

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 21, 1998**

President Kessler convened the May Meeting of the Colonial School Board of Directors at 8:14 p.m. in the Auditorium of Plymouth Whitmarsh High School on May 21, 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; John Lukens and Katy Swetkowski, Student Representatives to the Board; Carol Cohen, CEA; Sally Abbott; Jeanneane Bozzelli; Roselyn Cadoff; Mike Gordon; Hugh Lipshutz, Michael Macaninch; Donald Newmeyer; Mike Schaller; Cyndi Slagle; Amy Stohner; Bunny Swetkowski; students being recognized by the Board and their families.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Kessler and Dr. Durtan greeted students who had distinguished themselves in the areas of academics and the arts and introduced their sponsors and teachers. They presented each student with a certificate of achievement and introduced him or her to the assembled board members, staff and audience for recognition of their accomplishments. A complete list of those honored is attached to these minutes and listed as Attachment #1.

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. No questions were raised. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

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. Ms. Brown 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: None

Staff Report: None.

Old Business: Dr. Durtan presented two options to the school calendar for the 1998-99 school year for Board review and consideration. They were Drafts "G" and "H" of the calendar and are included as Attachment #2a and 2b to these minutes. Both calendars had 185 student days and 191 teacher days. Draft "G" listed the first day of school as 8/31/98 and the last day as 6/11/99. Draft "H" listed the first day of school as 9/1/98 and the last day as 6/16/98. Board members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Several board members noted that days that fell later in June did not offer the same educational opportunities as those that came earlier in the school year. Dr. Durtan noted that the CEA preferred a calendar in which the school year began on 9/1/98. Mr. Orlow questioned the precedent set by adding the Monday after Easter as a school holiday. Mr. Yunker noted the value of having in-service programs during the course of the school year. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the district's contract with its teachers normally ran from September through the following August and that setting the school start day earlier than 9/1/98 could be a problem. Mr. Kessler supported starting the school year on 8/31/98 and ending on 6/11/99. Several board members offered suggestions on the sequence for using snow make-up days. Mr. Pinheiro asked if the 8/31/98 start would fit well with the scheduled start of the vo-tech school and received a positive response from Dr. Durtan, who noted that both Colonial and Norristown Area School Districts would open their schools prior to Labor Day. Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to adopt Draft "G" as the official school calendar for 1998-99. This draft set the first day of school for students on 8/31/98 and, barring more than five days for school closing for inclement weather or other emergencies, the last day on 6/11/98. In-service days and holidays would be as indicated on the draft, as presented in Attachment 2a, and snow make-up days would be required with the sixth day on which classes were cancelled and taken in the following order: 2/15, 6/14 - 18, 3/29 - 31, and 6/21 - 30, as needed. On roll call vote, Ms. Brown, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Kessler and Mr. Orlow in favor. Mr. Johnson, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Pinheiro, Mr. Yunker opposed. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler reported that the district had received several pieces of correspondence. He recognized Ms. Slagle of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, who introduced Ms. Cadoff and Ms. Bozzelli as recent recipients of foundation grants. Ms. Cadoff explained a program entitled "Stories in Art, Art in Stories" which integrated art with the social studies curriculum and

encouraged students to be creative in writing about what they saw in pictures and drawing what they heard in stories. Ms. Bozzelli demonstrated the development of electronic portfolios through the use of recordable CD's that students could use to take their creative projects on the computer with them from grade level to grade level.

Mr. Kessler noted that the district had received a letter from Mr. Samuel E. Hayes, Jr., Office of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, informing 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 highlighted his recommendation that the Board appoint Darlene Schoenly as curriculum supervisor to replace Dr. Solow, effective 6/29/98 at a salary of \$70,000.00/year. Mr. Pinheiro received a confirmation from Dr. Durtan that Dr. Schoenly's current district would release her by that date. Dr. Durtan also noted that several longstanding members of the district staff were retiring and wished them well. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the superintendent's report. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: John Lukens took the opportunity to recognize Katy Swetkowski on the occasion of her last scheduled meeting as a Student Representative to the Board. In a heartfelt presentation before the Board and the community, John praised Katy for her academic accomplishments, her school and community service, her work on the Board, and her personal contributions to students and to her school. He shared tributes from staff at the high school and passed along his personal thanks and the thanks of those of the staff and student body who have interacted with Katy during her years at the high school. Katy thanked John for his tribute and expressed pleasure at having the opportunity to serve with him and to work with board members and administrators. John then provided an update on high school sports, AP testing and the activities of the freshman, sophomore and junior classes. Katy provided an update on senior class activities as graduation nears.

New Business: Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Connolly, Chair of the Buildings & Grounds Committee, who asked Mr. Bell to summarize the information on bids that he shared with the Board at its meeting on 5/1//98. Mr. Bell briefly reviewed the information provided earlier and answered questions posed by Mr. Orlow on 5/18/98 on age of the roof over Gym 20 at the high school and the cost involved in adding a pitch to the roof. Mr. Bell advised the Board that the roof was 14 years old and had a five-year warranty. He stated that, according to preliminary data that

Mr. Berneski secured from a roofing contractor, the addition of tapered insulation to provide pitch to the roof and the installation of two more roof drains would cost approximately \$2.00/square foot or \$19,272.00 for the 9,638 square foot roof. Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve bids for driveway resurfacing, chalkboard & marker boards, concrete curbs & sidewalks, and doors & frame replacement, as shown in Enclosures #19 through #22. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Connolly requested that action on the bid on the roof, as shown in Enclosure #23, be tabled and that the bid be returned to the Buildings & Grounds Committee for further review. Mr. Kessler agreed, noting that the issue could be brought before the Board at its June meeting because the bid was valid for a period of 60 days. Mr. Orlow asked what the topcoat of the current roof was made of. Mr. Bell did not know but would check. The matter was tabled and the bid returned to the committee for further review.

Mr. Kessler noted that two student trip requests were on the agenda. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the annual request from high school administration to begin planning for the 1999 Senior Class Trip, as shown in Enclosure # 24. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve a request for two students and their teacher from the high school to participate in the American Regions Mathematics League Competition and to fund participation in an amount up to \$170.00 per student or the limit of the student trip dollars still available for 1997-98, as shown in Enclosure #25. Mr. Pinheiro noted that Ms. Dormuth, the students' teacher had recently been recognized as Montgomery County Educator of the Year. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler 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 were all on the agenda for the meeting. He also advised that naming bank depositories and approving a list of investment banks were also agenda items.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Bickleman Board Treasurer for 1998-99 at an annual rate of \$6,250.00; to appoint Barbacane, Thornton & Co. as independent auditor for 1998-99, 1999-2000 , and 2000-01 at an annual fee of \$11,500.00, later amended as moved by Ms. Brown and seconded by Mr. Orlow, to \$12,000.00; to designate First Union/Core States as depository for school funds for 1998-99; and to approve the list of investment banks for 1998-99 as shown in Enclosure #26. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Carroll moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to re-appoint Mr. O'Hara district solicitor for 1998-99 at a rate of \$115.00/hour. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to appoint Michael Gordon Student representative to the Board and Russ Weisbrot as alternate. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to elect Mr. Bell Board secretary for a term beginning in 1997 and ending in 2001 and to set compensation for the assignment at \$5,000.00 for 1998-99. In response to a question from Mr. Pinheiro, Mr. O'Hara confirmed that the normal term for the position was four years but noted that the secretary served at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed without a stated abuse. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the 1998-99 MCIU Special Education Services Agreement and to contract for \$422,884.00 worth of special education services from MCIU, as shown in Enclosure #27. Mr. O'Neill questioned whether it was appropriate for the Board to vote on an agreement when the amount of dollars involved could change, and Mr. O'Hara responded that the agreement was contingent on the services being provided. Mr. Kessler asked if additional Board action would be necessary if the level on service increased, and Mr. O'Hara responded that the agreement could be supplemented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the projects proposed for the 1998-99 Federal Program, as shown in Enclosure #28. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the textbook titles shown in Enclosure #29 for the 1998-99 school year. Mr. Carroll asked if phonics was part of the language arts program, and Dr. Stormes indicated that it was. Mr. Orlow asked if the Board would be approving textbooks before it approved programs if it adopted the motion. Dr. Durtan advised that books would be purchased from the approved list as needed for use in approved programs. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. O'Hara thanked the Board for re-appointing him to his position as Board Solicitor and noted that he had been appointed to the post 23 times.

Mr. O'Hara recommended that the Board approve the settlement of the 1994-97 assessment appeals of Washington Street Associates at a market value of \$980,000.00. He noted that the recommended value was higher than the amount indicated in an appraisal done for Washington Street Associates, close to the maximum value of \$1,000,000.00 contained in the appraisals done for the Board and the county, and represents the maximum that the Board could expect at this time. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to authorize the settlement at a market value of \$980,000.00. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. O'Hara explained a proposed agreement between the district and Whitemarsh Township on the purchase of the former WFIL tract adjacent to district property along Colonial Drive. The document acknowledged the district and township's shared interest in the property and contained provisions for sharing the cost of an appraisal and the purchase of the property. The township's costs would be limited to approximately \$1,136,000.00 of an estimated \$1,950,000.00 total cost based upon the appraisal performed. Under such an arrangement, the township would purchase approximately 27 acres and the school district would purchase approximately 20 acres. If the price per acre changed, the township would purchase only that acreage that it could acquire for the approximate \$1,136,000.00 figure and the school district would purchase the remainder.

In response to a question from Mr. Kessler, Mr. O'Hara acknowledged that the arrangements outlined above would be the Board's exposure if it entered into the agreement. He also responded to a query from Ms. Brown about the district's eligibility for open-space funds by indicating that the district was not eligible for a county open-space grant. Mr. Kessler noted that the district would have greater latitude on how to use the land it purchased than the township would for land purchased under the open-space program. Mr. Carroll suggested that there should be some limits placed on the district's financial exposure. Ms. Brown noted that the township had arranged the agreement in such a way that it would not have to raise taxes to acquire it, while the district would have to use additional tax dollars for the purchase. Mr. Kessler noted that the matter would have to come before the Board again if the purchase could not be arranged through meetings with the owner and the district and township had to go into condemnation proceedings.

Mr. Carroll inquired about costs for improving the land for district use. Dr. Durtan responded by indicating that the district had preliminary estimates of the costs for most of the suggested uses for the land, including ball fields, tennis courts and parking areas. Mr. Yunker asked about specifying the area of the property which the school district would purchase. Mr. O'Hara responded that the district would get property contiguous with its existing property along Colonial Drive. In response to additional questions, Mr. O'Hara indicated that the property was currently zoned residential and reported that the district should have no major zoning issues with its use of the property, though such could not be guaranteed. Mr. Orlow questioned where the township was in the open-space application process, and Mr. Pinheiro responded that completing the application was contingent on getting the agreement then before the Board. Mr. Carroll questioned how removal of the towers on the property would be handled. Mr. O'Hara indicated that the township believed that it had an agreement with the owner to take care of the removal of the towers and was in the process of confirming that understanding. Mr. Orlow asked about the timeline for the proposed purchase of the tract, and Mr. O'Hara indicated that he hoped to be back before the Board in June with news of a mutually agreeable sale of the property or a recommendation to proceed with

condemnation. On roll call vote, Ms. Brown opposed. All remaining board members in favor. Motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Intermediate Unit Board: Mr. Pinheiro shared some general information on candidates for the Intermediate Unit Board. He also advised the Board that the Intermediate Unit budget for the coming school year had been approved and provided some basic information on I. U. services in support of non-public schools. In response to a question from Ms. Brown, Mr. Pinheiro noted that the district experienced increased I. U. costs because it purchased additional I. U. services for students.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the 1998-99 operating budget for the Center for Technical Studies of \$4,898,612.00. Mr. Johnson briefly reviewed the information that he had shared with the Board at its meeting on 5/18/98. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro announced that the Board had completed its annual evaluation of the superintendent, which precedes the establishment of his annual compensation. He advised that the Board generally established this compensation package based on its agreement with CASEA, the group representing district administrators. For the coming school year, the proposed raise for the superintendent was 3.6%, an increase resulting in a salary of \$122,076.00 and a bonus of \$10,369.00, based on the Board's evaluation, for a total of \$132,445.00. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve this compensation for the superintendent for the 1998-99 school year. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro also moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to amend the superintendent's contract and to make contributions to an annuity for the superintendent, as specified in the contract amendment. Under the resolution, the Board would be obligated to continue the payments if it did not continue the superintendent's commission through the year 2005, and the superintendent would have to refund the payments if he decided to leave his position voluntarily prior to the year 2005. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Finance: No report

Curriculum and Program: No report.

Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Connolly announced that board members had received an updated draft of a proposed contract for construction management services from Gilbane for the proposed science wing at the high school. Mr. Bell briefly reviewed the changes made in the second draft. He suggested that, in order to adhere as

closely as possible to the original timelines for the project, the Board permit Gilbane to undertake the pre-construction work outlined in the draft while it worked on the final language of the contract. Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion that Gilbane be appointed Construction Manager for the project to add a science addition to Plymouth Whitemarsh High School, subject to the signing of a mutually agreeable contract in an amount not to exceed \$240,613.00 and that Gilbane be authorized to proceed with the services listed under "Bid/Award Phase" in the draft contract of 5/6/98 on the condition that, if no mutually agreeable contract is signed, Gilbane be paid only for those services actually rendered and at the rate quoted in Exhibit A to the draft contract of 5/6/98. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the fee quoted in the motion was not the full fee and that the amount should read \$278,094.00. Mr. O'Hara suggested that a date be set for the conclusion of contract negotiations. Mr. Connolly and Mr. Johnson agreed to amend the motion to reflect a contract total of \$278,094.00 and to set 6/30/98 as the deadline for completion of the contract. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Community Relations: Mr. Orlow advised that the committee was exploring the possibility of conducting a drug and alcohol survey in district schools in the fall with funds from the federal "Safe and Drug-Free Schools" program. It is currently looking into a review of vendors.

Legislative: No report.

Public Comments: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 10:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary