a new bond on Monday evening at low interest rates. He noted that the funds would be used for major capital projects. He thanked Mr. Bickleman for his efforts to secure the funds at better rates than other districts had been getting.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis noted that the committee had met on Monday evening and that the minutes of the meeting had been approved and were in Enclosure #34. He briefly summarized the issues covered in the enclosure.

Facilities Management/Transportation (formerly Buildings and Grounds): Mrs. Moore gave a brief recap of the capital projects that had recently been completed or were nearing completion. They included the all-day kindergarten classrooms at Ridge Park and Whitemarsh Elementary Schools, the main roofs at the single-story side of the high school, the curtain wall at Conshohocken Elementary and the temporary relocation of Conshohocken Elementary to Colonial Elementary. All of the projects were substantially complete as of the meeting, except the classrooms at Ridge Park which were to be ready on 10/11/04 and the curtain wall at Conshohocken Elementary which was ahead of schedule. She noted that Conshohocken students would return to their renovated building after winter break. Mrs. Moore also advised that the district was planning to undertake renovations of the District Office and the high school library, expand the trainer's room and the storage building in the stadium and replace the main roofs at the middle school. The latter would complete the district's multi-year roof replacement program. Mrs. Moore also provided an update on the point-of-sale automated check-out system at the middle and high schools, ongoing efforts in the Transportation Department to address family requests for transportation accommodations following the start of school and the joint efforts of CITV and the Technology and Facilities Management Departments to upgrade maintenance of the Phoenix multi-media systems at the middle and high schools.

Community Relations and Student Life: Dr. Scoles reported that the historical display developed for Whitemarsh Heritage Day had been shown in the Board Room on Monday evening, was open for CES students on Tuesday morning and was in the main lobby of the high school for Back-to-School Night that evening (Thursday). He also indicated the district's annual report would be out at the end of October and that the committee was looking at various avenues for communicating with the public. Dr. Scoles reported that committee members were looking at the possibility of a matinee for seniors for the spring musical, contingency plans in the event of a work stoppage by the professional staff, and other initiatives. Mr. Orlow asked the committee to look into establishing an ad hoc or citizen's advisory committee that represented a cross-section of the community and could serve as a sounding board for the School Board. He asked the committee to come back to the Board with a recommendation.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan spoke about county efforts to help districts comply with Act 72 and noted that all parties, including the legislature and the schools, were seeking interpretations of the many rules associated with the act. He reported that the PA School Boards Association would be meeting with the legislators the following week.

Mr. Orlow asked board members to remain after the meeting for an executive session.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**