

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, OCTOBER 15, 2007**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:41 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 15, 2007.

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

Board Members Absent: Steven Slutsky.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Gerald E. Berger, Director of Human Resources; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary and Jack Pinheiro.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on 09/26/2007, 10/10/2007 and 10/15/2007 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Mr. Orlow called attention to events of October 11 in which a District youth was taken into custody for allegedly planning an assault on Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS). Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter to summarize the status of the event.

Dr. Cotter stated that he could not discuss the specifics of the case. However, he did thank the Plymouth and Whitmarsh Township Police Departments and the District Attorney's Office for their professionalism and assistance. He stated that he was initially contacted by police by 9:45 p.m. Wednesday evening, and was informed that a teen was in custody. Police stated that a current PWHS student and his father had informed police of the teen's intentions. Police assured Dr. Cotter there was no threat to the high school or students.

Dr. Cotter noted that police briefed high school and District administrators at 8:00 a.m., Thursday morning and again assured them that there was no current threat to the school or students. Dr. Cotter detailed communication to students, parents and community members throughout the day on Thursday, recounted a Friday press conference, and noted information placed on the District Web site relating to the event and the District's bullying and harassment initiatives.

Mr. Orlow stated that a potentially frightening episode was averted by a student and family doing the right thing and the community owed them a debt of gratitude. He added that the District will hold a debriefing session with local police to see what could have been handled more efficiently.

Whitmarsh Township resident Jack Pinheiro praised the administration for the manner in which it managed the incident and for keeping the community informed. He asked about the criteria for reporting and monitoring progress of home schooled students.

Mrs. DeLong stated that students are required to submit an annual affidavit of objectives. They must submit a log of work done and a portfolio of work completed to show proof of obtained objectives. The work is subject to an outside review.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow requested that Board members examine the minutes of the Work Session of 09/17/2007, the General Meeting of 09/20/2007, the Finance Committee of 09/27/2007, the Human Resources Committee of 10/03/2007 and the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee and

Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee of 10/04/2007. See enclosures #1 through #6. He noted that the minutes of the Safety and Wellness Committee of 10/11/2007 and the Curriculum Committee of 10/15/2007 should be available for review on Thursday.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow asked Board members to look at the financial reports on the list for approval on Thursday evening. The reports include 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 09/30/2007. See enclosures #7 through #17.

Mr. Orlow asked why items related to a dishwasher replacement and fire replacement systems at the high school were on the Capital Reserve Fund report and not the Bond Fund Report. Mr. Yemm stated that the fire systems were mandated by local ordinances through the Fire Marshall. Mr. Bickleman added that the dishwasher replacement pre-dated the bond issue.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: None

Old Business: Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review Board Policy #606, Construction Project Change Orders. See enclosure #18. He stated that this new policy folds the existing administrative regulations into a Board-level policy. He reminded Board members that they had approved the policy on a first-read basis in September. Mr. Orlow received confirmation from the administration that the policy was presented as approved.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow stated that Neil Cooper of Springboard of Plymouth Whitmarsh will be at Thursday's meeting to request District support for "Operation Pillow." See enclosure #19. The initiative is part of the Adam C. Conboy Memorial Fund's effort to supply bedding and other essential supplies to United States troops serving in Iraq.

Dr. Cotter noted that the high school is holding a fund raiser as part of its spirit week. The pillows cost \$6 each. Students are able to write a note to send with the pillow they donate.

Mr. Orlow stated that a member of the Whitmarsh Township Supervisors will be at Thursday's meeting to enlist the District's support for the Township's "Change a Light, Change the World" initiative.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter reviewed his report which includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #20 through #22. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contained seven actions, nine custodial, secretarial and food service substitutes and 72 teacher substitutes. The Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included a list of new activities for sponsorship and new or revised assigned unit values for those positions. Also provided is a list of staff appointments for SADD and the Care Team at PWHS.

Mr. Orlow received confirmation from the administration that each new activity has gone through the required two-year start-up period before a paid staffing position is approved. Dr. Cotter noted that there was some question about the Technology Student Association position given the variation in student participation.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Board generally approves a start date for the following school year at the October meeting. He directed Board member's attention to three drafts of the 2008-2009

school year calendar for review. See enclosure #23. Mr. Johnson noted that all three calendars had the same start date of Tuesday, September 2, 2008.

Considerable discussion followed regarding the number and placement of in-service days, the length of spring break and the timing of the last day of school. Mr. Orlow noted that the District did not need to stick to its practice of having 185 student days in the school year.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review revised Board Policy #437, Teacher Exchange Programs. See enclosure #24. Dr. Cotter stated that the old policy can be found on the back of enclosure #24 for comparison purposes. The new policy establishes expectations for teachers returning from an exchange program.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to examine a list, provided by Dr. Gorodetzer, of proposed members of the District's Strategic Plan Committee, which was before members as a separate attachment. He noted that the District is required to go through the Strategic Planning Process every five years. He reminded Board members that the list had been reviewed in committee.

Mr. Orlow stated that Mr. Berger is requesting Board approval to renew the contract for PA.Educator.net for the 2007-2008 school year. See enclosure #25. Mr. Berger noted that the online data warehouse was one of two systems used by the District that allow candidates to submit resumes, clearances and certifications online. The system eliminates a significant amount of paperwork and enables the District to review a large number of candidates in a short period. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Berger stated that the contract costs \$3,000 and that the price had not increased.

Mr. Orlow directed the Board's attention to two special education placement agreements with the Ambler Day School at a cost not to exceed \$18,110 per school year per student. He noted that the agreements were both renewals and were reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review three professional conference requests. See enclosures #26 through #28. The requests include: the attendance of PWHS Science Teacher Jim Muscarella at the National Science Teachers Association Area Conference in Boston, Massachusetts from March 27-30, 2008; the attendance of two PWHS teachers at the College Board/AVID Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from Nov. 13-14, 2007; and the attendance of the PWHS AVID Coordinator at Part III of a training session in Fairfax, Virginia from October 22-26, 2007. Mr. Orlow noted that the Curriculum Committee reviewed each request.

Mr. Orlow requested that Board members examine four student trip requests. See enclosures #29 through #32. The trip requests include: a Colonial Middle School student field trip to the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, New Jersey on December 20, 2007; a Colonial Elementary School student field trip to the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware on October 23-26, 2007; PWHS student field trips to the Harvard Mock Trial High School Seminar in Cambridge, Mass., from December 15-17, 2007 and to the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Fall Conference at Columbia University on November 5, 2007.

Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the Mock Trial trip to Harvard was a new request. Dr. Cotter stated that the Columbia University trip was a recurring request but that it did not occur every year. Mr. Orlow noted that the trips required Board approval since they were all out of state or involved overnight travel.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Legislative – Dr. Ryan noted that he attended the Pennsylvania School Boards Association conference in Hershey the first week in October. He stated that the District was again recognized for being named a “School of Excellence in Technology” and that the District’s display booth was located in a prominent position. Dr. Ryan stated that he was very proud to be a member of the Colonial School District and commended Mr. Boegly and his staff on a job well done.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary