

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, FEBRUARY 18, 2010**

President Johnson convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:04 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on February 18, 2010.

**Board Members Present:** Bernie Brady, Gary Johnson, Hope Luken, Susan Moore, Kathleen Oxberry, Tom Sigafos, Beth Suchsland, Alan Tabachnick and Mitch Zimmer.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultank, Solicitor; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; Richard Hartz, Director of Human Resources; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Jessica Piergiovannia and Stephen Pepper, Board Student Representatives; Susan Mayson; Thomas P. Davis; Cecilia Quarino; Jenna Backer; Michele Morris; Jane Rush; Mary Thiess; Danielle Babcock; Robert Franz; Melissa Sterling; Ilene Miller; Rick Miller; Dana Coia; Valerie Ward; Emily Rosenfeld; Meghan Cappello; Sloan Coletta and students receiving awards, their families and friends.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance and asked Dr. Cotter to facilitate the awards and recognition. Dr. Cotter introduced Mr. Sherman for the presentation of student awards. Mr. Sherman presented the three students, Emma Fayocavitz, Ashley Carobine and Shawn Donoghue, who had artwork or poetry published in the District's holiday card.

Dr. Cotter introduced Tonia Kauffman, the District's Music Director, who thanked the Board for their backing of the music program and asked them to adopt a resolution showing their continued support of music in education. Mrs. Kauffman read the resolution. See attachment A.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the resolution as read. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson announced that the Board had met in executive session on January 19, January 26, January 27, February 9 and February 16 to discuss legal and personnel issues.

**Minutes:** Mr. Johnson sought Board action on the minutes of the Work Session of January 19; the General Meeting of January 21; the Safety and Wellness Committee of January 29; the Human Resources Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee and the Special Meeting of the Board of February 3; the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of February 4; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of February 8 and the Curriculum Committee of February 16. See enclosures #1 through #8 and #48.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Sigafos 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. Johnson asked the Board to consider the financial reports on the list for approval. They 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 January 31. See enclosures #9 through #20.

Mrs. Luken moved and Mrs. Moore 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:** Mr. Franz inquired as to an \$11,000 expense for lighting for Victory Fields and the tennis courts listed in enclosure #10. Mr. Yemm explained that the costs were for engineering expenses related to the approval process. He noted that the lighting is not for the tennis courts and that reference should be removed. Mr. Franz inquired as to the nature of a \$57,000 expense for Victory Field lighting listed on the Bond Fund Report. Mr. Yemm reported that cost is also for engineering fees related to the approval process. Mr. Franz also commented on the 7.0 percent real estate tax increase passed in the 2010-2011 Preliminary Budget and noted that the District will file for Act 1 exceptions. He asked if the increase would go before the voters. Mr. Johnson stated that it will not. Mr. Franz expressed disappointment that, in his opinion, the District was not tightening the belt during these difficult economic times. Mrs. Luken explained that the 7.0 percent increase is a preliminary figure, and that the final budget will not be approved until June. In the meantime, the Board and administration will look at all expenses. She stressed the 7.0 percent is not a final number. Dr. Cotter added that all cabinet members were asked to revisit the budgets for their areas and recommend cuts to be reviewed by the Board. He stated that the District is looking to trim the budget dramatically while keeping instructional expenses in place. Mrs. Luken added that tax increases reported by school districts across the county range from 2.9 percent to 12.68 percent. She noted that all districts are dealing with difficult budgets.

Mr. Franz noted the difficulty with the mandated pension contributions and suggested the District consider instituting a fee for students who participate in athletics and other activities. He referenced a Philadelphia Inquirer article citing a program recently enacted by the Radnor School District. Dr. Cotter stated that the article has been reviewed and noted it also presented an alternative viewpoint. Mr. Sultanik stated that two of the districts that he represents instituted similar programs 24 years ago and abandoned the plans three to four years later because the administrative costs to collect the fees were more than the fees themselves.

Mrs. Luken noted that Colonial maintains the second lowest tax burden in Montgomery County.

**Staff Report:** Plymouth Elementary School (PE) Principal Judi Lipson, along with teachers Michele Morris, Jenna Backer and Cecilia Quarino, presented a PowerPoint and showed a video featuring the use of the new mini laptop computers by the school's students.

**Old Business:** Mr. Johnson directed the Board to take action on Policy #201.2 Student Admissions. See enclosure #21. He reminded Board members that the state mandated policy is presented on a second-read basis.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the policy on a second-read basis. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a donation in the amount of \$2,400 from the Deed of Trust for Joshua Morris. See enclosure #22.

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

Mrs. Luken asked the Board to accept the audit report submitted by Pennsylvania Auditor General Jack Wagner for the years ended June 30, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. See enclosure #23. She noted that the Finance Committee reviewed the report and added that there were no findings or recommendations included. Mrs. Luken thanked the administration and Chief Financial Officer Joe Bickleman for their diligent work in managing the finances.

Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Sigafos seconded a motion to accept the audit report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0

Mr. Johnson directed the board to act on a request by Bernadette Biasi, Chair of the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) Scholarship Fund, for the District to again add \$2.00 to the price of student picture packages to benefit the scholarship fund. See enclosure #24.

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

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed his report that consists of the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #25 and #26. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contains four changes from Monday's meeting, including one additional resignation, two more leaves of absence and an additional substitute. Dr. Cotter added that there were three changes to the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List, including the addition of an assistant band director at the middle school.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Pepper stated that the PWHS bowling and boys' basketball teams won Suburban One Conference championships. He added that the swimming and wrestling teams were beginning tournament play. He also stated that the Second Semester Open House was a success. Ms. Piergiovanni stated that a number of students participated in foreign exchange trips to France and Spain. She noted that she took part in the France exchange and had a good experience that she eagerly recommends to other students. Ms. Piergiovanni also reported on an upcoming Student Council dance. She stated that the new PWHS football coach has begun to meet with students and interest is high.

**New Business:** Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a request to approve an agreement to allow Berkheimer to act as the District's agent to secure taxable compensation data from the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. See enclosure # 28.

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

Mrs. Suchsland asked the Board to consider a series of summer programs. The first is a list of locations, dates and fees for primary and intermediate grade summer reading programs. See enclosure #29. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the District has run these programs for several years and they have had successful outcomes. She stated that the District is pleased to be able to continue the programs.

Mrs. Suchsland stated that a secondary summer program at PWHS will run from June 21 through July 20. See Enclosure #30. The Colonial Middle School (CMS) summer program will run from June 21 through July 16. See enclosure #31. Dr. Gorodetzer confirmed for Mrs. Suchsland that both secondary programs will be slightly different this year. She noted that the high school program will be an online credit retrieval program and will allow the District to offer more classes to better meet the needs of students. She stated that a staff member will be on site to provide assistance and that assessments will take place on site. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the CMS program will be expanded and be more project based. She noted that the program will be able to accommodate 40 students, significantly more than in the past.

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

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a request to allow the District's Music Department to operate a fee-based summer instrumental music program to include band, orchestra and individualized lessons. See enclosure #32.

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

Mr. Zimmer asked the Board to act on a request for the District to participate in the 2010 Summer Arts Consortium at a cost of \$6,300. See enclosure #33.

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

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a professional conference request for the PWHs athletic trainer to attend the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual National Athletic Trainers Association Meeting and Clinical Symposia from June 22-25 in Philadelphia. See enclosure #34. He noted that all fees related with the event are being paid by the trainer.

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

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a professional conference request for PWHs teacher Amanda Edwards to attend an AVID Conference in Brooklyn, N.Y., on March 4. See enclosure #49. He stated that all costs are to be paid from the AVID Path Training Budget.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Sigafos seconded a motion to approve the conference request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Zimmer asked the Board to consider seven student field trip requests in one motion. The first is for PWHs students to attend the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) competition in Hershey, Pa., from April 12-14. See enclosure #35. He noted that the FBLA club will cover all expenses. The second trip request is for CMS students to travel to the Marine Science Consortium in Wallops Island, Va., from May 5-8. See enclosure #36. Mr. Zimmer noted that District expenses are limited to costs of substitutes for instructional days as students are responsible for all costs and fees associated with their participation. The third request is for CMS students to visit the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, N.J., on May 14. See enclosure #37. Mr. Zimmer stated that costs for that trip are covered by the CMS Art Club and participating students. The fourth request is for CMS and PWHs students to attend a Technology Student Association competition at the Seven Springs Conference Center in Champion, Pa., from April 14-17. See enclosure #38. Mr. Zimmer reported that building funds and student fees will pay for the trip. The fifth request is for the PWHs Class of 2011 trip to Disney World in Orlando, Fla., from April 6, 2011 through April 11, 2011. See enclosure #39. Students assume all costs of the trip. The final request is for two PWHs choral students to attend the PMEA Region VI Choir Festival at Central Bucks West High School from March 10-12. See enclosure #40. Mr. Zimmer noted that the students will be accompanied by a teacher and that building funds will cover trip expenses. He added that the final request was not reviewed on Monday evening. The request is for 23 PWHs students to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on March 4 at no cost to the District. See enclosure #40.

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

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer stated that the IU Board met for the first time in two months in February. He stated that the board approved a number of personnel and facilities action items, welcomed new board members and gave out long-time service awards.

CMTHS: No report.

Human Resources: Mrs. Moore stated that the committee received updates on the Bloodborne Pathogens Plan and the principal search at PWHS. She also asked the Board to act on an addendum to the Colonial Administrators and Supervisors Association (CASEA) Act 93 Compensation Plan. See Attachment B. She noted that the addendum includes minor adjustments including a 40 percent reduction in professional travel and voluntary surrender of a vacation buyback option that will cut \$112,000 in costs. She thanked CASEA for its willingness to work with the Board on this issue.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the addendum to the compensation plan. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Finance: Mrs. Luken stated that the committee reviewed the preliminary budget that was passed on Tuesday evening and reiterated that real estate tax increase rates from across the county average between 2.9 and 12.68 percent. She also noted that the committee reviewed the State Audit Report approved earlier in the meeting. Mr. Johnson stated that the \$112,000 in reductions that Mrs. Moore announced in the CASEA Addendum are not included in the preliminary budget.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the committee reviewed the summer programs approved earlier in the meeting. She stated that there is a nominal student fee for participation in those programs. She added that PWHS Principal Dr. Monica Sullivan presented proposed changes to the student progress reporting system. Dr. Gorodetzer also reported that curriculum supervisors reported on the development of a summer technology academy in an effort to increase female student interest in science and technology, and on an annual review process of the secondary math program. She noted that math scores are up on all standardized assessments. Dr. Gorodetzer also stated that the committee heard an update on the Keystone Exams.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Yemm reported on the McCarthy Park detention basin project and noted that it was two months behind schedule. He noted that the VersaTrans GPS system has been installed in the First Student buses. He also updated the Board on radon testing that was conducted in the schools at no cost to the District. Mr. Yemm stated that all of the test results were favorable. Mr. Johnson stated that the testing was a proactive measure by the District and not the result of any problem. Mr. Yemm stated that the committee reviewed a plan for the disposal of the old CITV van. He reported that the Colonial Elementary School window replacement project was ahead of schedule despite the uncooperative weather. He praised Terese Boegly, the school principal, for her assistance with the project. Mr. Johnson inquired as to a problem with the water temperature in the PWHS swimming pool. Mr. Yemm stated that the issue was caused by a defective gas valve that is being replaced. Mr. Yemm stated that the equipment is 50-years old. He did say the water temperature should return to normal by the weekend. Mrs. Moore lauded the Facilities Management staff for its handling of snow removal during and after the recent storm.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mr. Zimmer reminded residents that it was time to register children for kindergarten. He promoted the upcoming spring musicals at PWHS and CMS, as well as the District Art Show. Mr. Zimmer also noted that the PWHS boys' basketball team begins District I playoff action tomorrow evening and that the Community Relations staff won several publication and electronic media awards from the Pennsylvania School PR Association.

Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Oxberry reported that the committee was provided with a preliminary plan to require background checks for parent volunteers. She noted that No FBI background checks will be required, and that the target date for adoption is September 2010. Mrs. Oxberry noted that the committee also received an update on the District's Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement as well as the number of ADA accessible parking spaces at each school. She stated that all schools complied except for PE and Ridge Park Elementary. She added that the Facilities Management Staff will add one or two spaces at those schools as soon as weather permits. Mrs. Oxberry also stated that Food Services Director Lori McCoy reported on how the District is addressing students with allergies including the possible cross contamination of peanuts by ordering pre-wrapped peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, the participation of CMS in a nutritional Web site activity and a new Grab-and-Go breakfast program at PWHS.

Legislative: No Report.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary