

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, MAY 18, 1998**

President Kessler convened the May Work Session of the Colonial School Board of Directors and Public Hearing on the Fact-Finding Report at 8:03 p.m. in the Auditorium of Plymouth Whitemarsh High School on May 18, 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 Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; R. Scott Klinger, Director of Personnel; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Frank O'Hara, Solicitor; Bob Greishober, CEA; Allan Dovberg; Don Flathman; Tom Gibson; Carol Klein; Sonia Krishman; Hugh Lipshutz; Michael Macaninch; Donald Newmeyer; Cyndi Slagle; Amy Stohner, Mary Theiss; Karen Tucker; and approximately sixty residents of Plymouth and Whitemarsh Townships and Conshohocken Borough.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Fact-Finding Report:** Mr. Kessler recognized members of the audience who presented their views on the Fact-Finding Report and on negotiations between the Board and the CEA on a teachers contract. Many speakers noted that the report represented a compromise with which neither side was completely happy and, for that reason, was probably a good compromise. Several speakers summarized what they felt that the Board and the CEA would gain if the report were accepted. A number of speakers expressed the belief that the Board would gain much of what it sought if it approved the report. Some speakers asked the Board to focus on the needs of the children and to avoid the disruptions that would come if a strike were to occur. Several speakers expressed concern that adopting the report would result in increased taxes which would hit especially hard on taxpayers with fixed incomes. Mr. Greishober, Vice President of the Colonial Education Association, characterized the fact-finding report as a reasonable compromise, which granted the Board many of the provisions that it sought. Mr. Dovberg, Colonial United Taxpayers, stated his belief that the report represented a "last, best offer" and not a finding of facts. He felt that the Board gained nothing from the report and gave up a great deal. He stressed that taxpayers should receive more consideration since they would be paying increased taxes to fund a contract settlement. Board members

offered clarifying information and reaction to community input on a number of occasions during the public comment.

Mr. Kessler announced a recess at 8:47 p.m., and the Board went into executive session to discuss disposition of the Fact-Finding Report. Mr. Kessler reconvened the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Mr. Kessler offered board members the opportunity to comment on public input to the Fact-Finding Report. Mr. Carroll summarized his view of the economic impact of accepting the Fact-Finding Report and indicated that he would not be voting to accept the report. Mr. O'Neill noted that the community had elected board members to make decisions on their behalf and that all board members took this responsibility seriously. He stated that each board member in his or her own way was attempting to look out for the best interests of the community. Mr. Orlow suggested that the report recognized a great deal of what the Board had been attempting to accomplish during negotiations and supported acceptance of the report. He noted that a new contract would not come cheap but that raises would be no greater than the county average. He characterized the data in the report as student centered and felt that accepting the report would have a positive impact in the classroom. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to accept the Fact-Finding Report. Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Bell to call the roll: Ms. Brown, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Connolly were opposed. Mr. Johnson, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Orlow, Mr. Pinheiro, Mr. Yunker and Mr. Kessler were in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Kessler noted that the vote was to approve the Fact-Finding Report and that the Board and CEA would be meeting to finalize the language of a new contract. He advised that the contract would then come before the Board for final approval.

Presentation of the 1998-99 School District Preliminary Budget: Mr. Kessler recognized Ms. Brown who introduced Mr. Bickleman for the formal presentation of the 1998-99 School District Budget. Mr. Bickleman presented a brief comparison between the budgets for the current and coming years, reviewed the projected expenditures and revenues for the 1998-99 fiscal year, and provided some background information on key items in the draft budget. A copy of his presentation material is attached to these minutes and shown as Attachment #1. He indicated that copies of the presentation materials and the proposed budget were available for public review.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler asked for comments or questions on the minutes of the Work Session of 4/14/98, the General Meeting of 4/16/98, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 4/27/98, and the Special Meeting of 5/6/98, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #4. Mr. Bell noted that a typographical error on page 2408 would be corrected for the meeting of 5/21/98. No other formal issues were raised.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler asked the Board if there were any comments or questions on the Budget Transfer Report of 5/98; the Bond Fund and the Capital

Reserve Fund Reports for the Month Ending 4/30/98; Food Service Bills and Reports for the Month Ending 3/31/98; the Outstanding Investment, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, and Real Estate Escrow Reports, and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the months ending 4/30/98; the Budget Analysis of 5/9/98 and the Treasurer's Report for Month Ending 4/30/98, as shown in Enclosures #5 through #15. No issues were raised with the reports.

**Staff Report:** None.

**Old Business:** Dr. Durtan noted that the Board's decision on the Fact Finding Report would have an impact on the school calendar for the coming year. He suggested that the Board direct administration to prepare, for review and action at the meeting of 5/21/98, draft calendars containing 191 teacher days and 185 student days. The Board so directed.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Kessler reported that the district had received several pieces of correspondence. Mr. Tom Davis, Chairman of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, had requested an opportunity to present a mini-grant recipient to the Board at the meeting of 5/21/98. Mr. Samuel E. Hayes, Jr., Office of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, informed the district that the 1996-97 single audit report contained no reportable conditions, as shown in Enclosure #16.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report containing routine recommendations on additions, terminations, suspensions, demotions, leaves of absence, promotions, suspensions, transfers and resignations of staff, as shown in Enclosure #17 and additions and deletions to the substitute list, as shown in Enclosure #18. He noted that there would be one addition to his report at the meeting of 5/21/98 when he expected to recommend, after confirming credentials, the appointment of a curriculum supervisor to replace Dr. Solow.

**New Business:** Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Connolly, Chair of the Buildings & Grounds Committee, who asked Mr. Bell to provide a brief summary of the bids that would be coming before the Board at the meeting of 5/21/98. Mr. Bell briefly reviewed the purpose of the bids and the recommended bid awards. He noted that the bids shown in Enclosures #19 through #22 were the 1998-99 component of a multi-year upgrade of the driveways & parking lots, chalkboards, curbs & sidewalks, and doors & frames, respectively. He also pointed out that the proposed replacement of the roof over Gym 20 at the high school was necessitated by the discovery of water in the insulating layer between the roof deck and outer membrane. Board members asked for an update on the age of the roof and the possibility of adding a pitch to it. Mr. Bell said that he would get the requested information from Mr. Berneski and report back to the Board at its meeting on 5/21/98.

Mr. Kessler noted that two student trip requests would be on the agenda for the meeting on 5/21/98. The first was the annual request from high school administration to begin planning for the 1999 Senior Class Trip, and the second was a request for two students and their teacher from the high school to participate in the American Regions Mathematics League Competition. Dr. Durtan noted that it was the first time that three Colonial students were eligible and two were interested in attending. The request was for \$170.00 per student, up to the limit of student travel dollars still available for 1997-98.

Mr. Kessler briefly noted that the annual election of the Board Treasurer and independent auditor, the annual appointment of the Solicitor and Student Board Representatives, and the election of the Board Secretary to a four-year term would all be on the agenda for the meeting of 5/21/98. He also advised that naming bank depositories and approving a list of investment banks would also be agenda items for that meeting. There were no significant Board comments on these action items for the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Mr. Kessler reported that the 1998-99 MCIU Special Education Services Agreement would be on the agenda for Thursday's meeting and that execution of the agreement would obligate the Board to contract for \$422,884.00 worth of special education services from MCIU. In response to a query from Ms. Brown, Mr. Pinheiro noted that the costs covered special education services which the district purchased from the Intermediate Unit. Also in response to a Board query, Mr. Shipman advised that "1306" services referred to a section of the school code covering institutionalized students. He also advised that the services agreement was a changing document and that services and costs to the district were reconciled at the end of each school year.

Mr. Kessler deferred to Dr. Durtan and Mr. Bickleman on estimates for the 1998-99 Federal Program Allocation that would also appear on the agenda for the meeting of 5/21/98. Mr. Bickleman noted that the expenditures were conditioned on receipt of the funds, and Dr. Durtan noted that the district would be building the budget on the data presented.

Mr. Kessler advised that textbook adoption would be an agenda item for Thursday's meeting, and Dr. Stormes presented some background information on the curricular areas, which were on the current cycle. In response to Board queries, she reported that the math texts were not on cycle and would be purchased from the high school budget and not the curriculum budget.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. O'Hara advised that he would have a recommendation on a tax appeal for the meeting of 5/21/98.

### **Committee Reports:**

**CMCAVTS:** Mr. Johnson announced that he would be recommending at Thursday's meeting that the Board approve the 1998-99 operating budget for the Center for Technical Studies. He noted that the budget of \$4,898,612.00 represented an increase of 1.7% and that the \$3,666,612.00 attributable to member districts represented an increase of 5.4%. Mr. Johnson also noted that an 8% increase in health care costs and an anticipated increase of approximately 50 students had a significant impact on the budget. He reported that enrollment at the center had increased 7.5% in the past four years and that the estimated annual cost per student had decreased \$995 over the past two years. He advised that the district's estimated share of the expenses was \$1,091,673.00 an increase of 14.28%, over \$33,300.00 less than that included in the district's preliminary budget. Mr. Johnson also indicated that Colonial School District's share of the center's students had risen from 30.87% to 32.31%. He reminded his fellow board members that the operating budget for the Center for Technical Studies had to be approved by at least two of the three sending districts and by a majority of the 27 board members from the sending districts.

Mr. O'Hara provided a brief update on the Articles of Agreement and noted that the agreement had been automatically renewed on an annual basis since 1994.

**Buildings & Grounds:** Mr. Connolly advised that he had growing confidence in Gilbane as construction manager for the planned addition of a science wing at the high school. He indicated that he would be recommending the appointment of Gilbane at the meeting on 5/21/98 and asked his fellow board members if they had any objection to Gilbane being involved in pre-construction activities centering on the bid review process. No objections were raised. Mr. Bell briefly reviewed a second draft of a contract for construction management services, which had been provided to the Board at the start of that night's meeting.

**Community Relations:** Mr. Orlow advised that the committee was working on an expansion of the district's web page. He asked board members to forward their ideas on the subject to him so that he could develop a budget for the effort.

There were no reports for other committees.

**Additional Information:** Mr. Carroll suggested that any contract with the Colonial Education Association start on July 1<sup>st</sup> so that it would run concurrently with the district's fiscal year.

**Public Comments:** None.

**There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**James M. Bell  
Board Secretary**