

COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, OCTOBER 15, 2009

President Johnson convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:02 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on October 15, 2009.

Board Members Present: Lenore Bruno, Tom Davis, Gary Johnson, Kelly Jowett, Hope Luken, Susan Moore, Steven Slutsky and Mitch Zimmer. Note: Mr. Slutsky joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Board Members Absent: Dr. William Ryan.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, 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; Kim Newell, Assistant Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Jessica Piergiovanni and Allan Hong, Board Student Representatives; Beth Suchsland; Tom Sigafos; Linda Doll; Kathleen Oxberry; Colleen DiFabio; Scott Shearer, Rob Walper and students receiving awards, their friends and families.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on September 17, September 24, October 7 and October 12 to discuss legal and personnel issues.

Dr. Cotter introduced Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) Principal Dr. Monica Sullivan to present the students receiving awards. Dr. Sullivan introduced seven students who were named Commended Scholars by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation – Bonnie Bronenberg, Maria Donnini, Jesse Goldshear, Brittany MacLean, Ashley Young, Jessica Wang and Stephanie Weakland. Dr. Sullivan also presented students who were named Advanced Placement Scholars – Bronenberg, Carly Cottone, Donnini, Jessica Friedman, Evan Hodge, Ryan Hom, Jaehyeon Lee, Luke Mercurio, Vuong, Kathryn Walker, Wang and Philip Yaure.

Minutes: Mr. Johnson sought Board action on the minutes of the Work Session of September 14; the General Meeting of September 17; the Finance and Audit Committee of September 29; the Special Meeting and the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of September 30; the Human Resources Committee and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of October 1; Safety and Wellness Committee of October 7 and the Curriculum Committee of October 12. See enclosures #1 through #7, #39 and #40.

Mrs. Bruno moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Financial Reports: Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider the financial reports on the list for approval. They included the Budget Transfers, 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 September 30 as shown in enclosures #8 through #19.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Dr. Sullivan reported on the results of the Middle States Accreditation for Growth Team's visit to the high school in the spring. She explained that last spring, a team of five educators from other school districts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey spent three and a half days at PWHS. Team members had previously reviewed the PW PrEP plan and many other documents about the school's curriculum and programs. While at the school, they met with faculty, parents and students involved in the development of the PW PrEP plan and also evaluated the degree to which PWHS fulfills the 12 standards of the Commission on Secondary Schools. They met with board members, administrators, department heads, & pupil services staff, observed in classrooms, and experienced the total life of the school.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on a request from Conshohocken Elementary School (CE) Principal Denise Marks to approve a grant from ASTM to support the after school science club and a field trip to the Riverbend Environmental Center. See enclosure #20.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the grant. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to consider Dr. Sullivan's request for Board approval of a donation of 30 calculators from District resident Michael Schwab. See enclosure #21.

Mr. Slusky moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0. Mr. Slusky thanked Mr. Schwab for his ongoing donations. Mr. Zimmer also added his thanks to Mr. Schwab.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on Mrs. Marks' request of Board approval for the creation and installation of a mosaic tile mural in the main hallway of CE. See enclosure #22.

Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the mural project. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter summarized his report that included the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #23 and #24. He said that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contained two additional actions from the 15 he reported on Monday evening. The new actions included one leave of absence and one additional substitute. He noted that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List was unchanged from the previously reported stipends for three positions and two revised appointments.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Bruno seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0. Mr. Zimmer abstained because of a conflict of interest.

Mr. Slusky stated that the Board would consider a resolution to refinance general obligation bonds series of 2003 and 2004 as part of the District's continued practice of fiscal responsibility. Mr. Shearer of Public Financial Management explained the bond bidding process. Mr. Slusky stressed that the bond would not increase or extend the District's debt burden, but rather reduce the amount of interest owed by the District. Mr. Walper, representing Fox Rothschild, led Board members through the resolution, which authorizes the issuance of bonds in the amount of up to \$13,905,000.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the bond resolution as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Board Student Representatives Report: Ms. Piergiovanni reported on the September 21 Academic Awards Dinner and Ceremony and stated that a math night was held for parents on September 23. She added that a cap and gown assembly was held for the senior class on September 24 and class ring sales and senior portrait retakes occurred on Sept. 30. Underclassmen had pictures taken on October 1. Mr. Hong reported on the first Montgomery County Orchestra practice hosted by PWHS on October 14 as well as an assembly about mental illness and suicide that was held on October 15. He stated that the girls' basketball team is sponsoring a 5K run on October 18 and highlighted Homecoming activities that take place during the week of October 19.

New Business: Dr. Cotter shared six variations of a calendar outline for the 2010-2011 school year with Board members. See enclosure #25. He noted that the first three versions had a post-Labor Day start to the school year, while version four had a pre-Labor Day start to the school year. He added that version six included a partial spring break and an Easter Monday holiday. Dr. Cotter said that the various versions show the Board how the holidays will affect the development of the calendar. Mr. Slutsky asked if there had been much feedback regarding school opening before Labor Day. Dr. Cotter explained that the early start date was necessitated by the lateness of the holiday this year. He noted that Labor Day falls late on the calendar again in 2010. Dr. Cotter reaffirmed the District's preference to start school after Labor Day but felt most people understood the reasoning of not wanting to end the school year during the third week in June.

Mr. Johnson sought action on Board Policy #219, Behavioral Support, on a first-read basis. See enclosure #26. At Mr. Johnson's request, Mrs. Berk stated that the policy is mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and focuses on the use of behavioral supports and interventions for special needs students. She noted that restraints used are to be the least intrusive possible and mainly to prevent the students from hurting themselves or others. Mrs. Berk also noted that staff are annually trained on the use of the non-violent restraints.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the policy on a first-read basis. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider an administration request to approve the renewal of the PA.Educator.net contract for the 2009-2010 school year. See enclosure #27. At Mr. Johnson's request, Mr. Hartz explained that the service is a Web-based recruiting service that allows the District to post jobs and receive electronic resumes and applications from potential teachers based in the western part of the state.

Mrs. Bruno moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the contract renewal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Davis asked for the Board to act on a professional conference request for the PWHS head varsity baseball coach to attend a clinic in Cherry Hill, N.J. from January 14-16, 2010. See enclosure #28.

Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the professional conference request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Zimmer asked the Board to consider four student trip requests in one motion. The first is for approximately 25 PWHS yearbook and newspaper students to attend the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Fall Conference held at Columbia University on November 9. See enclosure #29. The second request is for the PWHS Ski Club to travel to Killington, Vermont from January

8-10, 2010 and to Stratton Mountain, Vermont from February 19-21, 2010. See enclosure #30. The third trip request is for a PWHS English class to view a production of Hamlet and visit the Smithsonian Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. on May 14, 2010. See enclosure #31. Mr. Zimmer noted that Board members had the fourth request before them as a blue page. The request is for the entire fourth grade to attend the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, New Jersey on one of the following days, October 26, November 2, 5, 6, 9, or 11.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the student trip requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer noted that the IU Board met on September 23 and approved the goals for the year, heard a report on possible relocation sites for the IU and viewed a spotlight report on technology.

CMTHS: No Report.

Human Resources: Mrs. Luken reported on the committee meeting of October 1. She stated that the committee reviewed a request for payment for additional work completed over the summer by a special education instructor and also examined the Extra Duty/Extra Pay stipends presented earlier by Dr. Cotter. She said that Mr. Hartz provided an update on the Montgomery County Health Insurance Consortium prescription self-funding initiative and Mr. Bickleman gave the committee an updated five-year financial outlook for the District.

Finance: Mr. Slutsky expressed outrage at the state's mishandling of federal stimulus money earmarked for school districts. He cited a report from President Obama that listed Pennsylvania among only three states that was not funneling stimulus money directly to school districts as directed. Rather, he said that the state is using federal stimulus money to reduce the state's contribution to school districts. Mr. Slutsky urged community members to contact their local representatives to voice their disappointment.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Gorodetzer reported that the committee reviewed high school course offerings for the 2010-2011 school year at its October 12 meeting. She explained the course review process and noted changes for CITV courses, a nine-week business education course to support the internship program, changes to technical education courses and a new World Languages elective. Mr. Davis noted that the committee also heard a report on the Middle State reaccreditation process at the high school and an overview of student achievement data for disaggregate student groups. Mr. Davis also stated that Curriculum Supervisor Maria Bellino informed the committee of a one-year grant from ArcelorMittal to fund Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) initiatives in the District. He also noted that the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had recently published a report card that ranked Colonial fifth and 11th graders among the top quintile in the region for both math and reading. Dr. Gorodetzer added that new "Wow" moments were airing on CITV and being sent home in Friday folders to highlight student achievement, including the fact that Colonial's third graders were first in Montgomery County in math and reading on the PSSA. Mrs. Moore congratulated the District's teachers and administrators for all of their hard work in improving student achievement.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore stated that the District's tree revitalization project involving the reforestation of areas in and around Victory Fields had received a 2009 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Community Greening Award. She noted that the District also received funding for Phase II of the project. Mrs. Moore also reported that the installation of new security cameras has been completed throughout the District.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mr. Zimmer reported that the high school's fall production was scheduled for November and encouraged the community to attend the event.

Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Bruno reported that the committee met on October 7. She stated that Lori McCoy provided information on how the District is addressing the needs of students with food allergies. She added that the committee reviewed the behavioral support policy approved earlier on a first-read basis. Mrs. Bruno also reported that the committee received an update on the status of the Memorandum of Understanding with local law enforcement.

Legislative: None.

Mrs. Luken noted that Board members had a list of District salaries and wages before them as a separate attachment. She noted that the salary list was publicly available in the Human Relations Office.

Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the salaries. On a roll call vote all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Public Comment: Mr. Sigafos noted Mr. Slutsky's impassioned speech about school funding and inquired as to why no Board member had attended a school funding rally in August. Mr. Slutsky stated that it was the Board's experience that such rallies are ineffective. Mr. Slutsky noted that he was a member of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Coalition of Schools and that the organization has had success in swaying legislators through open dialogue. Mr. Slutsky stated that he would rather expend his efforts in that manner which has proven to be more successful.

Mrs. Doll commented on the successful freshman orientation program at the high school. The program was held the Thursday before school started. She noted that if the school year begins after the Labor Day holiday, orientation attendance may not be as high and the benefit to the students may not be as great. She encouraged the Board to factor that in when considering the start of the school year.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary