

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MARCH 18, 1999**

Vice President Orlow convened the March meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:02 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on March 18, 1999.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Robert Carroll, Rich Connolly, Gary Johnson, Robert O'Neill, Jack Pinheiro, and Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: Stuart Kessler and Beverly Brown.

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; Dr. Ann Stormes, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; John Lukens and Michael Gordon, Board Student Representatives; R. Scott Klinger, Director of Personnel; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Frank O'Hara, Solicitor; Carol Cohen, CEA; Matthew Coccagna; Allan Dovberg; Leslie Finegold; Tom Gibson; Irene Guerriero; Karen Leung; Dr. Hugh Lipshutz; Donald Newmeyer; and Amy Stohner.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings of 02/10/99, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 02/11/99, the Work Session of 02/16/99, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 02/17/99, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 02/18/99, the General Meeting of 02/18/99, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 02/25/99, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/03/99, as corrected and shown in Enclosures #1 through #8. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow referred board members to the Budget Transfers Report of 03/99; the Bond Fund Report for the month ending 02/28/99; the Capital Projects Report for the month ending 02/28/99; the General Fund/Federal Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 02/28/99; the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report of 01/31/99; the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, and the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 02/28/99; the Budget Analysis of 03/05/99; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 02/28/99, as corrected and shown in Enclosures #9 through #20. Mr. Carroll moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the reports as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Mr. Dovberg provided a brief recap of the successful Technology 2000 symposium sponsored by the Montgomery County Taxpayers Consortium. He noted that 4,000 people had attended the event, including all of the board members from Colonial School District and some district administrators, teachers and students. He expressed his appreciation for the broad support from the district. He also commended the Plymouth Whitemarsh High School String Ensemble and sponsor, Ms. Guerriero for their excellent performance at the event and announced that the consortium had awarded the group a stipend of \$100 for their fine effort. Mr. Orlow offered Mr. Dovberg congratulations and appreciation for the fine effort by the consortium in organizing the event. Mr. Dovberg was pleased to be able to showcase the work of area students at the event.

Mr. Dovberg thanked high school principal, Patricia Campbell for her efforts and ingenuity in developing a solution enabling students eligible for the national DECA competition to attend the event without asking for funding from the Board. He felt that club and parental support and a loan to be repaid through fundraising placed the responsibility for attendance at the event where it should be. Mr. Dovberg also expressed some concern about the language of the proposal.

Mr. Dovberg questioned Mr. Bell on the steps that he had taken to correct meeting minutes earlier in the year. Mr. Bell outlined his process which included mentioning the request in the minutes of the meeting where the request was made and making the change to the minutes where the change was required. Mr. Dovberg suggested that the wording of changes be reflected in both sets of minutes.

Budget Report: Mr. Orlow provided an overview of the proposed buildings and grounds/transportation budget for the 1999-2000 school year. He noted that the personnel portions of the budget had been covered by Mr. Pinheiro in his report the previous Monday. He reviewed with the Board and the community the major components of three sub-budgets: The custodial/operational budget, the facilities budget and the transportation budget. The key highlights of his report are contained in Attachment #1 to these minutes. Mr. Orlow advised that the information that he was sharing was based on early projections and that the Buildings and Grounds Committee would be taking a careful look at the facilities requests from each of the district's schools at upcoming committee meetings. He also noted that additional background information on the budget for the coming year would be forthcoming in the weeks ahead and that the committee would be reviewing it carefully. He noted that negotiations were underway with the district's support services employees and that Mr. Bickleman was working on projecting the district's revenues, expenditures and fund balance as the current fiscal year draws to a close. In response to a Board query, Mr. Orlow received confirmation from administration that line items and video cameras listed in the transportation budget were for periodic monitoring of student behavior on the buses transporting students to and from school.

Mr. Orlow and Mr. Bickleman announced that the budget report of the Finance Committee was being deferred to the Board work session scheduled for 04/12/99.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow noted that preliminary information on the proposed school calendar for 1999-2000 had been received and reviewed at the work session on March 15th. See Enclosure #21. Dr. Durtan provided some information requested by the Board at that meeting. He advised that the senior trip at the high school was scheduled for 04/08/00 through 04/11/00 and that Romano's had agreed to a reduced rate for bus service on a day where service was not provided to the high school but was provided to other district schools. Ms. Cohen stated the position of the CEA that in-service days were needed at all grade levels and not just at the high school. Dr. Durtan agreed but noted that in-service should not come at the expense of instructional time. The Board discussed revisions to the calendar that included the addition of an in-service day at the high school on 01/21/00 to assist staff in making the transition from the first to the second semester of block scheduling and another in-service day for all staff on 03/17/00 to provide a break in the long stretch of instruction in the spring. During discussion, it was noted that there would be 192 teacher days, 184 instructional days and eight in-service days at the high school, and 185 instructional days and seven in-service days at the elementary and middle schools. After careful deliberation, Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the calendar for the 1999-2000 school year with the addition of the in-service days on 01/21/00 for the high school and 03/17/00 for all schools. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the second of two pieces of correspondence on the agenda, the 1999-2000 Intermediate Unit budgets. Mr. Pinheiro briefly summarized his comments at the work session the previous Monday and moved a motion to approve the four budgets outlined in Enclosure #23. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report as shown in Enclosures #24 through #25. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Connolly seconded a motion to approve the superintendent's report and the personnel actions contained therein, as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: Mr. Gordon gave a brief review of the fine effort by the Colonial Players and their sponsor, Amy LaRue on the spring musical and an update on a SADD concert, the junior class fashion show and the jazz band's performance at the capitol. Mr. Lukens recapped the achievements of high school qualifiers for state competition in swimming and wrestling and of students who might become members of the national math team. He also provided an update on planning for the senior trip and the senior dinner.

New Business: Mr. Orlow raised the subject of a Health Insurance Broker of Record, the first of four items of new business on the agenda. He noted that the Board had been awaiting additional information on the subject. Mr. Connolly read excerpts from a letter from Jeffrey Wallner, the current broker of record, reviewing his more than four-year history with the district and his value to the district during that period. Mr. Connolly noted that Mr. Wallner had received 3% of the value of the district's health insurance contracts as commission for his services and that these fees had been added to the district's premiums. He also indicated that Mr. Wallner had expressed a willingness to renegotiate his fee. In response to Board queries, Mr. Klinger indicated that Mr. Wallner had assisted the district well in the past but that it might not need the assistance of a consultant on a regular basis. Mr. Orlow indicated that Board review of its need for a broker of record was not a rejection of Mr. Wallner but an opportunity to evaluate changing circumstances and costs before deciding how to proceed. Mr. Klinger addressed a concern that the district's experience factors had been adversely affected by misdirected worker's compensation claims and said that, upon investigation, there was no record of misdirected claims. Mr. Orlow suggested that the Board rescind its appointment of a broker of record. Board members praised Mr. Wallner's past service to the district. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to terminate Mr. Wallner's/Walnut Street Associates' appointment as Broker of Record of the district's insured benefits package. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Klinger advised that he would notify Blue Cross/Blue Shield of the change so that it would be effective by April 1, 1999. He reported that the Board action just taken would reduce district premiums for the balance of the fiscal year. Mr. Pinheiro suggested that the Board add money for contracted services in the upcoming budget should consultant services later be required.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to two contracts for transporting students, one to The Philadelphia Children's School and the other to New Life Youth and Family Services, as shown in Enclosure #26. Dr. Durtan confirmed that in the former case the parent would be providing the transportation and in the latter the school. Mr. O'Hara reported that he had reviewed the contracts and, with the exception of a preposition which he would like corrected, had found them appropriate. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the contracts, as amended. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow referred the Board to Enclosure #27, a request from the Future Business Leaders of America Club at the high school for approval of a trip to Seven Springs for the state FLBA competition. Dr. Durtan confirmed that the request did not involve an expenditure of district funds. Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the request. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow advised the Board that two high school students had earned the right to attend the National DECA Competition in Orlando, Florida from April 23rd to April

28th. He noted that the high school administration proposed that the trip by the students and an advisor be financed by approximately \$869 currently available from the DECA Club, \$200 from each of the participants, and \$1,250.50 from a Board loan to DECA. The loan would be repaid before the end of the school year from funds raised by the club through fund-raising activities. Mr. Carroll moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the request and the loan. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Shipman to summarize briefly the nature of the annual Assurance Regarding the Operation of Special Education Programs, as indicated in Enclosure #28. Mr. Shipman explained that annually the district had to certify that it would abide by the laws governing special education, would respond to the needs of each exceptional child, and would educate each child in an appropriate setting. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the submission of the annual assurances. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports:

Intermediate Unit: Mr. Pinheiro thanked the Board for its prompt approval of the annual I. U. budgets.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson advised the Board that the Center for Technical Studies had negotiated an articulation agreement between the center and The Restaurant School by which students completing related vo-tech programs would receive college credit when they attended The Restaurant School. He announced that the Joint Operating Committee would consider its budget for the coming school year next month and that the Joint Committee Dinner would be held on April 20th.

Personnel Committee: Mr. Pinheiro advised that the committee had met on February 25th. He noted that the district was still negotiating contracts with its support service units, was reviewing the progress made by the performance-based pay committee, and was looking at the potential impact of District Office retirements over the next couple of years and the need for smooth transitions. He also reported on a proposal to place the district's three security personnel on a standard hourly rate of pay of \$18.50 by 07/01/00 and raise current salaries 25% of the difference between current rates and the new rate at six month intervals over the course of the current and coming school years as a transition into the new rates. He advised that all district security personnel were former police or security officers and that they were currently paid less than their peers in other districts. In response to Board queries, Mr. Pinheiro indicated that any security employee hired before the effective date of the new rate would receive a current rate and be subject to the transition process affecting current employees. The Student Board Representatives spoke favorably of the security personnel in the district. Mr.

Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the new hourly wage proposal. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: No report.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Orlow referred the issue of designing air conditioning systems for two elementary schools and the east wing of the high school back to the committee for additional review.

Mr. Orlow led the Board in a discussion of a proposal from Worth and Company to change the scope of the project to install the new chiller at the middle school so that the old chiller currently under repair could serve as a back-up to the new chiller. The suggested change called for using the school's boilers in lieu of the gas-fired boiler planned as part of the project and using the savings realized to undertake the additional plumbing required to provide the back-up connections. Following discussion of the proposed change, Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the recommended change in the scope of the project as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow reviewed with the Board earlier action to designate Polatnick Zacharjasz Architects as the firm to do the design work to create additional classrooms at Colonial Middle School, subject to a final contract being approved by the solicitor. He noted that Mr. O'Hara had prepared a contract based on the assumption that the price quoted by the firm included construction monitoring. Mr. Orlow advised that the firm had notified the district that the price originally quoted had not included construction monitoring and had submitted a revised cost which added \$4,200 to the price. He reported that the revised cost of the contract would be \$20,700 and recommended Board approval. After a brief discussion, Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the contract with the additional language and allowance to cover the construction phase of the project. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson advised that the committee had been meeting with the district's parent-teacher organizations and teachers. He also reminded the Board and the community of the upcoming town meeting on March 22nd at the Whitmarsh Township Building. He noted that the meeting would offer the community the opportunity to take a look at preliminary plans for the development of the WFIL Tract.

Legislative: No report.

Public Comment: Mr. Dovberg, district resident, asked the Board what would happen if DECA did not repay the loan that the Board had approved earlier in the

meeting to fund student participation at the national DECA competition. He suggested that the Board take formal action to stipulate that no future district funds would be made available to DECA until the loan was repaid. In the discussion that followed Mr. Orlow advised that the Board had an understanding with DECA that the loan would be repaid by the end of the current school year and that it did not want to be locked into a single course of action if the club were unable to meet that deadline. He also expressed the point of view that the club should be given some credit for its efforts at fundraising. Mr. Connolly concurred that board members should be able to use their best judgments if repayment of the loan became problematic. He also voiced dismay and concern about singling out a single school club for continued close scrutiny.

Ms. Cohen, President of CEA, thanked the Board for its support of the Read Across America program. She also restated the position of the CEA that all professional staff should be treated equally when providing in-service opportunities. She asked that the Board reconsider its decision to schedule an in-service day in January for high school teachers only. Mr. Yunker responded by saying that the Board was doing what it felt was best for the district's students. Mr. Orlow noted that the high school staff would be undertaking work related to block scheduling that no other teachers in the district would face.

Mr. Newmeyer, district resident, inquired about shortages of substitute teachers and the use of student teachers as substitutes. Dr. Durtan noted that districts all over the state were feeling the shortage of substitutes but indicated that Colonial was not feeling the shortage as strongly as other districts. He reported that Colonial, like other districts, would be looking into ways to address the shortage. Dr. Durtan noted that the district's location was an advantage but reported that other districts were paying more than Colonial for substitutes. He voiced his belief that market conditions would dictate how the problem was handled in the future. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the district had student teachers in its schools but was not using them as substitutes. Mr. Klinger reported that the district was working with some local universities on the issue and that the Department of Education was making some exceptions to past practice because of the statewide substitute shortage.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary