

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 17, 2005**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on November 17, 2005.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Gary Johnson, Tom Davis, 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; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Jessica Klein and Angela D'Alessandro, Board Student Representatives; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Patricia Madeira, Principal, Conshohocken Elementary School; David Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Carol Bucci; Shana Duffine; Robert Liptock; Erin McKelvey; Lori Strosser; Marcia Wright-Soika; students being honored, their coaches, families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and asked Dr. Cotter to facilitate the introduction of the coaches and players of the varsity golf team that had won its second league championship in a row and had its first undefeated season in 29 years. The Board recognized the players and presented them with certificates of achievement. A complete list of those honored is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the minutes of the Work Session of 10/17/05, the General Meeting of 10/20/05, the Facilities Management - Transportation Committee Meeting of 11/03/05, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 11/09/05, the Community Relations – Student Life Committee Meeting of 11/10/05 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 11/14/05. See Enclosures #1 through #3 and #33 through #35. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented that evening. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the financial reports. The reports included the Budget Transfers, Bond Fund Report, the Capital Project Report, General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund Report, the Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Escrow Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 10/31/05, as shown in Enclosures #4 through #15. Mr. Orlow asked how the Bond Fund Reports had been updated since Monday evening. Mr. Bickleman reported that additional bills had been received. Ms. Luken moved and Mr. Johnson 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: Dr. Madeira provided a report on the use of technology across the curriculum at Conshohocken Elementary School and presented examples of student work at each grade level. In response to a question from Mr. Orlow, she confirmed that staff and students made good use of the upgrades in technology each year even though the district goals for the current year did not include a separate goal for technology. She reported that technology had become an integral part of delivering curriculum at each grade level.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow reported that the Board had already set the start date for the 2006-07 school year and would be acting on the full school calendar that evening. See Enclosure #16. Mr. Orlow sought and received confirmation that the Colonial Education Association (CEA) had reviewed the calendar options. Dr. Cotter reported that both the Community Relations – Student Life Committee and the CEA preferred draft #1. Mr. Orlow noted that draft #1 was a traditional calendar with two in-service days and regular breaks in the winter and spring. He reported that it called for classes to begin the day after Labor Day and end on Friday, 06/15/07. Mr. Johnson asked what changes had been made to the draft since Monday. Dr. Cotter reported that the date of the Rosh Hashanah holiday had been corrected. Dr. Scoles moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the calendar. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the second reading of Board Policy #202, Non-Resident Students and Tuition Payment on Thursday evening. See Enclosure #17. He noted that the policy had been reviewed on Monday evening and provided greater clarity on district practice. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the policy on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow sought Board acceptance of an organ that Ron Lopresti, a retired teacher and coach at PWHS, had donated for use in the high school music program. He thanked Mr. Lopresti for his generous donation and asked Mr. Bickleman how the district accounted for donations. Mr. Bickleman reported that he held documentation of such donations, listed their value as revenue and accounted for them as fixed assets. Mr. Orlow sought and received confirmation that treating the donations as a fixed assets meant that they were covered by district insurance.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter provided information on the changes that had been made to his report on personnel actions, changes to the substitute lists, and proposed extra-duty/extra-pay assignments since Monday evening. He also provided current information on student enrollment in all district schools. See Enclosures #18 through #20 of Thursday evening's agenda. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board discussion and action on a request from Adam Bailey, PWHS Spanish teacher, to participate in the Fulbright teacher exchange program. He noted that Mr. Bailey had made an earlier request that he be allowed to participate in the program.

Dr. Cotter told the Board that Mr. Bailey's application had been held for three years and that action was now required or his opportunity would pass. Mr. Johnson reported that Mr. Bailey had met with the Personnel Committee and had addressed the concerns that had been raised by board members. Mr. Sultanik confirmed that school districts generally acted on such requests on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Orlow asked what protection that the district had against teachers not returning following an exchange. Dr. Cotter advised that the Board could make returning a condition for approving the request. Mrs. Moore reported that Mr. Bailey had expressed his willingness to put his intention to return to the high school in writing. Dr. Scoles and Mr. Davis sought confirmation that the exchange program was part of the overall program run by the Fulbright organization. Dr. Cotter confirmed that it was, but he noted that the exchange program was not part of the scholarship program or as selective as that program.. Mr. Orlow asked who would be assuming Mr. Bailey's extra-duty/extra-pay duties during his absence. Dr. Cotter indicated that arrangements had not yet been made to cover Mr. Bailey's department chair responsibilities or his honors classes. Mr. Orlow received confirmation that Mr. Bailey would not receive his extra-duty pay while on his exchange. Dr. Cotter reported that the district was considering an exchange for one semester only and noted that the exchange could come in either the fall of 2006 or the spring of 2007. He also reported that the district had the right to screen the written credentials of any foreign teacher involved in the exchange and accept or decline his or her placement at PWHS. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the exchange request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: Ms. D'Alessandro provided updates on the fall sports teams, the Colonial Player's fall show and Parents' Night for those with students in the junior class. Ms. Klein reported on the faculty's efforts to promote multi-cultural awareness, an assembly on the Holocaust and the annual food drive in December.

New Business: Mr. Orlow sought Board would action to authorize payment to the Student Councils at the middle school and high school in an amount equal to one half of the funds remaining from the 2004-05 anti-vandalism program after paying for repairs and to fund the program for the 2005-06 school year at the same level as the previous year. See Enclosure #21. Mr. Orlow stated that the program had been in effect for 20 years. He noted that some vandalism had occurred in the prior year. He asked if the reported vandalism included only those incidents for which the district received no reimbursement because the vandals had not been identified. Mr. Bell confirmed that to be the case. He reported that vandalism to the tennis courts had not been included because the parties involved had been identified and restitution was being made. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to provide the Student Councils at PWHS and CMS funds for their anti-vandalism campaigns in the amounts of \$2,099 and \$1,123 respectively, and to fund the program for the current year as in the prior year, \$5,000 and \$3,000 respectively. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on two student trip requests, Enclosure #22 – a request for the boys' lacrosse team to travel to Charlottesville, VA during spring break from 04/11/06 to 04/15/06 and Enclosure #23 – a request for the girls' lacrosse team to travel to Florida during spring break from 04/08/05 to 04/15/05. Both requests were supported by

the PWHS Administration. Students were to pay the costs of the trips. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the trips. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested that Board action on a request from the high school administration for English teacher, Nancy Lipner to attend the 2005 Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Pittsburgh from 11/17/05 through 11/20/05. Costs were to be covered as part of the high school's professional development program. See Enclosure #24. Mr. Zimmer 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 asked for Board action on a recommendation from Ms. DeLong to approve a Special education Placement Contract for residential and educational services for an IEP student attending the district. He noted that the placement was for an IEP student and was the result of a due process hearing and would come at an annual cost of more than \$150,000 to the district. Mr. Orlow asked about partial reimbursement for the placement. Ms. DeLong reported that there were no slots currently available for reimbursement but pledged that the district would apply for reimbursement when a slot did become available. Ms. Luken moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on Thursday evening on a recommendation from Ms. DeLong to add the Ambler Day Alternative School as an alternative school placement option for district students. See Enclosure #25. Dr. Ryan noted that the school was licensed and accredited. Mr. Orlow asked if that was sufficient for reimbursement. Ms. DeLong and Dr. Cotter explained that the school was for alternative placement of students with disciplinary issues and not an approved private school for special education students. For that reason, reimbursement was not a factor. Dr. Cotter also said that it was an appropriate facility for certain students who needed alternative placement and offered a bona fide education for them. Mr. Bickleman reported that the state offered only \$25,000 in funding for alternative education services and that district programs far exceeded that amount. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to add Ambler Day Alternative School to the list of schools for alternative placements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on bids for equipment and supplies for the boys' lacrosse team. See Enclosure #26 for the lowest responsible bidders for various items. Board members noted that they had received a breakdown of the equipment ordered. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the bids as listed in Enclosure #23. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a revision of Board Policy #125.1, Adult Evening School, which adjusts the hourly salary range for approved staff. Mr. Orlow noted that the policy was coming before the Board on a first reading and that the premise behind adult evening school had always been that tuition payments would make the program self-sustaining. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the revised policy on first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik requested Board approval of Stipulations #95102 for a violation of the district's weapons policy. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the stipulations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Sultanik recommended a tax appeal settlement agreement negotiated by his office for parcels, 05-00-11858-008, 05-00-11866-001 and 05-00-11888-005, as outlined in a letter from his office, dated 11/07/05. Mr. Orlow reported that Fox Rothschild, the office of the solicitor, had enabled the district to increase its revenues by settling tax assessment appeals under favorable terms and that the Board had a lot of confidence in the firm's work in this area. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the settlement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: **Intermediate Unit Board:** Dr. Ryan reported that the IU had issued a new Parent Guide to Special Education. He also announced that the IU was looking to purchase the building that it now occupied and that four members of the board had retired and replacements were being sought. Dr. Ryan noted that Fox Rothschild would be handling the orientation program for new board members. He provided a brief update on the state and federal audits and a new program involving 51 intermediate units to get increased funding for early intervention programs.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson announced that the Center for Technical Studies would be closed on 11/28/05 in order to restore power following facility upgrades over the four-day Thanksgiving weekend. Dr. Cotter reported that the district had arranged transportation to get the students to their regular programs in the high school. He advised that the district had encouraged the center to arrange career training opportunities that day as well, but the center had been unable to make the necessary arrangements in time.

Personnel: Mr. Johnson reported that the committee had looked into class size at the middle school following a large number of registrations after the start of school. Mr. Berger provided information on the efforts of the Human Resources Department to move to an on-line application process for professional staff. He noted that using the on-line program allowed the district to sort applications by certain criteria and undertake its paper screening of applicants more efficiently prior to setting up interviews. Mr. Berger assured the Board that the Human Resources Department would continue all of its outreach programs to attract the best candidates available.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis reported that the district was seeking teacher input into planning professional development and working to have dual enrollment opportunities with local colleges for the coming year. He also provided an update on course offerings and scheduling and provided information on the technology plan for the secondary schools that included both replacements and enhancements.

Facilities Management – Transportation: Mrs. Moore provided updates on the renovation of the high school library and reminded the Board and the community that the library would be open on 12/05/06 and formally dedicated on 01/11/06. She reported briefly on the first meeting of the township committee on plans for Wetherill Park, the bidding schedule, zoning process and renovation schedule for the Facilities Management Center (formerly the building at Victory Fields) and the trainer’s room and stadium expansion at PWHHS. The center should be completed by the end of the school year and the trainer’s room and stadium expansion should be available for the start of the new school year.

Community Relations – Student Life: Dr. Scoles noted the email drive to encourage legislators not to link school funding with gambling. He also reminded the community of the dedication of the high school library on 01/11/05, the senior matinee of the spring musical on 04/11/06, and the district art show open to seniors on the afternoon of 04/20/06 and to the general public that same evening. Mr. Orlow noted that PTO’s were circulating petitions opposing the use of gambling funds to support public education and require referendums on public school budgets.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan reported on the legislature’s abbreviated work schedule as the calendar year drew to a close and the danger of sudden action on a number of bills dealing with public education without much public input. He specifically noted the bill, called the Commonwealth Caucus, which was a follow-up bill to Act 72, which most districts had rejected. Mr. Orlow reported that the district had been very assertive in presenting its views to local legislators.

Additional Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary