

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, MAY 19, 2011**

President Johnson convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:03 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on May 19, 2011.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Alan Tabachnick.

**Also Attending:** 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; Michael Cielieska, Jessica Knudsen, Stephen Pepper and Stacey Wong, Student Board Representatives; Clint Richert; Judi Lipson; Charlene Richter; Sandi Krone; Roger Krone; Michael Krone; Maria Hyer; Eileen Spector; Wendy Kleckner; Michael Gaffney; Donna Gaffney; Nate Adams; Kyle Hatfield; Karen Fondots; Andrea Fondots; Anthony Williams; Brian Adams; Amy Venkus; Cheryl Rossini; Christina D. Frangiosa; Debra Harris; Alan Fiermonte; Dara Nasatir; Lois Horn; Mary Thiess; Rosanna Costa; Louis Trautman; Denise Marks; Mike McKenna; Mindi Richman; Karen Gebhardt; Joe Carracappa; Dan Balek; Heather Nuneviller; Charles Forster; Robert Franz.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Awards/Recognition:** Dr. Gorodetzer introduced Colonial Elementary School Teacher Anna Mindel, who presented Odyssey of the Mind student participants for Board Recognition.

Dr. Gorodetzer introduced Colonial Middle School Teacher Clint Richert, who recognized student participants in the Technology Student Association.

\*Note: Mrs. Miscannon joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Dr. Gorodetzer introduced Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) Teacher Megan Carragher, who presented student participants in DECA for Board recognition.

Dr. Gorodetzer introduced PWHS Teacher Chris McWilliams, who presented award-winning television production students. For a complete list of students honored, see Attachment A.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Board had met in executive session on May 16.

**Minutes:** Mr. Johnson asked Board members to review the minutes of the General Session of April 14; the Human Resources Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee of May 3; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of May 6; the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of May 9; the Safety and Wellness Committee of May 11 and the Curriculum Committee of May 16. See enclosures # 1 through #6 and #50.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Moore 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. He noted that the financial reports are for both March and April. 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 months ending March 31 and April 30. See enclosures #7 through #19.

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

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Mr. Franz wondered why there was no reduction in the real estate tax rate from the preliminary budget to the proposed final budget when other school districts have lowered their proposed tax rates and a number are projecting no tax increase. He also commented on the number of school districts that charge students fees to participate in athletics and activities. Mr. Franz also stated that cars were parked in fire lanes on the evening of April 14 and there was no security. He stated that his requests for a reason from the District received no response. Mr. Johnson explained that the proposed final budget is not the final budget. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that the Board will act on the final budget on June 16. Mrs. Oxberry stated that the District is not offering an early retirement incentive program this year and plans to use about half, or more than \$4 million, of its projected fund balance. She also noted that with approved state budget exceptions, the Board has the leeway to raise taxes up to 4.9 percent. She added that the District has done a good job of keeping taxes low while maintaining excellent programs. Mrs. Oxberry also stated that the District has extensively researched the implementation of athletics and activities fees and has decided it is not in the District's best interest. Mr. Johnson said that the District is exploring additional budget cuts.

**Staff Report:** PWHS Principal Heather Nuneviller showed a video that highlighted the school's Advanced Placement, Life Skills, Inclusion, Engineering and Advancement Via Individual Determination programs. She also provided statistics on the Class of 2011, including that 94 percent of graduates plan to continue their education at a four or two-year college or university.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a dues invoice for the 2011-2012 school year submitted by Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. See enclosure #20.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the dues invoice. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a request to accept of a donation of \$600 from the Clayman Family Foundation on behalf of Colonial Middle School (CMS) Autistic Support Teacher Cheryl Rossini. See enclosure #21. Mr. Johnson noted that the funds are to be used for the purchase of materials for the CMS autistic support class.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to accept the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

**Superintendent's Report:** Mr. Johnson noted that Dr. Cotter was being recognized at the PWHS spring music concert. Dr. Gorodetzer presented the Superintendent's Report that includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #22 and #51. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the report includes 10 additional actions from those reviewed on Monday evening, including one resignation, two leaves of absence, four appointment extensions, one return from leave, one completed assignment and one eliminated position. She noted that there was no furlough associated with the eliminated position. Dr. Gorodetzer also stated that one Extra Duty/Extra Pay position is included.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Ciesielka reported on the Distinguished Graduates Organization induction ceremony, Advanced Placement exams and the staff appreciation breakfast. Ms. Knudsen reported on the Cappy Awards and the Sophomore Hop. Ms. Wong reported on the Students Against Destructive Decisions Volleyball Tournament, the Junior Prom and the spring concert. Mr. Pepper reported on championships won by the boys' lacrosse team and the indoor guard. He also reported on springs sports teams. Mr. Johnson noted that this is the last meeting for Ms. Wong and Mr. Pepper and thanked them for their service to the Board. Mrs. Suchsland presented the two student representatives with plaques of appreciation.

**New Business:** Mr. Johnson stated that he was going to take the next item out of order on the agenda. Mrs. Moore said it was a great honor and pleasure to be able to nominate Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer for the position of superintendent. Mrs. Moore read the motion to elect the superintendent found in enclosure #42. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. Mr. Johnson stated that it has been his pleasure to work with Dr. Gorodetzer the past nine years. He stated that through her creativity and leadership skills she has proven that she is more than ready to lead the District to the next level. Mr. Johnson stated that the Board did not see the need to conduct a national search when they felt that they had the best candidate in house. Mr. Brodsky stated that he worked in education under six different superintendents for 35 years. He stated that Dr. Gorodetzer possesses all of the qualities needed to do the job well. He saw no reason for the Board to waste time and money with a national search when they already have someone who they know is good. Mrs. Suchsland noted that Mr. Tabachnick was unable to attend the meeting but read a letter from him. See attachment B.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor to elect Dr. Gorodetzer to the position of superintendent. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Dr. Gorodetzer thanked the Board for their support and for the opportunity. She stated that she is confident that through teamwork and collective effort the District will meet any challenges it faces.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on the recommendation that Joe Bickleman serve as Board treasurer for the 2011-2012 school year with the stipend to be set at \$2,500. He noted that the appointment is in accordance with Section 404 of the Public School Code.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the appointment. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson also noted that Section 404 of the Public School Code directs the Board to elect a secretary and Section 432 of the Code requires the Board to establish new compensation levels. Mr. Johnson asked that the Board consider Mr. Sherman for the position folding the duties of the Board secretary into the job description of the Community Relations Coordinator.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to have the duties of Board secretary included in the job description of the Community Relations Coordinator. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0. Mr. Johnson asked to have the issue added to the next Human Resources Committee agenda so that the job description can be updated.

Mrs. Suchsland stated that according to Board Policy #004 and Administrative Regulation #004.1, two students have been nominated for the position of student representative to the Board. She added that the candidates were interviewed on Monday evening.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to appoint Cindy Ly and Tom Elvins as student representatives to the Board. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mrs. Moore asked the Board to consider a tentative agreement with the Colonial Education Support Professionals (CESP) effective July 1 through June 30, 2013. She stated that the agreement is subject to:

(1) finalizing the wording for a 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 the final wording of the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement. Mrs. Moore thanked Mary Thiess and the CESP leadership for a productive, cordial and respectful negotiation.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the agreement subject to the conditions set forth above. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Johnson voted in favor. The motion was carried 7-0. Mr. Johnson stated that he needed to abstain because his daughter is a member of the bargaining unit.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on the alteration/curtailment of the academic program in the delivery of transition programming for special needs students and career counseling. See enclosure #23.

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

Mrs. Oxberry asked the Board to consider a 2011-2012 Proposed Final Budget. See enclosure #25. She stated that Mr. Bickleman has requested that the previously approved preliminary budget and subsequent revisions be utilized as the proposed final budget. Mrs. Oxberry reported that the budget totals \$94,498,732 which is an increase of \$439,732 or .47% over the 2010-2011 spending plan. She added that the proposed final budget includes a real estate tax of 18.547 mils, an increase of 2.9%. The new real estate tax equates to an additional \$52.00 per year for each \$100,000 of taxable assessed value or an increase of \$77 on the District's median assessed value of \$147,120. Mrs. Oxberry informed the public that the proposed final budget is available on the CSD Web site in the state required format. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mrs. Moore that the Board and administration are still working on the budget and that the final budget will be approved on June 16.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the 2011-2012 Proposed Final Budget as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mrs. Oxberry reported that in accordance with Section 621 of the Public School Code, the Board of School Directors must designate one or more banks or trust companies as depositories for school funds. She noted that Wells Fargo Bank is interested in continuing to serve as the District depository.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to appoint Wells Fargo Bank as the District depository. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mrs. Oxberry asked Board members to act on a list of investment banks, savings and loans and trusts that are recommended for solicitation of interest rates on school investments during the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #26. She added that the investments are subject to confirmation of bank maintenance and legally required collateral. Mr. Bickleman explained that banks must maintain collateral funds in a third party bank. He added that the District always make sure that collateral funds are in excess of the money invested.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the list of investment banks. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to consider a contract to reappoint Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Esquire, of Fox Rothschild LLP as Colonial School District Solicitor effective July 1, 2011. See enclosure #27. He stated that the annual rate for retainer services of \$24,823.00 remains the same from 2009-2010. Mr. Johnson added that the agreement provides for a base rate of \$180.00 per hour on items not covered under the school retainer.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0. Mrs. Suchsland thanked Mr. Sultanik for being sensitive to the current economic climate and holding the line on fees.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a consultant agreement with Sweet, Stevens, Katz and Williams, LLP. See enclosure #28. He noted that the agreement is for designated services and commitments in the amount of \$8,000. Mrs. Berk explained that the agreement is for a pool counsel to handle issues related to special needs students and IEPs.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the consultant agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson called for Board action on two special education renewal contracts with the Lincoln Center at a cost of \$860,428 for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #40. He noted that there is no rate increase from the current year.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on an annual agreement with Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit Data Processing Services at a cost of \$43,347. See enclosure #30.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a request to renew the license with My Learning Plan for instructional users at a cost of \$7,170. See attachment #31. Mr. Hartz reported that the service is used by certified staff to track credits required to maintain their certification. He stated that there is no rate increase and added that there is an overall reduction of \$315 because the District has fewer users this year.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to renew the license. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to act on a cell telephone contract with Verizon. See enclosure #52. He noted the contract in addition to a reduction in the number of cell phones provides significant monthly savings. Mr. Boegly confirmed for Mrs. Suchsland that the District's monthly bill will be reduced by \$3,000.

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

Mr. Johnson called for Board action on an agreement with EduPlanet for professional development at an annual cost of \$2,000. See enclosure #32. Mr. Boegly reported that the service is an online Web site that houses professional development tools and provides a social network for educators.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on the purchase and adoption of textbooks for the Spanish program. See enclosure #33

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the purchase and adoption of the textbooks. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider a special education settlement agreement that was reviewed in executive session.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Oxberry seconded a motion to approve the settlement agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mrs. Suchsland asked the Board to act on a request for one PWHS student to attend the Best Buddies Conference held in Indianapolis, Ind. See enclosure #53. She added that the parents of the student will sign all of the appropriate permission and waiver forms.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the trip request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson called for Board action on a series of instructional supply bids. He stated that the bids are for elementary art supplies, secondary art supplies, general instruction supplies, technology education supplies, science supplies, CMS athletic and physical education supplies and custodial supplies. See enclosures #34 through #40.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the list of investment banks. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Brodsky stated that the IU Board is lobbying state legislators regarding budget cuts.

CMTHS: No report.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: Mrs. Oxberry reviewed the minutes of the May 3 meeting. She updated the budget process, the Bond Fund Parameters Resolution passed on Monday evening, and future Act I projections.

Curriculum: Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the committee met on May 16. She reported that the committee reviewed a presentation by PWHS teachers Megan Carragher and Paul Marro on a marketing project students conducted with regards to promoting the Colonial Garden. She also noted that the committee received updates on the K-5 Science, Social Studies and World Language curriculums, including an online Chinese course. She stated that the committee was also apprised of the Best Practices Fair.

Facilities Management and Transportation: No report.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mrs. Suchsland stated that the committee met on May 9. She reported on the CITV Public Service Announcement about the "Don't Text and Drive" campaign. She stated that the spring community newsletter will be in the mail in the next few weeks and that the District will staff a tent at Plymouth Township Day on June 4 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She also noted that the District is piloting a program to sell advertisements in its publications.

Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Jowett stated that the committee met on May 11. They received updates on the "Don't Text and Drive" campaign, the District's Memorandum of Understanding with local municipalities, a school safety and security audit of Ridge Park Elementary School, the District's handling of food allergies and initiatives to enhance the image of the Food Services Department.

Legislative: Mrs. Suchsland reported on the state budget and the possible return of \$900,000 of state social security reimbursement money to the District. She also noted that HB1326 eliminates all Act 1 exceptions.

Municipal Liaisons: None.

**Public Comment:** Mrs. Thiess spoke on behalf of the CESP and thanked the Board for an open and pleasant negotiating process. She stated that the organization voted unanimously to pass the agreement on April 26. Mrs. Moore thanked Mrs. Thiess for her leadership.

Mr. Brodsky stated that he has heard from a community member at Board meetings that all this District does is spend, spend, spend. Mr. Brodsky noted that among the 21 school districts in Montgomery County, the Colonial School District has the highest elementary PSSA scores, a recognized Advanced Placement program and the third lowest tax burden in the county. He thanked the principals, administration and staff for all of their hard work.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David M. Sherman". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary

**Odyssey of the Mind**

Colonial Middle School

Riddhi Ameser  
Raquel Dunoff  
Christian Hoban  
Nathan Hyer  
Mason Jones  
Michael Krone  
Josh Kurman  
Colleen McFillin  
Nathaniel Reichley  
Angela Richter  
Ryan Silverthorn  
Cooper Smith  
Lizzie Stricklin

Colonial Elementary School

Vivian Altopp  
Shreya Bhutani  
Bailey Bower  
Sean Friday  
Alyssa Jamison  
Nicole Lauria  
Sean McLaughlin

**Technology Student Association**

Plymouth Whitemarsh High School

Bryan Bennett  
Mark Forsberg  
Olivia Gum  
Ariana Horn  
Lisa Kelly  
Sabrina Koenig  
Joseph Narke  
Gregory Richards  
Christian Schaeffer  
Joseph Weir  
Anthony Williams

Colonial Middle School

Anya Forsberg  
Woody Fulmer  
Patrick Gaffney  
Sophia Gross  
Jake Gum  
Carley Hauer  
Samantha Horry  
Rachel Paciello  
Stephanie Wisniewski

**DECA**

Blair Averett  
Alison Cohen  
Mollie Dronson  
John Fritz  
Jessie Hockman  
Jaelyn Jaffe  
Jordan Kapel  
Josh Klempner  
Scott Leopold  
Chloe Leshner  
Sierra Levin  
Colin Steinberg  
Jordan Mitchell  
Remi Nuddle  
Seth Nuddle  
Dani Rosenberg  
Allison Weinstock  
Margaux Weinraub  
Brett Paul  
Jordan Paul  
Rod Pichon  
Austin Rose  
Stuti Santosh  
Brandon Schwab  
Cory Somers  
Brad Wanner  
Jordan Wolfheimer

I apologize for not being able to attend tonight's board meeting due to a scheduling conflict with the High School spring concert. I am also sorry that I could not be there in person to share my thoughts on Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer's selection as the next Superintendent of the Colonial School District.

As we all know, the Colonial School District has developed into one of the top tier systems in southeastern Pennsylvania, growing greatly over the past decade. Our outgoing Superintendent, Dr. Vince Cotter, deserves much credit for this improvement, but he will be the first to state that this evolution could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of an exemplary core staff of administrators, teachers, and support personnel, all of whom shared the vision of what Colonial could become.

Dr. Gorodetzer was a critical part of the evolution of the Colonial School District during the past decade. As Assistant Superintendent, she was involved in almost every aspect of the District's operation, from curriculum, to facilities, to finance, and all areas in between. Her background as teacher, principal, and administrator in a variety of buildings in the District has given her a unique perspective on how things work here at Colonial.

Over the past year and a half, I have worked closely with Dr. Gorodetzer on the Curriculum Committee, and at various meetings and functions. I have found her to be dedicated, hard-working, organized, open and honest, and a very good team builder and communicator. She is willing to listen to and consider all points of view, a skill which I feel is critical in working in such a complex and challenging organization as the Colonial School District. As one of the newer members of the Board of Directors, I have seen first-hand how many different perspectives there are on every issue, even ones that appear simple. Dr. Gorodetzer's ability to listen and understand varying opinions, and then integrating those thoughts into the decision-making process, will bode well in her new role.

I know that Dr. Gorodetzer has a vision and a plan to take Colonial to the next level, and we have a wonderful, strong, and dedicated team in the district to help execute that vision and to keep providing the highest quality educational programming to our children. As a Board member, I look forward to working with Dr. Gorodetzer to ensure a continued open, honest, and cooperative relationship across the District, where all voices and opinions are valued, and where every employee and every student are appreciated for who they are.

Although we are working through some challenging economic times, I know that the Colonial School District will continue to shine with Dr. Gorodetzer at the helm, taking our programs to the next level. Congratulations!