

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, APRIL 10, 2000**

President Kessler convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:40 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 10, 2000.

Board Members Present: Stuart Kessler, Marc Orlow, Robert Carroll, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Thomas Marchozzi, Robert O'Neill, Jack Pinheiro and Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Dr. Ann Stormes, Director of Educational Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Miki Gerlin, Director, Genesis; Gerhard Dietrich, Vice-Chairman, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Allan Dovberg, President, Colonial United Taxpayers, and Scott Helfand.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meetings of 02/17/00 and 03/02/00, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 03/10/00, Work Session of 03/13/00, the Personnel Committee Meetings of 03/13/00, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/15/00, the General Meeting of 03/16/00, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 03/23/00, and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/27/00, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #9. Mr. Marchozzi suggested that a line in Enclosure #7 be rephrased to reflect more accurately Board action on an item of business. Mr. Bell advised that he would make the change prior to the Board taking action on the minutes the following Thursday. Mr. Carroll noted a typographical error in correspondence sent to the Board and attached to the minutes. No action was taken to correct this error.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler noted that only the Food Service Report for 01/00, as shown in Enclosure #10, would be on the agenda for Board action at its Thursday meeting. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the Board had in the past received reports that showed food service activities by school. He asked if such reports would be available in the future. Mr. Klinger responded that they would again be available but that data on prior years was not currently in the department's new database.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler noted that five items of correspondence would be on the agenda, including Enclosures #11 through #14. He recognized Mr. Dietrich who gave a brief summary of the mission of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, thanked those who had donated funds to the foundation and introduced Ms. Gerlin, a recent mini-grant recipient. Ms. Gerlin briefly reviewed the work of Genesis, the alternative education program housed at Plymouth Whitemarsh High School, and reported on the positive impact that the purchase of a digital camera was having on the students in the program. She noted that Genesis students had seemed somewhat less familiar with the technological advances that many of their peers in regular high school programs dealt with daily. She reported that use of the digital camera had had a positive impact both on the students' attitude in school and their performance in their educational program. Ms. Gerlin expressed her pleasure in finding the students so enthusiastic about projects involving the use of the camera and thanked the foundation and the Board of School Directors for providing students access to the technology.

Mr. Kessler referred to correspondence from Gerald E. Depo, Town Administrator of Bloomsburg, PA, requesting Board support of an attempt to defeat Senate Bill 390. Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Bickleman about the significance of tax issues raised in the bill. Mr. Bickleman provided information on the impact on the district of limits previously imposed on the collection of the amusement taxes but could not comment directly on the proposed legislation. Mr. Kessler felt that the correspondent had not been clear as to where the legislation was going and what he expected of the district.

Mr. Kessler noted that Barry Shutt, Director of the PA Department of Agriculture, had provided verification of the acceptability of the district's schedule of federal financial assistance. He also reported that Murray S. Toas, President of the Norristown Area School Board, had requested district support by communicating with local legislators on legislation dealing with special education funding for urban districts. Mr. Carroll spoke in favor of this initiative.

Mr. Kessler referenced correspondence from Bernadette Biasi, Chair of the PWHS Scholarship Fund, requesting authorization to add \$1.00 to the cost of student picture packages to support the scholarship fund. Dr. Durtan provided some information on the fund. Mr. Bell provided an update on the status of what is normally an annual request from the fund for support. He also reported that, as a result of miscommunication between the district and the photographer, the fee approved for the current school year had not been collected. Mr. Bell asked that the Board consider authorizing the collection of \$2.00 per photo package in the coming year to address the shortfall. He noted that the reduced package charges resulting from the move to a new photographer this year would mean that even with the \$2.00 add-on, picture prices for the coming year would not be much higher than they would have been if a \$1.00 fee had been added to the former package prices. Some

board members had questions and concerns about the practice of adding the fees to picture prices to support the scholarship fund. Mr. Kessler acknowledged that similar issues had been raised when the Board first considered and approved the practice.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosure #15. He highlighted the pending retirement of Dr. Stormes and the resignation of Teresa Woodin, Assistant Principal at Colonial Elementary School, as well as the retirements of three teachers who had been with the district many years: Bob Thompson, Bill Keller, and Mary Jane Himmelreich. He thanked the teachers for their many years of dedicated service and for their consideration in advising the district early about their retirement. Mr. Orlow asked whether the district provided training for substitutes who were not certified. Mr. Klinger noted that district provided training for all of its substitutes and evaluated them daily. He also recapped the process through which individuals received emergency certification and answered questions related to that process.

New Business: Mr. Kessler asked Mr. O'Neill to provide an overview of the preliminary budget on which the Board would be acting at its Thursday meeting. Mr. O'Neill reported that the budget contained estimated revenues developed by Mr. Bickleman based on data currently available and historical trends and estimated expenditures based upon information provided to Board committees and presented in earlier committee budget reports. He noted that, if the Board adopted the preliminary budget shown in Enclosure #16 on Thursday evening, it would be available to the public the following day. The proposed budget represented total expenditures of \$54,596,268.00 and a real estate tax milage if 13.12.

Mr. Kessler noted that two field trip requests, shown as Enclosures #20 and #21 on the agenda for Thursday, would be up for board consideration at that general meeting. The requests involved the participation of Daniel Richardson , a high school student, in the All-State Orchestra in Pittsburgh from April 12th through April 15th and a trip by the lacrosse team to Sea Isle City. Dr. Durtan noted that the district always had short notice of music and choral students qualifying for state events, and he asked that the Board consider action that night on the request that Mr. Richardson be allowed to participate in the state orchestra. In response to a question from Mr. Kessler, Dr. Durtan indicated that the trip would be funded with funds in the high school budget for that purpose and that no additional funding would be required. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to authorize the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Pinheiro wondered why the request for the lacrosse team trip had arrived so late since the coaches had probably planned it for some time. Dr. Durtan noted that the annual trip had been to Florida in recent years and that, when it was learned that the site would not be available this year, the coaches had to make alternate arrangements.

Mr. Kessler reported that a series of Board Policies (#311, #411, #511, and #911) on firearms, ammunition and other weapons, and Board Policy #116 on tutorial instruction would be on the agenda for Board action on second reading on Thursday evening. Mr. Orlow raised the issue that collections of historical artifacts that included weapons could be banned under the current language in the policies. He noted that a teacher had been using such a collection for many years to pique student interest in particular historical periods, and he expressed an interest in including an exception in the policy for such activities. Mr. Yunker felt that the language of the policies already allowed for such cases. Mr. Orlow thought that a specific provision allowing for discretion by building principals would be appropriate. Mr. Kessler questioned the convoluted definition of a firearm and felt that it was inappropriate and needlessly complex. Dr. Durtan suggested having the solicitor address this concern.

Mr. Kessler noted that proposed Board Policy #209 on medical management of pupil health conditions would also be on the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. Mr. Shipman briefly reviewed prior Board direction to develop a broader policy covering medical management of student health conditions rather than deal with the conditions individually. He noted that the policy relied heavily on the opinions of the treating physician, the district's physician and the parent(s). In response to a question from Mr. Kessler, Dr. Lipshutz reported that the policy addressed concerns raised earlier by the Board and codified what the district was already doing.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to a bid for high school athletic, health and physical education supplies that would be on the agenda on Thursday as Enclosure #21. Dr. Durtan advised that a bid for similar supplies at the middle and elementary schools would also be on the agenda.

Solicitor's Report: The solicitor was not scheduled to be present to deliver a report. However, Mr. Kessler took the opportunity to point out to the Board that it had received information on an adjudication in a disciplinary measure and to suggest that it would be appropriate for the Board to decide that evening on the resolution that board members had before them. Mr. Orlow sought and received clarification that it was the practice of the Board to have board members who were not present at the meeting where the issues were discussed abstain from voting on the resolution. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the resolution before the Board. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Orlow and Mr. O'Neill voted in favor. Mr. Orlow and Mr. O'Neill abstained because they had not been present at the original meeting. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Community Relations Committee: Mr. Johnson reported that the next town meeting would be held at the Conshohocken Municipal Building on May 2nd and that Ms. Davis, Principal of Conshohocken Elementary School, would

provide an update on the school-wide initiative in progress at Conshohocken Elementary.

Mr. Kessler announced that the Board had met in executive session from 6:30 p.m. to just prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Public Comments: Mr. Dovberg requested changes to the minutes contained in Enclosures #4 and #7 to reflect more accurately comments that he and the district solicitor had made during the meetings. Mr. Bell confirmed the clarifying language being sought. Mr. Dovberg expressed his opinion that too many issues were being deferred to the Thursday Board meetings where they were then raised and acted upon without sufficient time for the community to consider and offer comment. He suggested to the Board that Mr. Marchozzi's written comments attached to the minutes of the regular Board meeting in March were worthy of serious Board consideration. Mr. Dovberg challenged Mr. Orlow to cite an instance when it would be appropriate for someone other than a law enforcement official to bring weapons onto school property. Mr. Orlow cited his earlier example of historical artifacts. Mr. Dovberg stated his firm belief that it was never appropriate to bring weapons into schools and that there were other ways to illustrate points and interest students in the subjects being covered in class. Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Dovberg's right to state his opinion and the opportunity of board members to consider differing points of view.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary