

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, May 17, 2007.**

President Orlow convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:04 p.m. in the auditorium of Colonial Elementary School (CES) on May 17, 2007.

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

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Gerald E. Berger, Director of Human Resources; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Angela D'Alessandro and Philip Weisgold, Board Student Representatives; David Reppert; Crystal Taylor; Tonia Kaufman; Irene Guerriero; Clint Rickert; Members of the Colonial Education Association (CEA) [See attachment A]; students receiving awards, their friends and families.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and noted that a number of students were present to receive awards. He introduced Dr. Cotter who invited Tonia Kauffman and Irene Guerriero to the podium to present the high school music awards. Clint Rickert then presented awards to students in the Technology Student Association who had advanced to the state competition. Finally, Maureen Convery introduced members of the fourth and fifth grade Odyssey of the Mind teams that advanced to the state competition. See Attachment B for a complete list of the students receiving awards.

Mr. Orlow announced that the Board had met in executive session on 04/25/2007, 05/09/2007, 05/14/2007 and 05/17/2007 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider the minutes of the Work Session of 04/16/2007; the General Meeting of 04/19/2007; the Finance Committee of 04/23/2007; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee, the Human Resources Committee, the Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee and the Safety and Wellness Committee of 05/03/2007 and the Curriculum Committee of 05/14/2007. See enclosures #1 through #5 and #48 through #50.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the financial reports on the list for approval. The reports included the Budget Transfers, the Bond Fund Report, the Capital Projects Report, the General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund, the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 04/30/2007, as shown in enclosures #6 through #17.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Staff Report:** Conshohocken Elementary School Principal Judi Lipson and teacher Nina Pratoski spoke to, and showed a movie depicting, the school's integration of technology and writing across all content areas. They also touched on their ongoing integration of multicultural and diversity themes in lessons.

Mr. Orlow directed that the administration place on the internet the videos and presentations that principals and building representatives have made throughout the year.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow asked Board members to consider a request from Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), that the District pay the submitted invoice for dues for the 2007-2008 school year. See enclosure #18. Mr. Orlow noted that the boards of all 501 districts in Pennsylvania belonged to the PSBA and that the organization provided valuable services. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bickleman explained that there was no correlation between the dues increase from the previous year and the District's market value. He noted that Colonial is maxed out in terms of the market value formula used by PSBA to determine dues. He stated that the dues reflect the maximum allowed 3.4 percent increase from the 2006-2007 school year.

Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve payment of the dues. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow announced that Thomas M. Kuestner, Elementary Vice-President of the Colonial Education Association, was present to speak to the Board regarding teacher efforts and accomplishments with the intent of collaboratively establishing a fair, professional contract. See enclosure #19. Mr. Kuestner thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and introduced Jim Donofrio, Abbey Gutkowski and Liz Malarski who each read a portion of a letter to the Board. See Attachment C. Mr. Orlow stated that the Board agreed with the fact that the teachers play a major role in the successes of the District. He then explained that both parties had agreed to Fact Finding and explained that process. He noted that the Fact Finder was scheduled to present his report within the next two days and that the teachers and the Board would have 10 days to review the report and vote on it in its entirety. If both sides approve the report then a contract is reached. The Fact Finder's report will be made public if either side rejects any portion of the report. Mr. Orlow stated that the entire Board was hopeful the parties could find common ground and come to a resolution sooner rather than later. He noted that the Board would look at the report objectively and hoped the CEA would do the same. He concluded by stating that if both sides look at the report as if a contract will be reached, then it will.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a request from Dr. Monica Sullivan, PWHS Principal, to accept a \$1,000 donation from the Wal-Mart Foundation in honor of PWHS science teacher Sandra Grigas, recently named a Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year. See enclosure #20. Dr. Cotter reported that there was no stipulation regarding how the donation was to be spent and that there was an open nomination process.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter noted that there were two yellow pages updating his report from Monday evening. See enclosures #21 and #51. He stated that there was one additional resignation, one additional retirement, seven more leaves or extensions of leaves of absence and four replacements. He noted that there was a new Extra Duty/Extra Pay position to fill the faculty manager position at Colonial Middle School (CMS). He noted that a non-bargaining unit wage/salary proposal was before

members as a separate attachment as was a blue page regarding the appointment of a temporary long-term sub at PWHS for the remainder of the school year.

Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Berger stated that the district had received only three teacher retirements and that he had no other formal announcements at this time.

Mr. Orlow announced that he and Mr. Zimmer would be abstaining from voting on the Superintendent's report as each had a son on the list of summer employees for approval. Mr. Orlow stated that he and Mr. Zimmer were required to publicly announce the reason for their abstention and noted that they would be filling out the appropriate abstention forms.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Orlow and Mr. Zimmer voted in favor. Mr. Orlow and Mr. Zimmer abstained. The motion was carried, 7-0.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Weisgold noted that the Freshman Fling occurred on April 20 and that the first ever PW Idol contest was held on May 11. He noted that the baseball and softball teams had qualified for playoffs and that the Cappies Award Ceremony has held at Upper Darby High School. Mr. Weisgold stated that the Junior Prom was scheduled for the next night and that class elections are scheduled for the next week. Ms. D'Alessandro noted that the Academic Awards Diner was held on April 24 and the Spring Concert took place on May 3. She noted that the Art Major show is being displayed in the Muse, the Senior Prom is scheduled for June 1 at the Hilton and the Senior Awards Assembly is schedule for June 5. Ms. D'Alessandro thanked Dr. Cotter, Mr. Orlow and the School Board for the opportunity to serve as a student representative and thanked them for all of their work on behalf of the students. Mr. Orlow presented Ms. D'Alessandro with a plaque and thanked her for her service to the community and the School Board.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow stated that this was the time of year for a number of annual appointments as required by Section 404 of the Public School Code. The first of those is the appointment of a Board Treasurer. Mr. Orlow noted Mr. Bickleman has served in the position since before he joined the School Board and that Mr. Bickleman was recommended to continue as Treasurer for the 2007-2008 school year as a salary of \$9,202.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Dr. Ryan seconded the motion to reappoint Mr. Bickleman as School Board Treasurer. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

The second appointment is for a School Board Secretary. Mr. Orlow stated that Mr. Sherman had filled the role in the past year after the retirement of Jim Bell and that he was recommended to continue as Secretary for the 2007-2008 school year at a salary of \$4,500.

Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to name Mr. Sherman as School Board Secretary. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

The third annual appointment as required by Board Policy #004.1 and Administrative Regulation #004.1 is for two positions of student representative to the Board. He noted that the Board interviewed the candidates prior to the meeting. Mr. Orlow moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to appoint Sarah Corcoran as the student representative designated to attend the CRSL meetings and Simon Wong as student representative to attend the monthly School Board meetings. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider a request to adopt a resolution to establish installment payments for property taxes. See enclosure #22. He noted that the installment option only applied to qualified owner occupied residences. At the request of Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bickleman explained that qualified residents would receive a four-part bill in July. The bill will include the option to pay the tax

in three installments due August 15, September 30 and October 31. There will be a 10 percent penalty for late installment payments. Residents may still receive a 2.0 percent discount if they pay their real estate tax bill in full by August 31. Mr. Orlow noted that even though the Act 1 earned income tax was rejected, residents will still have the option to pay real estate taxes by installments, and the Board was still subject to back-end referendum as required by the law.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all vote in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the 2007-2008 Proposed Final Budget. He noted that this was a new step in the budget process as required by Act 1. Responding to a request from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bickleman explained that the budget totaled \$84,599,000 and included a real estate tax increase of 3.40 percent. He noted that the increase equated to an additional \$52 per year for each \$100,000 of assessment or an increase of \$76.43 on the district's median assessed value of \$146,990. Mr. Bickleman added that salary and benefits accounted for the largest portion of the budget. He noted that the budget included the addition of 8.2 teachers and 11 support staff.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the Proposed Final Budget. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider the next three items in one motion. They included the designation of Wachovia Bank as the depository for District funds, a change in the signatures on the CMS Activity Account (see enclosure #23) and the annual list of investment banks, savings and loans and trusts for solicitation of rates on school investments during the 2007-2008 school year (see enclosure #24).

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve all three items as noted above. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow stated that the Board has been asked to approve a list containing estimates for the 2007-2008 federal programs allocation. Ms. Pustilnick reported that Title I funding for Conshohocken Elementary School and Colonial Elementary School is expected to increase 8.3 percent. She also noted that Title 2-A spending is expected to increase 4.2 percent. Mr. Orlow asked if the District could count on receiving the accountability block grant. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the grant, as well as other state grants, were contingent upon the Commonwealth's final budget. Mr. Sultanik noted that was in effect acting on what was analogous to a budget projection. He noted that when individual grants come in they should be approved at that time. Ms. Pustilnick said the allocations are expected to be announced by the end of June. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the projections were included in the budget.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the federal programs allocation estimates. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on leases for space occupied by the Montgomery County Head Start Program housed in District buildings. See enclosure #26. A 4.0 percent increase in rental charges is requested. Mr. Orlow noted that the leases are consistent with others recently approved by the Board.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the leases. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to approve a list of textbooks recommended for adoption and utilization during the 2007-2008 school year. See enclosure #27. Mr. Orlow stressed that the Board was approving the titles and not the actual purchase of the books themselves. At Mr. Orlow's request, Dr. Gorodetzer reviewed the textbook review process by department heads and curriculum supervisors,

which occurs over a number of years. She noted that high school science and 11<sup>th</sup> grade math were on cycle for review this year.

Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the list of textbooks. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to consider special education proposals for extended school year services at both Plymouth Elementary School and CMS, as well as a proposal for a summer reading program for students in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, as one item. See enclosures #28 and #29. He noted that the extended school year program at CMS was a new program while the Board would be renewing the summer reading program.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the special education programs. On a roll call vote, all but Dr. Scoles, who had briefly left the table, voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to act on a series of settlement agreements and placement contracts involving special education students. They are renewal agreements with Foundations Behavioral Health which operated the Lifeworks Alternative School, the Eagle Hill School and Austill's Rehabilitation Services, Inc. Mrs. DeLong confirmed that the Eagle Hill School was located in Massachusetts.

Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the placements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider two professional conference requests as one item. The first is for Ridge Park (RP) Elementary autism teacher Tracy Quinn to attend the annual COSAC Conference in Atlantic City, N.J., May 18-19, 2007. See enclosure #30. The second request is for a number of PWHS and CMS administrators and teachers to attend the AVID Implementation Summer Institute in Atlanta, Ga., July 22-26, 2007. See Enclosure #31. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter to explain the AVID program. Dr. Cotter noted that the program originated out of the PW PrEP initiative. He stated that the program was for lower achieving students who possessed the potential to perform well in college and who may be first time college students in their families or who may not aspire to go to college. Dr. Cotter reported that the program included mentoring and the teaching of study skills. He stated that the program was to be implemented during the next school year and that the Implementation Summer Institute was mandatory. He concluded by noting that the cost for the 17 teachers and administrators to attend the seminar was funded through a college and career counseling grant received from the state.

Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the conference requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to consider five field trip requests in one motion. The first request is for CMS students to travel to the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. (see enclosures #32), the second for CMS students to go to the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, N.J., on May 21, 2007 (see enclosure #33), the third for CE students to attend the Camden Aquarium on June 7, 2007 (see enclosure #52), the fourth for CES students to attend the Odyssey of the Mind World Competition in East Lansing, Mich., from May 24-27, 2007 (see enclosure #53) and the fifth to change the departure and return dates for the previously approved PWHS Class of 2008 trip to Florida (see enclosure #34). Dr. Cotter stated that the CMS trip to the Holocaust Museum had already occurred. He stated that five members of the Board reviewed the trip during an executive session prior to its taking place. He noted that by acting on the trip now, the Board was simply making it part of the official record. Dr. Cotter also pointed out that the CE trip and the CES trip were new requests since Monday's meeting.

Mr. Moore moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the trip requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a series of bid recommendations for instructional and athletic supplies. See enclosures #35 through #41. Instructional bids include elementary art supplies, secondary art supplies, custodial supplies, general supplies, technology education supplies and science supplies. The athletic supplies are for PWHS and CMS. Mr. Orlow noted that the bid forms are lengthy and includes hundreds of small items.

Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the bid recommendations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Solicitor's Report:** No Report.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer reported that at its last meeting, the IU Board has reviewed the non-public school budget, which totaled more than \$11.3 million. He stated that the IU will take action on the budget at its next meeting.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson stated that the vo-tech school planned to hold its senior recognition night at 7:00 p.m. on June 7 at CMS.

Human Resources: Mrs. Luken stated that the committee met on May 3 and reviewed enrollment and staffing. She noted that the committee suggested the addition of several teaching positions including a K-3 math coach, another K-5 gifted teacher, an addition to the .5 math resource position at CMS, an autistic support teacher at RP and an ESL teacher. She stated that the committee reviewed the non-bargaining unit wage/salary proposal and that it is available for public inspection in the Human Resources Office.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis reported that the committee met on May 14 and reviewed the conference requests just approved by the Board. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that Mrs. Boegly and members of the CES teaching staff presented recommended changes to the intermediate school report card, most notably the elimination of a summary grade for fourth grade students. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that Liz McKeaney, Betsy Wells and Amy Venkus presented changes to the new teacher induction program, noting that differentiated instruction would be provided depending on teachers' needs, and that Mrs. DeLong presented a draft of the Special Education Strategic Plan. Mr. Davis noted that because of the increased use of technology, the cost of textbooks has decreased. He also stated that Mrs. DeLong should be congratulated on the quality and thoroughness of the Special Education Strategic Plan.

Facility Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore reported that the artificial turf for Colonial Field would be delivered on Monday. She stated that the CITV studio renovation was nearly completed and that the maintenance and grounds staff had installed a new light in the parking lot of Whitemarsh Elementary School.

Community Relations and Student Life: Dr. Scoles noted that the committee heard a presentation from the group Girls on the Run, which addresses fitness and self esteem issues with young girls. He stated that PWHS peer counselors and representatives of Independence Blue Cross had dedicated a Diversity garden at the school. He concluded by noting that the District would participate in Plymouth Township Day activities in July.

Safety and Wellness: Mr. Zimmer noted that the committee discussed the format for its monthly review of the District Crisis Response flip chart. He noted that the goal was to make all staff better prepared in the event of an emergency. He stated that Montgomery County has selected CMS as a test site for its CLASP emergency communication system. Mr. Zimmer also reported that the committee reviewed a March 26 Newsweek Magazine article which attributed better math scores in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to increased physical activity. He stated that the article inferred that physically fit students performed better academically.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan stated that the voters, who on Tuesday resoundingly defeated the Act 1 tax shift ballot question in the primary election, provided his report. He congratulated all who had taken the time to exercise their right to vote. Mr. Orlow noted that independent voters normally don't vote in the primary elections but many turned out specifically to vote on the ballot question. Mr. Sultanik noted that only nine school districts in the state had their ballot questions approved. Mr. Orlow noted that the state legislature may now attempt to remove the budget exceptions provided to school boards since they will have a hard time addressing the revenue side of the equation. Mr. Sultanik noted that Act 1 provides for future ballot questions in municipal elections.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary