

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, APRIL 15, 1999**

President Kessler convened the April Meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 15, 1999.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Thomas Yunker.

**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 Michael Gordon, Board Student Representatives; Carol Cohen and Bob Grieshofer, CEA; Phyllis Kedson, Colonial Foundation for Educational Excellence; Tom Gibson; Barbara Haight; Dr. Hugh Lipshutz; Thomas Marchozzi; Dee Mellor; Donald Newmeyer; Carol Votto; and family and friends of those being honored by the Board with certificates of achievement.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Kessler presented certificates of achievement on behalf of the Board to district students and a member of the Board for their successes in community service, academics, athletics and cultural endeavors. A full list of those recognized is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings of 03/10/99, the Special Board Meeting of 03/10/99, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 03/15/99, the Work Session of 03/15/99, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/17/99, the General Meeting of 03/18/99, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/29/99, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7, and the minutes as the Special Board meeting of 04/05/99, as shown in Enclosure #31. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Kessler referred board members to the Budget Transfers Report of 04/99; the Bond Fund Report for the month ending 03/31/99; the Capital Projects Report for the month ending 03/31/99; the General Fund/Federal Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 03/31/99; the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report of 02/28/99; 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 03/31/99; the Budget Analysis of 04/05/99; and the

Treasurer's Report for the month ending 03/31/99, as shown in Enclosures #8 through #19. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. Mr. Kessler asked if the bills list included a payment for the architect. Mr. Bickleman replied that it did. Mr. Kessler asked if the board members who made and seconded the motion would accept an amendment to approve the financial report, except for the architect's bill. Ms. Brown and Mr. Orlow accepted the amendment. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion, as amended, carried.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Kessler noted the three pieces of correspondence on the agenda, one requiring Board action. The first was a letter from Bernadette Biasi, Chairperson of the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School Scholarship Fund providing information on the scholarship fund and requesting Board authorization to include one dollar for the fund in the price of student picture packages for the 1999-2000 school year. (See Enclosure #20.) Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to authorize the one-dollar addition to the price of student picture packages to benefit the scholarship fund. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

The second piece of correspondence was a request by the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation to present two mini-grant recipients to the Board at its April meetings. Mr. Kessler recognized Phyllis Kedson of the Colonial Foundation.

Ms. Kedson first introduced Carol Votto, a teacher at Colonial Middle School who worked with fellow teacher Suzanne Slattery on a project entitled "Community Cameo". The project involved the seventh grade Orange Team in a student photo-journalism's look at the district's three municipalities: Plymouth and Whitmarsh Townships and Conshohocken Borough. The students heard presentations from local government representatives, visited local sites of historical interest, including Hope Lodge and the Dickinson Farmstead, conducted individual research projects, and took photos to create a composite picture essay of the district's many neighborhoods. The foundation grant paid for the disposable cameras used by the students and the developing and printing of the film.

Ms. Kedson also introduced Barbara Haight, an English teacher at Plymouth Whitmarsh High School, who outlined a live community theater program by the Philadelphia Theater Caravan. The program was conducted during February as part of Black History Month and served two purposes: To introduce students to live theater entertainment and to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject matter. The program was funded by grants from both the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation and Ursinus College and was composed of a series of vignettes based on the lives of African Americans who had made significant contributions to American life. Ms. Haight reported that the program

was attended by 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students, simulcast to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students, and video-taped and added to CITV's video library for used again in the future.

Board members asked questions about both mini-grant programs and complimented the teachers on their work. The grant recipients thanked the foundation for its support.

The Board received correspondence from Allan Dovberg, President of Colonial United Taxpayers and the Montgomery County Taxpayers Consortium. The correspondence contained the text of Mr. Dovberg's comments to the Board at its work session the previous Monday on the subject of the minutes of Board meetings.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his report as shown in Enclosures #21 through #23. He noted that the changes to the personnel report and substitute list reported at the work session on 03/12/99 had been included in the report but that no other changes had been made. He also requested authorization to operate the summer school program during the summer of 1999. He directed Board attention to Dr. Stormes' report on the program and reminded the Board that the summer school was financially self-supporting. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the superintendent's report as presented.

Dr. Durtan advised the Board that the annual parent survey was already in the mail and that families should be receiving it shortly. He also announced that any family that did not receive a survey through the mail could get a copy at his Office. He encouraged community input.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Gordon highlighted the annual talent show at the high school featuring performers in many categories and won by a violin duo from the sophomore class, the jazz band cavalcade won by the high school's jazz band, and Mike Cho's participation as the #1 bass singer in the all-state choir. Mr. Lukens provided an activity update featuring the senior prep seminar held to help members of the current junior class and their parents prepare for their senior year, the AP government class's voter registration drive, the upcoming distinguished graduates recognition and luncheon, and the senior class trip scheduled to begin the following Saturday.

**New Business:** Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the five items of new business on the agenda for action at the meeting. See Enclosures # 24 through #26 and #35. Ms. Brown provided a brief recap of her report to the Board and the community at the Board work session the previous Monday. She reported that the preliminary budget being presented for action contained a 3.72% increase in local real estate taxes, a real estate tax millage rate of 12.84, and total expenditures of \$51,881,482. In response to a question from Mr. Carroll, Mr. Bickleman reported that the proposed increase in expenditures was \$2,748,482. Ms. Brown reminded the community that the preliminary budget included all requests from Board committees and was a document available for community review and input. She urged residents to pick up a copy of the document and share their thoughts with the Board prior to adoption of the final budget in June. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Connolly

seconded a motion to approve the preliminary budget. On roll call vote, all but Mr. Carroll in favor. Mr. Carroll abstained. Motion carried. Mr. Carroll noted that he had been away on Board business and had not yet had the opportunity to review the preliminary budget.

Mr. Kessler advised that the corporate resolutions for bonds proceeds accounts were a matter of routine. Ms. Brown noted that they were necessary so that funds could be drawn down to pay bills. In response to a query from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bickleman advised that the bond proceeds were invested in a legal instrument of the federal government and would be available for Board use on June 30, 1999. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the resolutions. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler referred the Board to the bids for athletic supplies and a nine-passenger school van, as outlined in Enclosures #26 and #24, respectively. Ms. Brown expressed some uneasiness at approving the bids for athletic supplies before the budget had been finalized. Mr. Kessler reminded the Board that the bid was for the 1999-2000 school year but had to be placed early to insure the arrival of the supplies prior to the start of the fall sports season. He also noted that administration had a long-standing commitment to under-expending other budget accounts to provide funds to cover the bids if the final budget were approved with fewer than requested funds for the athletic supplies. In response to queries from the Board about funding for the van, Mr. Bell reported that \$30,000.00 had been budgeted in the 1998-99 budget for its purchase. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the bids as presented to the Board. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler noted the request from the adventure club for approval of an overnight camping and whitewater rafting trip to Ohiopyle, PA. Dr. Durtan noted that Board action was requested because the trip was an overnight school activity. He also reported, however, that parental permission slips that released the district from liability were in hand. Board members remembered the excitement and adventure of a similar Board excursion. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trip. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit Board: Mr. Pinheiro had no formal report but indicated that board members would shortly receive ballots for I. U. Board members. He advised that he would do some research on the candidates and share the information with the Board prior to the election.

**CMCAVTS:** Mr. Johnson shared with the Board the proposed 1999-2000 operating budget of the Center for Technical Studies. He pointed out the accomplishments and comments of some CTS graduates included in the budget document, provided some statistical information, and reported that the district's anticipated contribution for the year as \$1,091,673.00, less than the amount currently projected in the district's preliminary

**budget.** He also commended Mr. Connolly for his work on the budget and noted that Board action on the proposed budget would be requested at the May meeting.

**Personnel:** Mr. Pinheiro reported that the committee had met April 14<sup>th</sup> and was bargaining with the district's support service units. He announced a tentative agreement with the Teamsters Union representing the districts, maintenance, custodial and grounds personnel. He advised that the proposed four-year contract was a good one and reported that the union was scheduled to take a vote on the contract at the end of April and that the Board would vote on it at its May meeting. Mr. Pinheiro advised that no information on the contract would be shared with the public until after the union vote.

**Finance:** Ms. Brown recommended the appointment of seven individuals to the Local Tax Reform Advisory Committee: James J. Gillespie, Jr., Dee Mellor, Allan Dovberg, John M. Slavish, Valerie Flounders, Thomas Marchozzi, and Dennis Powell. She noted that the committee would serve in an advisory capacity, study options and make recommendations to the Board. Mr. Pinheiro asked about the timing of information from the PFM study. Mr. Bickleman reported that he had already attended a meeting at which he had received preliminary information specific to Colonial School District. He also announced that a formal report would be forthcoming at a May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of all seven schools involved in the I.U. consortium on tax reform. Board members and the members of the district's Local Tax Reform advisory Committee were welcome to attend this meeting. Ms. Brown indicated that she would be the Board liaison with the committee. Mr. Bickleman was designated the administrative liaison. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to appoint to the Tax Reform Advisory Committee the seven members recommended by Ms. Brown. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

**Curriculum and Program: No Report.** Mr. Yunker had reported on the committee's work at the work session the previous Monday.

**Buildings & Grounds/Transportation:** Mr. Orlow announced a committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> to come to some resolution on capital issues before the committee. He also raised for Board consideration a PDE 731 Approval form to advise the state of the proposed removal of vinyl asbestos tile from cafeteria #7 in connection with the building of the annex at the high school. In response to a Board query, Dr. Durtan confirmed that the form was still in use though it was originally slated to expire at the end of 1998. Board members had a number of questions concerning the total cost of the project, potential bidders and the possible need to bid rather than quote the preparation of bid specifications. Dr. Durtan indicated that Mr. Berneski, Director of Maintenance, would have these answers but that he did not. He suggested that the action on the item be postponed until additional information could be provided to the Board. Board members agreed and the item was referred to the Buildings & Grounds Committee for follow-up.

**Community Relations:** Mr. Johnson reported that the committee had met to prepare for the annual report. He confirmed that the report would continue to be published in tabloid format. He also advised the Board that the new district web page would be out shortly.

**Legislative:** Mr. Carroll reported that he had no report because the legislative group would not be meeting until the following Wednesday.

**Public Comment:** Dr. Lipshutz asked the Board for an update on the status of merit pay. Mr. Orlow reviewed the development of the Performance-based Review Committee composed of four Board members and four CEA representatives and its activities over the past year. He noted that the committee had met at least 16 times but had not reached a consensus on a model for performance-based compensation by the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. He reported that the Board had, in accordance with procedures established when the contract had been reached with the CEA, submitted the issue to binding arbitration. He also advised that the arbitration panel would be composed of one arbitrator each chosen by the Board and the CEA and one neutral arbitrator from a list of four or five approved by both sides early in the process. Mr. Orlow announced that Dennis Powell would be the Board's interest arbitrator. He also advised that the panel would probably meet in May. He reminded the Board and the community that, under the terms of the contract, a final report would be due by June 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Orlow also indicated that the Board was hard at work on developing a plan for review by the arbitration panel. Mr. Kessler noted that the Board would have the benefit of the work done by the Board consultant on performance-based pay.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary