

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, MARCH 17, 2011**

President Johnson convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on March 17, 2011.

**Board Members Present:** Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Gary Johnson, Kelly Jowett, Susan Moore, Kathleen Oxberry, Beth Suchsland and Alan Tabachnick.

**Board Members Absent:** None. (Note: There is currently one seat vacant due to the resignation of Mitch Zimmer.)

**Also Attending:** Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; 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; Stephen Pepper and Stacey Wong, Student Board Representatives; Beth Miller; Colleen DiFabio; Erin Dooley; Meghan McCullough; Mary Beth McCullough; Paul McCullough; Shane McCullough; Mollie Getzfread; Mimi Getzfread; Candy Maggioncalda; Marlo Mitchell; Courtney Mitchell; Andrea Fondots; Karen Fondots; Joe Getzfread; Christina Frangiosa; Hope Garfinkle; Kris McDowell; Marcia Constan; Shana Genkin; Tammy D'Onofio; Florindo D'Onofrio; Mary Thiess; Maria Conway; Donn Sturm; Chris Manero; Ellen Reilly and Kyle Hatfield.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Board had met in executive session on February 23, March 9 and March 17.

Dr. Cotter introduced Ellen Reilly who presented three field hockey players for Board recognition.

Dr. Cotter introduced Candy Maggioncalda who presented a number of art students for Board recognition. Please see Attachment A for a list of all students and their achievements.

Dr. Cotter stated that the District also wished to recognize Plymouth Township for the use of snow removal equipment. See enclosure #1. Mr. Brady extended his thanks to the township.

Mr. Johnson stated that he wished to recognize Dr. Cotter for being named the recipient of the Juran Medal for distinguished organizational leadership. He noted that Dr. Cotter is the first superintendent to receive the award.

**Minutes:** Mr. Johnson asked Board members to act on the minutes of the Work Session of February 14; the General Session of February 17; the Human Resources Committee, the Special Meeting and the Finance and Audit Committee of March 2; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of March 4; the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of March 7; the Safety and Wellness Committee of March 9 and the Curriculum Committee of March 14. See enclosures #2 through #9 and #52.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Jowett 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 sought Board action on the financial reports on the list for approval. They 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 Trust Fund Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the

Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending February 28. See enclosures #10 through #22.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Suchsland 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:** Whitmarsh Elementary School Principal Donna Drizin described the Lego robotics program in the school. Teacher Frank Whitehead demonstrated a completed robot made by one of his students and thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend professional development seminars in order to offer this type of program. Dr. Cotter stated that students needed to program sounds and movements in sequence in order for the robots to function properly.

**Old Business:** Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider an item not on the agenda. He stated that on Monday evening the members had interviewed candidates for the vacant seat on the Board and had decided to appoint Jodi Miscannon.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to appoint Mrs. Miscannon to the School Board. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson took the next item out of order on the agenda. He sought Board action on a new three-year agreement with the Colonial Education Association (CEA). Mrs. Moore stated that the Board felt the agreement is fair and realistic under the current economic conditions. She added that it allows the Colonial School District (CSD) to maintain and attract the top teachers, while also being fiscally responsible. Mrs. Moore explained that the agreement contains a 1.4 percent salary increase, plus step, for each of the three years, with a 10-pay freeze each year. She noted that there is also an increase in the teachers' contribution to health care costs in years two and three of the agreement. Mrs. Moore spoke to the mutual respect forged between the Board and CEA negotiating team during the process.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Oxberry seconded a motion to ratify the Tentative Agreement reached between the Colonial Education Association and the Board of School Directors of the Colonial School District effective August 15, 2011 through August 14, 2014, subject to: (1) finalizing the wording for the final Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Association and the District; and (2) District Solicitor, Fox Rothschild LLP, and the District Administration approving the final wording of the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement; and (3) subject to the Association approving the Tentative Agreement and final wording of the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Brodsky voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0. Mr. Brodsky stated that he needed to abstain since his daughter is a member of the CEA.

Mr. Tabachnick noted that this was his first time being a part of the negotiating process and stated that he was pleased to work the teachers and participate in frank and open discussions. He also thanked Mr. Hartz for his role in the negotiations.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on the MCIU General Operating Budget for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #23. He stated that the Board would vote on the budget collectively and fill out individual ballots for each of the IU budgets including: Administrative Services; Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development Services; Legislative Services and Grant Development and Technology and Information Services.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the MCIU General Operating Budget. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Note: Mr. Tabachnick and Mrs. Suchsland left the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

**Correspondence:** Mrs. Oxberry stated that Board members had before them as a separate attachment an independent audit report for the year ending June 30, 2010 prepared by Barbacane, Thornton and Company. She noted that the report was reviewed by the finance committee.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson asked Board members to consider an anonymous donation of \$2,000 to support an all-school field trip for Conshohocken Elementary School (CE) students. See enclosure #24.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Oxberry seconded a motion to accept the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on author Dr. Halee Adelman's request to donate her presentation fee back to CE so that it be used to purchase quality books for the school's library. See enclosure #25.

Mr. Brady moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the donation request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a request by The Lincoln Center to donate 18 new and existing computers from the center to CSD. See enclosure #26.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the donation request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to act on a \$2,000 grant from State Farm Insurance Company to support a Don't Text and Drive Campaign. See enclosure #27.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to accept the grant. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed his report that included the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #28 and #29. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contained 23 actions, including nine leaves of absence, seven replacements, one return from leave, one assignment completed and five substitutes. Dr. Cotter reported that the Extra Duty Extra Pay list included appointments for assistant coaches in tennis, softball and track and one resignation.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider the two lists in separate motions.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Personnel Report and Substitute List. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Johnson voted in favor. The motion was carried, 5-0. Mr. Johnson stated that he needed to abstain since his daughter was on the list.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Pepper reported on the success of winter sports teams and student athletes, the jazz festival, the foreign language competition and the Colonial Players production of the musical *Titanic*. Ms. Wong informed the Board of parent conferences, a senior Florida trip meeting, the pops concert, the application process for Board Student Representatives and the Asian Awareness Club fundraiser to aid the disaster relief effort in Japan.

**New Business:** Mr. Johnson requested Board action on lease contracts for the Montgomery Early Learning Center. See enclosure #30.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a lease contract with Montgomery County Head Start. See enclosure #31.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a request for an international exchange student to attend Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #32.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on the Federal Program Allocations for the 2010-2011 school year. See enclosure #33. He noted that various Title I programs as well as the Pennsylvania Accountability Block Grant are included. Dr. Cotter stated that the Pennsylvania Accountability Block Grant has been eliminated from Governor Corbett's 2011-2012 proposed budget. He noted that the grant covers staffing for the full-day kindergarten program.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Federal Program Allocations for the 2010-2011 school year. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to consider a MCIU Special Education Cost Plan for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #34. Mrs. Berk explained the plan includes itinerant services, including vision and hearing, assorted technical resources, behavior management services and more.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the cost plan. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a request for Board authorization to plan and staff summer programs, including the Credit Recovery Program at PWHS and Colonial Middle School (see enclosure #35), the Bridge Program (see enclosure #36) and the Girls in Technology Summer Academy (see enclosure #37). Dr. Gorodetzer explained that all three programs were successful last year and plans are being made to expand the Bridge Program and Girls in Technology Summer Academy for this year.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the summer programs planning. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider the Special Education Summer Program. See enclosure #38. Mrs. Berk explained that the program provides individual instruction beyond the length of the regular school year for students with IEPs.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the Special Education Summer Program. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to act on a request for PWHS College Counselor Pat Tamborello to attend a professional conference at Stevenson University on March 25. See enclosure #39.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a Power School training professional conference request in South Carolina from June 19-23. See enclosure #40. Mr. Boegly explained that Power School is the District's student data management system. He stated that Rob Das would receive the training.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mrs. Jowett asked the Board to consider four student trip requests as one item. The first is for PWHS Advancement Via Individual Determination students to visit three Pennsylvania Universities on an overnight basis from March 25-26. See enclosure #41. The second trip is for the PWHS Ski Club to travel to Stratton Mountain, Vermont from March 18-20. See enclosure #42. The third trip is for students in Advanced Placement (AP) Art History, AP Drawing and Art majors to visit the Museum of Art in Manhattan on April 14. See enclosure #43. The final request is for two students to attend the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra in Hershey from April 13-16. See enclosure #53.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trip requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

Mr. Brady requested Board members take action on a recommendation to award bids for the window replacement project at Ridge Park Elementary School. See enclosure #44. He noted that all bid procedures are in accordance with Pennsylvania code with the lowest responsible bidder being recommended.

Mr. Brady moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the bid award. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 6-0.

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

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Brodsky commented on two items from the March meeting. He touched on a program called "Reflections," that is modeled after an effective and cost efficient program from Chester County for youth that are diagnosed with mental health disorders. The program provides either in-patient or out-patient services. He also stated that the Board heard a presentation about pooling resources and purchasing power of all the county districts as a way to be more cost-effective.

CMTHS: No report.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: Mrs. Oxberry reviewed the minutes of the March 2 meeting. She highlighted the independent audit presented by Mr. Timothy Sawyer of Barbacane, Thornton and Company and detailed how the state will not funnel federal EduJobs funding to school districts in the coming year. Instead the state will use those funds for other expenditures. She also noted that the governor's budget cuts result in an 11.34 percent reduction in state funding for CSD. Mrs. Oxberry reported that the committee was provided preliminary budget real estate tax increases for all county school districts and the range is from 0.0 percent to 7.6 percent. The committee also was provided a review of pay to play programs in place throughout the county which shows only three of 21 school districts implement a fee structure for activities. Mrs. Oxberry noted that this issue has been thoroughly reviewed by the Board in a number of committees.

Curriculum: Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the committee reviewed the summer programs and heard updates on the World Languages Program initiative, Federal Programs Review and the Keystone exams. She noted that there is a one-year pause in the development of the exams.

Facilities Management and Transportation: No report.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mr. Sherman asked members to refer to the minutes of the March 7 meeting found in enclosure #8. He highlighted the discussion on advertising and noted that the committee agreed to form a sub-committee to formulate an advertising plan. He noted that more than 500 senior citizens are expected at the senior luncheon and matinee on Saturday.

Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Jowett reported that the committee reviewed recommended changes to the District's Memorandum Of Understanding with local municipalities and heard a report from the Whitmarsh Police Department's Fran Wheatley on the State Farm grant approved earlier in the

evening. Mrs. Jowett also reported on a school safety check performed recently by District Safety Officer Tom Traister at Plymouth Elementary School. She also stated that two new items, smoothies and air-pop corn, are being test marketed in the high school cafeteria.

Legislative: No report.

Municipal Liaisons: No report.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary