

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JUNE 17, 1999**

President Kessler convened the June meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:02 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on June 17, 1999.

Board Members Present: Stuart Kessler, Marc Orlow, Beverly Brown, Robert Carroll, Rich Connolly, Gary Johnson, Robert O'Neill, Jack Pinheiro, and 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; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Tom Davis, Chairman of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Allan Dovberg, President of Colonial United Taxpayers; Bill English; Leslie Finegold; Tom Gibson; Debra Harris; Dr. Hugh Lipshutz; Thomas Marchozzi; Dee Mellor; Donald Newmeyer; and Sherri Patchen.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance. He also recognized the members and coaches of the high school girls softball team that became a 1999 co-champion in the Liberty Division and Steven Das, a fifth-grade student at Colonial Elementary School who became a member of C-Mites. He presented these individuals with certificates of recognition. A full list of recipients is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

Mr. Kessler directed the Board's attention to the minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting of 05/10/99, the Community Relations Committee of 05/13/99, the Buildings & Grounds/Curriculum Committee Meeting of 05/17/99, the Work Session of 05/17/99, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 05/20/99, the General Meeting of 05/20/99, and the Buildings and Grounds/Curriculum Committee Meeting of 06/01/99, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7. Mr. Bell confirmed that the correction requested at the work session earlier in the week had been made to Enclosure #6. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler referred board members to the Budget Transfers Report of 06/99; the Bond Fund Report for the month ending 05/31/99; the Capital Projects Report for the month ending 05/31/99; the General Fund/Federal Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 05/31/99; the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report of 04/30/99; 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 05/31/99; the Budget Analysis of 06/07/99; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 05/31/99, as shown in Enclosures #8 through #19. Mr. Yunker suggested that no action be taken on Enclosure #17, Reconciliation of Cash Accounts because the accounts had not yet been reconciled to the bank statements. Ms. Brown suggested that the reconciliation to bank statements was not necessary because it was an audit function and suggested that the reconciliation report be removed from the list of month Board financial reports. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve all of the financial reports except the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts. On roll call vote, all but Ms. Brown in favor. Ms. Brown opposed. Motion carried. In a follow-up to her earlier comments, Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to eliminate the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts from the list of financial reports provided to the Board on a monthly basis. Ms. Brown indicated that this report was different from the others in that it did not directly involve receipts or expenditures, only the reconciliation of records. Mr. Sultanik that the Board may wish to rethink the reports that it required based upon the Local Government Investment Reform Act. On roll call vote, Ms. Brown, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Connolly in favor. All other board members opposed. Motion defeated.

Public Comments of the Agenda: Dr. Lipshutz noted that the ILS at the elementary school had functioned well and felt that the Board should be proud that the system had been well used. He noted, however, that the technology was old and needed to be replaced. He suggested that the Board include funds in the upcoming budget for a replacement/reconfiguration of technology in the elementary schools but withhold approval of any expenditures for the system until the Board had approved a district plan for technology at the elementary level. Ms. Brown expressed concern that the district often approved expenditures through the payment of bills and recommended that any expenditure for elementary technology be pre-approved by the Board. Dr. Durtan assured the Board that administration would come back to the Board with a plan for elementary technology before any expenditures were made.

Old Business: Dr. Durtan announced that board members had received renumbered copies of the Colonial School District Policy Manual. He explained that the policies themselves had not been changed but only renumbered to conform to the system advocated by PSBA. Mr. Yunker noted that the Board would be considering some new and/or revised policies in next few months and sought assurance that approving the renumbering of current policies did not involve the approval of any new or revised policies. Dr. Durtan provided that assurance. Mr. Kessler asked board members to defer comments on new or revised policies until later in the agenda. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the renumbering of Board policies. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to several pieces of correspondence, noting that the only item requiring Board action involved four major projects that the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation would like to fund. Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Davis, retiring chairman of the foundation. Mr. Davis noted that his last act as chairman of the foundation was to recommend Board approval of four major grants to be funded by the foundation. He briefly explained a summer teaching and learning institute for math through grade five, an internet-based professional development program for teachers, an expansion of the team building ropes program at Colonial Middle School to include all sixth grade students, and an artist in residence program in support of the arts at the high school. He noted that the foundation would be matching a grant from the state arts foundation for last program. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the four major grants. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried. The Board commended Mr. Davis for his efforts as foundation chairman.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report as shown in Enclosures #21 through #24. He noted that there were four additional retirements and an additional substitute listed in the report. In response to a query from Mr. Orlow on the financial impact of the district's decision to provide medical coverage to new employees through Keystone HMO, Mr. Bickleman reported that there was little impact on budgeting for benefits in the coming school year. He noted that numbers other than premiums affected the total cost of benefits and, when these numbers were considered, the resulting reduction in premiums for the new plan would mostly be offset by other factors. Dr. Durtan also confirmed that summer school appointments were for courses that were actually subscribed by students and that data on long-term substitutes finishing assignments was provided for Board information. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's report as shown in Enclosures #21 through #24. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Board Representatives Report: None.

New Business: Mr. Kessler reminded the Board of the pending adoption of the district budget for the 1999-2000 school year that evening and the punch list of all the suggestions made during the work session the previous Monday. He asked that the board members review and comment first upon the punch list attached to these minutes as Attachment #2.

CMS Family and Consumer Science: Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to eliminate this expenditure from the budget for the 1999-2000 school year. They suggested that the current program be offered in the coming year. Mr. O'Neill noted that the program was on cycle for curricular review. Mr. Yunker suggested that this curriculum initiative be postponed for a year when there may be

lower on-cycle curriculum costs. Mr. Carroll questioned the merits of the program proposed for the coming year. Mr. Orlow stated that he could not support the program revisions as currently proposed but noted that the school principal believed that the living skills component of the program was the weakest section. He suggested funding one third of the suggested \$112,090.00 to strengthen this component. Mr. Johnson voiced support for the program noting that he had observed the hands-on component of the new program and believed that it fostered individual motivation. On a roll call vote on the motion to eliminate funding, all but Mr. Johnson and Mr. O'Neill in favor. Mr. Johnson and Mr. O'Neill opposed. Motion carried. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to restore one third of the funding for upgrading the living skills component of the existing program and evaluating the effectiveness of the changes. Several board members spoke of funding options for upgrading the program. On a roll call vote, Mr. Orlow, Mr. Johnson and Mr. O'Neill in favor. All other board members opposed. Motion defeated.

Replace the ILS in Grade 4: Mr. Kessler noted that the district may not replace the ILS in kind and that there was not yet a formal replacement recommendation from administration. He suggested that leaving the funding in the budget would create a pool from which the costs of replacing the ILS could be made once a formal recommendation was received and approved by the Board. Mr. Connolly moved and Ms. Brown seconded a motion to delete the funding from the budget for the coming year. On a roll call vote, Mr. Connolly, Ms. Brown and Mr. Carroll in favor. All other board members opposed. Motion defeated. The Board took note that administration was preparing to provide a recommendation on the issue in the fall of 1999 and that the Curriculum Committee was deliberating on the issue. The Board learned that three vendors had visited district elementary schools and that the district was looking at courseware. It was noted that no money would be spent without Board approval of a replacement. Some board members worried about taking on too much at one time. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion that no money be spent without a further Board vote. On roll vote, all in favor. Motion carried. Dr. Durtan advised that administration would work toward having a recommendation to the Board at its October meeting, barring unusual developments.

AP Testing: Mr. Yunker moved and Ms. Brown seconded a motion to drop funding for AP testing at the high school. Mr. Orlow noted that the AP tests could serve as standardized tests for their respective courses. Ms. Brown noted that the tests helped students get credit for college course work. She also argued that the district's strategic plan covered education within the district, not at the college level. Mr. Orlow disagreed and noted that the tests could be used as course level exams for the purposes of pay-for-performance evaluations. Mr. Yunker noted that students were only required to take the test to get weighted credit for the courses. In response to Board queries, Dr. Durtan indicated that he did not know how many students did not take the test because of a lack of money. On a roll call vote, Mr.

Kessler, Ms. Brown, Mr. Yunker and Mr. Carroll in favor. The remaining five board members opposed. Motion to delete funding defeated.

Repaving the Parking Lot at Plymouth Elementary School: Mr. Connolly reported that he had visited the school earlier that day and supported the work. He noted that a bad winter could do considerable damage to the current paving. Others also voiced the opinion that the work should be undertaken. No motion was made. The project stayed in the budget for the 1999-2000 school year.

Additional Custodian at the High School: Mr. Bickleman reported that he had included the reduced amount of \$17,500.00 for compensation for one FTE for half of the coming school year, as proposed at the work session earlier in the week. The Board took no action to change this entry.

Para-Professionals for Block Scheduling at PWHS: After discussing the issue and receiving information from Mr. Klinger on compensation options, the Board reached a consensus that five full-time and five part-time para-professionals would appropriately provide five staff at the beginning and end of each day and ten during the middle of the day when they would be needed most. Several board members expressed lingering concerns. Mr. Kessler noted that, in passing the budget, the board was approving a spending plan. Some board members advised that the Curriculum Committee and administration had more comfort with the staffing level than with the funding level. No action was taken to change funding levels for the upcoming school year.

Fund Balance: Mr. Yunker moved a motion to take \$300,000 from the fund balance for the 1998-99 school year and place it in a capital reserve rather than use it to fund the 1999-2000 operating budget. Mr. Orlow suggested that there would be sufficient funds from the capital projects bonds to provide an appropriate reserve for capital projects. After hearing discussion among board members and receiving estimates from Mr. Bickleman that removing \$300,000.00 from the fund balance would raise the added millage to fund the proposed 1999-2000 budget from 1.62 mills to 2.40 mills and that removing \$150,000.00 would raise it 2.02 mills, Mr. Yunker withdrew his motion.

Additional Recommendations: Mr. Orlow suggested adding sufficient funds to fund a full computer lab at the high school rather than half a lab. Dr. Durtan noted that the proposed lab would be a full lab but that students would have to share computers. Mr. Orlow also suggested adding funds for additional computers in the labs of the new science wing. Mr. Connolly suggested that the district move into the new wing first and grow gradually. No additional funds were added.

Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Kessler seconded a motion that \$140,000.00 be taken from the fund balance and added to the capital reserve. After discussion on the merits of the move and clarification on what funds had already been included in the

budget for safety and security initiatives, on roll call vote, Mr. Kessler, Mr. Pinheiro and Mr. Yunker in favor. All remaining board members opposed. Motion defeated.

Mr. Orlow moved and Ms. Brown seconded a motion to take \$33,000.00 in expenditures that resulted from savings secured under the tentative agreement with the Teamsters out of the proposed budget for the coming school year. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Based on the net impact of Board action on all of the budget recommendations discussed earlier in the meeting, Mr. Bickleman recalculated the amount of revenues needed and the tax revenues necessary to create a balanced budget for the 1999-2000 school year. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Connolly seconded a motion to adopt the 1999-2000 budget in the amount of \$51,806,861.00, a real estate tax of 12.56 mills (an increase to the taxpayer of 1.45%), a real estate transfer tax of 1%, an amusement tax of 10%, a real estate tax certification fee of \$20.00, and a tax billing date of 07/01/99 for 1999-2000. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to make the following appointments:

- Dr. Marc H. Neiberg, D. O. and Dr. Glenn Miller, D. O. School Physicians at annual retainers of \$1,350.00 each and hourly salaries of \$93.60 each;**
- Dr. Marc H. Neiberg, D. O., for new employee exams at \$35.75 each; and**
- Arnold Randel, DMD for dental clinic at and hourly rate of \$45.00 and a per student rate of \$1.90 for mandated services, as outlined in the agenda for the meeting. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.**

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve a contract with Psychiatric Consultation Services MH/MR for \$27,191.16 for 612 hours of psychiatric consultation services for socially and emotionally disturbed students, as shown in Enclosure #25. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the following contracts, as shown in Enclosures #67 through #34:

- Progressions Group at \$23.00 per hour for homebound education services;**
- Montgomery County Early Learning Centers for \$38,830.00 for space leased from the district for the day care program at Colonial Elementary School and \$25.00 per day for space leased from the district for enriched kindergarten and after-school programs at the district's K-3 elementary schools.**
- Carbon Lehigh Data Processing Center for data processing services for the 1999-2000 school year at increase of 3% for business related services and 2.8% for student related services.**
- Davidson School/Instructional Aide to accommodate the needs of a district student at a cost of \$15,606.50, a 6% increase over the preceding year.**

- Carol Webster, PT to continue to serve students' physical therapy needs at a rate of \$59.75 per hour, an increase of 3% over the preceding year.
- Montgomery County Head Start for rental of a classroom at Conshohocken Elementary School for \$3,200 for the 1999-2000 school year.
- Kim Hartranft, OT for the provision of occupational therapy services at an hourly rate of 59.75, a 3% increase over the preceding year.
- Kirsten Rapsher for the provision of itinerant vision services at the rate of \$65.00 per hour, no increase from the 1998-99 school year.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve both the district's response to its insurance carrier on the subject of Y2K compliance and the attached Status of District Progress toward Y2K Compliance, as shown in Enclosure # 35. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler directed the Board's attention to four policies recommended for Board consideration on first reading, as shown in Enclosures #36 through #39. Board members offered a number of preliminary observations. Ms. Brown suggested that consideration of the policies be postponed because they deserved a more careful review than would be possible that evening. Mr. Orlow agreed that Policy #227.1 on an activities code of ethics needed debate. Mr. O'Neill wondered if that policy needed to be in place before the high school student handbook could be issued. Dr. Durtan noted that the handbook could be supplemented at a later date. Mr. Pinheiro suggested that administration needed to clean up the language in that policy, cited a number of inconsistencies in the policy and suggested a clear definition of terms. Ms. Brown felt that the policy was poorly written, and Mr. Connolly indicated that he could not support that policy on first reading. Board members and the solicitor commented on issues of due process, even-handed application of the policy in the districts two townships and one borough, the different standards being applied by the district and its local municipalities, and a number of investigative and language issues. Dr. Durtan noted the current inconsistent application of team rules by coaches. There was discussion whether activities conducted during the high school resource period fell within the parameters of the policy. Mr. Orlow suggested that there was value in having the policy in place at the start of the school year. Dr. Durtan reported that parents were about equally divided on the policy when it was discussed at parent Council. Mr. Sultanik noted that there were a number of questions about whether the district should regulate off-school, off-premises conduct. Board members raised issues concerning the consequences if students fail to sign the code of conduct. Other questions arose concerning the substances prohibited by the policy. Dr. Durtan suggested that board members list their questions and concerns about the policy and send them to him so that administration could review and address them before a second reading. A suggestion was also made to refer the policy to the Community Relations Committee for review prior to bringing it forward to the Board again for action. At the close of discussion, Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve Policy #227.1, Activities Code of Ethics, on first reading. On roll

call vote, all but Ms. Brown, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Yunker in favor. Ms. Brown, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Yunker opposed. Motion carried. Action on policies #436, #438 and #217.1 was deferred to a later meeting.

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to accept the 1999-2000 Safe and Drug-Free Schools Funding, as shown in Enclosure #40. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler suggested that the Board offer PSBA an addition to its platform for the 1999-2000 school year that addressed concerns raised by the Mifflinburg case. He noted that the ruling of the court in that matter made almost any issue arising in public schools open to arbitration. Mr. Yunker moved and Ms. Brown seconded a motion to approve the platform proposal as outlined in Attachment #3 to these minutes. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve bids for concrete sidewalk replacement, parking lot re-surfacing at Plymouth Elementary School, carpet replacement and marker board skins installation at the high school. Board members discussed the value of adding other areas of repaving to that already planned for Plymouth Elementary School. On roll call vote to approve the bids as presented in Enclosures #46 through #49, not to exceed the budgeted amount, all in favor. Motion carried. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to use a change order to cover any small addition to the repaving project at Plymouth Elementary School. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried. There was also a consensus on the Board to seek quotes for repaving any significant additional space at the school.

Solicitor's Report: None. Mr. Kessler welcomed Mr. Sultanik of Fox Rothschild O'Brien & Frankel as the district's solicitor.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson noted that Dr. Durtan would be the Superintendent of Record for the next two years.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro requested Board ratification of a tentative agreement with Teamsters Local No. 384 covering Buildings and Grounds employees. He noted that wages would increase approximately 3% per year, that the new health plan would be Personal Choice Plan 215 for current employees and Keystone Health Plan HMO for new employees, and that a medical insurance co-pay was possible in the second, third and fourth years of the contract. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the contract. On roll call vote, all but Mr. Connolly and Mr. Orlow in favor. Mr. Connolly and Mr. Orlow absent from the room. Motion carried. Mr. Pinheiro also recommended adoption of administrative, non-bargaining unit and confidential secretaries' salaries, and the superintendent's

salary, as presented to the Board. Mr. Pinheiro reported that non-CASEA salary increases were in the 3% range. He also noted that Dr. Durtan's base compensation for the coming school year would be \$125,738.00 and his merit compensation would be \$10,730.00. He indicated that copies of the salary schedules were available in the district office. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the salaries as presented. On roll call vote, all but Mr. Connolly and Mr. Orlow in favor. Mr. Connolly and Mr. Orlow absent from the room. Motion carried.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Yunker noted that the committee had met earlier in the day and recommended five full-time and five part-time para-professionals at the high school to support block scheduling. He estimated the cost of the additional staff at \$130,000.00.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: No report.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson indicated that the committee would be meeting the following week to discuss Board policies.

Legislate: Mr. Carroll reported that the governor's vouchers bill had never come to a vote. He also reported that the omnibus education bill had gone to the Senate, the continuing professional development bill had not gotten out of committee, and that there was a plan to phase out the amusement tax over a four-year period.

Other: Mr. Kessler reported that classroom air conditioning units were being tested at Conshohocken Elementary School and the east wing of the high school and that the outcome of the tests would be discussed in the Buildings & Grounds Committee. He also advised the community that there would be no work session in July.

Questions or Comments from the Floor: Mr. Dovberg expressed concern about how the Board had handled its review of Board policies that evening and noted that there had been no time for public comment on them. He decried Mr. Orlow's push for a first reading of Policy #227.1 despite the fact that comments from other board members, the superintendent, the solicitor and public raised concerns. He considered the policy highly flawed and asked what had been gained by ignoring past practice of the district in moving forward with a policy that needed more work. Mr. Dovberg felt that board action on first reading did not reflect well on the board members. He asked that they bring more thought to bear on the policy. He also objected to comments made during Board discussion of the budget that seemed to indicate that the Board was simply filling a void by approving taxes up to 2%.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 11:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary