

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, APRIL 14, 2008**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:31 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 14, 2008.

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

Board Members Absent: Steven Slutsky.

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

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on March 26, April 9 and April 14 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow asked the Board to examine the minutes of the combined Work Session/General Meeting of March 17 and the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of April 3. See enclosures #1 through #3. Mr. Orlow noted that the minutes of the Finance Committee of April 8 and the Curriculum Committee of April 14 should be available for review on Thursday. Dr. Cotter added that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee of April 11 will also be available on Thursday.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow requested that Board members review 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 March 31, 2008. See enclosures #4 through #15.

Mr. Orlow inquired about several budget transfers in the amount of approximately \$2,700 for desks and chairs for Guidance at Colonial Elementary School (CES). Mr. Bickleman stated that the transfers covered a complete renovation of the office with two new sets of desks and chairs. Mr. Orlow also questioned transfers totaling more than \$1,300 for a wireless scanner in the CES Library. Mr. Boegly reported that the librarians use the scanner to inventory books and label new books. He confirmed for Mr. Orlow that other schools in the District had the device and that CES was the last to acquire one.

Mr. Orlow stated that information on the 2008-2009 preliminary budget was in the agenda and that the Board will provide more detail on Thursday. He asked Mr. Bickleman to explain the proposed tax rebate from the state. Mr. Bickleman reported that the state had to inform school districts how much money it was providing for the rebate by April 15. He added that the county would inform the district how many qualified homesteads it has on May 1. He stated that the state revenue will be divided equally among the parcels and the millage rate will be reduced by that amount. Mr. Bickleman noted that qualified residents will not receive a rebate check but rather a reduction in their tax bill. He stated that the rebate will appear as a separate item on the bill. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Orlow that

each qualified homestead will receive a reduced assessment of the same amount. Mr. Orlow stated that the process will repeat each year.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Old Business: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow noted that Conshohocken Elementary School (CE) Principal Julie Pustilnick will report on programs at the school during Thursday's meeting.

Correspondence: None.

Budget Report: Mr. Orlow stated that the Board will present a report on the 2008-2009 preliminary budget at Thursday's meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter reviewed his report which includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List, information on the summer music program, a report on staffing for the summer reading program, a report on staffing for the secondary summer school and a recommendation regarding the substitute pay rate for nurses. See enclosures #17 through #21. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contained 17 actions including three resignations, two retirements, one termination, one medical leave, five replacements, one completed assignment, one return from maternity leave, two additional needs and the conclusion of one probationary period. He noted that there were 11 substitutes listed. Dr. Cotter reported that the Music Department is proposing to hold summer music lessons again this year. He also called Board members' attention to staffing lists for the summer school programs and noted that there were two directors listed for the secondary summer program, one each at the high school and middle school. Dr. Cotter stated that the request regarding the nurses' salary rate coincides with the current District practice and that formal Board action is requested to secure the rate.

Mrs. DeLong explained that substitute nurses cover both the staff and certified nurse positions in the District. She added that both positions needed to be paid the same amount in order to provide greater depth of coverage. She confirmed for Mr. Orlow that staff nurses are not part of a bargaining unit.

Dr. Gorodetzer confirmed for Mr. Orlow that teachers recommend the students who attend the summer reading programs at CE. She also confirmed that the registration cost will not be an issue if ability to pay is a concern.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that at this time of year the Board begins to renew annual contracts and appointments. He reported that the Board will consider a recommendation to retain Jeffrey T. Sultanik as the District's Solicitor effective July 1, 2008. See enclosure #22. Mr. Orlow stated that the rate for retainer services will be increased by 3.5 percent and that services provided are detailed in the attachment. He added that the rest of the contract reflects current practice.

Mr. Orlow stated that the second contract for consideration is with the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit for data processing services. See enclosure #23. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the contract rate will be increased by 1.4 percent because of anticipated enrollment growth. Mr. Bickleman also confirmed that the contracted services are more cost effective than handling the same duties in house. Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that there have been no issues with the IU handling scheduling in the past three to four years.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) Special Education Cost Plan is up for review. See enclosure #24. The \$529,263.44 plan covers students already identified as needing special education services. Mrs. DeLong stated that the 10 percent cost increase reflects an increase in the number of students contracted for the current year and the coming year. Mr. Orlow noted that the cost represented a small portion of the special education budget.

Mr. Orlow called Board members' attention to the alternative education contract with the Lincoln Center. See enclosure #25. Mrs. DeLong reported that the contract includes three community counselors, two at the high school and one at the middle school. She added that the contract price for alternative education services is about \$62 per day per student, which represents excellent value for the type of service provided. In addition to the counselor component, the contract includes the operation of the Genesis Program at Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS). The program supports 30 students.

Mr. Orlow noted that the final contract for consideration is with the Montgomery County Head Start Program. See enclosure #26. Mr. Yemm confirmed that the contract covers rental of one elementary classroom in the District and that there are no changes from the current agreement. Currently the classroom leased is in CE.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board will consider handbook revisions as submitted by the secondary principals. See enclosure #27. Dr. Cotter stated that the middle school changes do not need Board approval. He just wanted the Board and community to be aware that the school will have a number of early dismissals in the coming year to allow for staff collaboration time. Dr. Cotter added that the high school changes are technical changes necessitated by the evolving curriculum. The changes are related to the graduation requirements, grade recording and class rank. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the grading changes will allow for a more accurate assessment of a student's performance. Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the changes have already begun to be communicated to parents through discussion with the Parents Council and PTSO and that some of the changes are an outgrowth of suggestions from those groups. He also stated that some of the changes impact Board policies that will require updating.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review a number of student trip requests. The first is for the PWHS Indoor Guard to participate in a championship in Wildwood, NJ from May 2-4. See enclosure #28. The second request is for CMS students to travel to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC on May 14. See enclosure #29. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board needs to act on the third request this evening. It is for two PWHS students to attend the All-State Concert Band and Wind Ensemble in Hershey from April 16-19. See enclosure #30. The final request is for a fifth grade class trip to the Trenton Thunder Ballpark in Trenton, NJ on May 14. See enclosure #31.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a request to approve the student trip to the All-State Band Concert and Wind Ensemble. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow stated that there were several bids on the agenda for Board review. He reported that bids for the Colonial Elementary School Renovation and the PWHS stadium entrance will be tabled. The Board will consider the bid for a 24-passenger school bus on Thursday. See enclosure #32. Mr. Yemm stated that the bus will replace a bus that is 12 years old.

Mr. Orlow noted that the bid for PWS athletic equipment is an annual bid for a wide variety of small items. See enclosure #33. He stated that the Board traditionally acts on the request at this time of year to allow for the equipment to be ordered and in place in time for the new school year.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Legislative – Dr. Ryan stated that he would like to see the Board consider the Pennsylvania School Board Association resolution denouncing the proposed state Graduation Competency Exams. Mr. Orlow said he would like to see an opt-out provision included for school districts that already have quality assessments in place.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary