

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, JANUARY 12, 1998**

The January Work Session of the Colonial School Board of Directors was convened by President Kessler at 8:39 p.m. in the Board Room of the Colonial Elementary School on January 12, 1998.

**Board Members Present:** Stuart Kessler, Marc Orlow, Beverly Brown, Robert Carroll, Rich Connolly, Gary Johnson, Robert O'Neill, Jack Pinheiro, Thomas Yunker.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; Dr. Ann Stormes, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; James M. Bell, Director of Operation/Board Secretary; R. Scott Klinger, Director of Personnel; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Joseph Bickleman, Controller/Treasurer; Frank O'Hara, Solicitor; Carol Cohen and Ray McMahon, CEA; Kate Campbell; Allan Dovberg; Hugh Lipshutz; Darilyn Moyer; Donald Newmeyer; and Mary Theiss.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session to discuss legal and personnel matters before the meeting from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Minutes:** Mr. Kessler asked for comments or questions on the minutes of the General Meeting of 11/20/97, the Reorganization Meeting of 12/1/97, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 12/15/97, the Curriculum Meeting of 12/15/97 and the Special Meeting of 12/15/97, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5. No issues were raised.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Kessler asked the Board if there were any comments or questions on the Budget Transfer Reports of 12/97 and 1/98; General Fund/Federal Program Bills for 12/97 and 1/98; the Capital Reserve Fund Reports 11/97 and 12/97; Food Service Bills and Reports for 10/97; and the Outstanding Investment, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Reports, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status and Treasurer's Reports for 11/97 and 12/97, as shown in Enclosures #6 through #15. Dr. Durtan noted that he had also received the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report for 11/97 and that it would be included on the agenda for the General Meeting of 1/15/98. Mr. Yunker requested that action be delayed on approving the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts in Enclosure # 13 until the district had received a final bank statement. Mr. Kessler so directed. Mr. Orlow asked if reimbursements to the district from the bond issue would be returned to the accounts from which they were originally spent. Mr. Bickleman indicated that they would. He also noted that

a couple of typographical errors on dates would also be corrected prior to the meeting on Thursday.

**Old Business:** Mr. Kessler noted that the Board had received an update of the Strategic Plan, shown as Enclosure # 16, and asked Dr. Stormes to review the document briefly. Dr. Stormes reported that the Strategic Planning Committee had met on 10/28/97 and 10/30/97 and updated the strategies and action plans contained in the plan. She noted that the committee had labeled two strategies as completed and listed six others as still valid but requiring additional time to complete. She also noted the elimination and realignment of some action plans. She advised that the update did not need to be forwarded to the state at this time but indicated that administration was seeking Board approval of the update to the plan. Mr. Orlow asked about and Dr. Stormes confirmed the number of strategies in the plan. She noted that the committee had compacted the number of strategies in 1995, thereby reducing them from eleven to eight. Mr. Carroll inquired about the meaning of “holistic scoring”, and Dr. Stormes briefly explained the nature of this standard evaluation tool. Mr. Orlow asked if the committee had considered adding strategies, and Dr. Durtan and Dr. Stormes indicated that the facilitator had presented that opportunity to the committee but that the committee had not chosen to add new strategies at this time. Mr. Orlow asked how many of the original committee members were still serving, and Dr. Stormes indicated that there had been a couple of changes in administrators and board members participating in the planning process but that most of the original members of the committee were still serving. Ms. Brown asked if the plan addressed a need of the district for additional land, and Dr. Stormes responded that it did not address this issue directly. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the original plan did include goals for maintaining facilities so that they met district needs. Ms. Brown stressed that the goal was to meet such needs “satisfactorily”.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Kessler noted that the district had received several pieces of correspondence, as shown in Enclosures #17 through #19 and #30 through #32. The Board briefly discussed two of these letters. In Enclosure #17, four families in the district expressed concern about changes in the response of local fire companies to alarms at district buildings. They noted that procedures had been changed so that only one company now responded to alarms when five companies had responded in the past. The writers and several board members were concerned that the changes could result in too few firefighters respond to serious incidents, especially during the day when many of the volunteer firefighters were at work outside the community. The Board asked Dr. Durtan to contact the fire marshal and to ask him to respond to the concerns of the community and the Board either through correspondence or through visiting an upcoming board meeting, as appropriate.

Board members also briefly discussed a letter and series of petitions advocating the establishment of all-girls soccer teams at the middle and high schools. Dr. Durtan

noted the strong community interest in the sport and raised some pertinent issues associated with the request. He noted the current shortage of fields to support an expanded sports program and concerns that there may not be a large enough pool of athletes to field competitive teams in a wider variety of sports. Mr. Orlow asked and Mr. O'Neill provided information on the number of girls participating in community soccer programs. Dr. Durtan felt that community interest in a girls soccer program was growing stronger and that it was inevitable that the district would eventually have such a program. He stated his belief that the issues he raised earlier would need to be addressed before such action could be take. He will seek input from Mr. Forster at the high school and from coaches at both the middle school and high school and report back to the Board at a later date.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Durtan reviewed his personnel report on the current additions, terminations, suspensions, demotions, leaves of absence, promotions, suspensions, transfers and resignations of staff, as shown in Enclosure #21, and also noted that he would be recommending routine additions and deletions to the substitute list, as shown in Enclosure #22. Board members had no questions on his personnel recommendations.

Dr. Durtan raised the issue of a late Labor Day in 1998 and the need to decide in the near future the date on which classes would begin for the 1998-99 school year. He noted the preference of the CEA Executive Committee that classes begin on the Tuesday after Labor Day. He asked the Board to consider Monday, 8/31/97; Tuesday, 9/1/97; and Tuesday, 9/8/97. Mr. Connolly asked on what date classes would end if they began on 9/8/98. Dr. Durtan estimated that they would end on 6/18/99. Mr. Kessler asked if Dr. Durtan had a recommendation based on educational concerns, and Dr. Durtan responded that an earlier start date would be better. He also noted that neither Norristown Area School District nor Upper Merion School District, Colonial's two partners in the vo-tech consortium, had yet reached a decision on the issue. Mr. Kessler indicated that the Board would attempt to reach a decision at its Thursday meeting.

**New Business:** Mr. Kessler noted that the PLGIT Arbitrage Rebate Management (ARM) Account Agreements, shown in Enclosure #23, would be on the agenda for Thursday's meeting. Ms. Brown and Mr. Bickleman briefly explained the agreements which deal with the short-term investment portfolio for funds received from the Emmaus Bond Fund and withdrawal of these invested funds. Ms. Brown noted that the district could not manage the investments itself unless Mr. Bickleman worked full-time on the task. She noted that the fees associated with PLGIT management were a small price to pay for solid investment. Mr. Bickleman noted that the fees which PLGIT charged for this service were lower than that offered by others and that all investments complied with state regulations.

Mr. Kessler noted that the request to authorize the high school orchestra to take a trip to Baltimore, shown in Enclosure # 24, would be on the agenda for the meeting

of 1/15/98. In response to a Board query, Dr. Durtan will confirm that all the costs associated with the trip will be met by the students or through fundraising.

Dr. Durtan indicated that the DECA Club has requested approval to attend the State Career Development Conference in March and that the club and participants would cover the full cost of the trip. The request will be on the agenda for the Thursday meeting.

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

**Committee Reports:** No reports.

**Public Comments:** Ms. Theiss, district resident, spoke in favor of a girls soccer program and offered some suggestions on how to address the issues of field availability. She commended the Board for looking into the changes in how local fire companies provide coverage for district alarms. She asked for an update on the high school addition and the technology initiative. Mr. Connolly responded that draft feasibility studies were on hand and that the Board should receive final copies in the near future. He also indicated that the architect was preparing construction drawings and the project was on schedule. Dr. Durtan indicated that purchase orders were being put together for the first phase of the technology initiative. He noted that there had been a slight delay because Compaq would be providing newer models of computers at the original bid price. He expected installation to begin within three weeks, if all goes as planned.

Dr. Lipshutz, district resident, asked for additional information on recent out-of-school suspensions at the K-3 level. Dr. Durtan indicated that there was no on-going problem and that he would provide additional information at Thursday's meeting if he could do so without giving information which would identify the students involved.

Mr. Dovberg, district resident, indicated that we would be providing the Board correspondence which he hoped would be included in Board records. He expressed pleasure at DECA's own funding of its upcoming trip, noted the status of the funds available to the club, and suggested that the club set aside funds to later trips so that it could avoid requesting a district subsidy. He also queried the plans of the orchestra to fund its trip and asked if any precedents would be set if the district provided funds for such a trip. Mr. O'Hara responded that the district could choose how it supported the orchestra, including whether to fund trips or not. Mr. Dovberg supported opening school early next fall, suggested that Mr. English help the district locate fields in Plymouth Township which could be used by a girls soccer program, and solicited comment from Mr. O'Hara on the best way to address correspondence to the Board. Mr. O'Hara provided Mr. Dovberg with some suggested changes to his most recent letter to the Board.

**There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James M. Bell  
Board Secretary**