

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

President Kessler convened the March Work Session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:57 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on March 15, 1999.

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

Board Members Absent: Beverly Brown.

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; Carol Cohen and John Batchelor, CEA; A. J. Daulerio; Leslie Finegold, and Dr. Hugh Lipshutz.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Kessler apologized for the late start of the meeting and advised that the Board had met in executive session from 7:30 p.m. until just prior to the work session to consider personnel and legal matters.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings of 02/10/99, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 02/11/99, the Work Session of 02/16/99, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 02/17/99, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 02/18/99, the General Meeting of 02/18/99, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 02/25/99, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 03/03/99, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8. Board members cited a couple typographical errors and omissions in three of the minutes. The administrators submitting the minutes advised that they would make the necessary corrections.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler referred board members to the Budget Transfers Report of 03/99; the Bond Fund Report for the month ending 02/28/99; the Capital Projects Report for the month ending 02/28/99; the General Fund/Federal Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 02/28/99; the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report of 01/31/99; 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 02/28/99; the Budget Analysis of 03/05/99; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 02/28/99, as shown in Enclosures #9 through #20. Mr. Kessler asked for and received from Mr. Bickleman a clarification on the comparison of the audited and original budgets for 1998-99. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the food service program was

running a deficit through 01/31/99 and had had a surplus through the same period in the preceding year. He asked for a reason for the change. Mr. Klinger noted that the cost of food had increased. He also indicated that he would seek an update for the Board from Mr. Haines, Director of Food Services. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bickleman if the revenue labeled as “performance incentives” in the Treasurer’s Report was for PSSA Awards. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that it was and explained that the state required that the funds be shown as general revenues but that the expenditures from the funds be limited to the two eligible district schools. Mr. Yunker noted a typographical error in the maturity date of investments in Enclosure #12. Mr. Bickleman indicated that he would correct the error before Board action on the reports on the following Thursday.

Budget Report: Mr. Yunker provided the Board preliminary information on the proposed curriculum budget for the 1999-2000 school year. He highlighted the significant increases contained in the Curriculum Committee’s report to the Board, as shown in Attachment #1 to these minutes, and walked board members through the information contained in that report. Mr. Yunker noted that the budget requests for the combined on-cycle and off-cycle curriculum initiatives proposed to the committee totaled in excess of \$398,000, above the \$300,000 historically budgeted annually in recent years. He advised the Board that the committee would be asking administration to prioritize its requests and that the committee would be looking to reduce proposed expenditures to the \$300,000 to \$320,000 range. He also noted that the proposed technology budget was \$535,000 for the coming year, far above the \$230,000 historically budgeted for technology each year. He advised, however, that the proposal included starting a replacement cycle for technology and aggressively pursuing the completion of a number of projects already underway at the middle and high schools. Mr. Yunker noted that the committee would be looking at paring planned technology expenditures to \$500,000. Board members asked for clarification of some of the data presented and posed questions about some of the underlying premises used to develop the curriculum and technology budget figures. The latter included queries on the use of computers by specialists, the need for additional computers to support block scheduling and technical education programs, plans for upgrading the ILS, how software was budgeted, and the committee’s approach to funding AP testing. Mr. Yunker provided some additional information but noted that the committee would be working on the preliminary information in the weeks ahead and would have additional information to share with the Board at a later date.

Mr. Pinheiro provided preliminary information on staffing and budgeting for salaries, wages and benefits for the coming school year. His report from the Personnel Committee is shown in Attachment #2 to these minutes. He highlighted a projection for 4.2 additional professional staff, projected increases in support staff, data on possible retirements, and a continuing shortage of substitutes. Mr. Pinheiro also advised the Board and the community of a possible 21% increase in the cost of health insurance and some steps that the committee was exploring in an attempt to

reduce the projected premium increase. He reminded the board and the community that the district employed approximately 550 people and that district salaries and benefits represented about 80% of the budget. He touched briefly on a plan to pay additional compensation to substitutes who worked frequently for the district and reminded all that the district was in the process of negotiating contracts with its support services personnel. Mr. Bell briefly explained the need for additional custodial and grounds staff when the new high school annex and playing fields came on line. Dr. Durtan briefly summarized the future impact of block scheduling on staffing and noted that staffing would be flat in the short term but would improve in the future. He pointed out that there would be no study halls under block scheduling and that student would take electives to fill their schedules. Mr. Pinheiro advised that the district was facing a potential increase in personnel costs of approximately \$1,750,000 before retirements were considered and new contracts were negotiated.

Old Business: Mr. Kessler noted that the school calendar would be on the agenda for Board consideration at its meeting on March 18th. Dr. Durtan noted that there would be 192 teacher days in the calendar for the coming school year, an increase of one day. He also reminded the Board that it had already taken action to start the coming school year on August 30th. Board members raised several questions and suggestions on the calendar. These included a clarification of the number of new teacher induction days (three); the possibility of adding one additional in-service day at the high school to assist in the transition between semesters under block scheduling; the cost of busing if the district ran less than a full schedule because of in-service day at the high school; and the date of the senior trip and its effect of students under block scheduling. Ms. Cohen commented on the issue of in-service days for some but not all of the professional staff by recognizing the need at the high school, suggesting that there were other needs in other buildings, and noting that she would like to consider the implications of the options raised and comment again later. See Enclosure #21.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the second of two pieces of correspondence on the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday, consideration of the 1999-2000 Intermediate Unit budgets. Mr. Pinheiro briefly explained the four budgets to be considered and advised the Board that the District's contribution to those budgets, if approved, would be the same in the coming year as in the current year. He noted, however, that the district would continue to pay for the services that its students actually received from the I.U. See Enclosure #23. Comments from Michel D. Serratore, district resident, on land acquisition, girls' soccer and other issues were provided in Enclosure #22 for Board information, but they required no Board action.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report as shown in Enclosures #24 through #25. There were no questions from board members.

New Business: Mr. Kessler reported that four items of new business would be on the agenda for the meeting of 03/15/99. He noted that the subject of a Health Insurance Broker of Record would be discussed at that meeting. He also noted that the transportation contracts contained in Enclosure #26 and the student trip request contained in Enclosure #27 would be raised for Board consideration. Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Shipman to review briefly with the Board the Assurances Regarding Special Education Programs contained in Enclosure #28. Mr. Shipman indicated that the assurances were an annual requirement through which the district certified that it would be doing what was right in the area of special education.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Mr. Johnson reminded the Board and the community that the next town meeting would be held on Monday, March 22nd at the Whitemarsh Township Building and that the topic of the meeting would be district plans for the use of the land it acquired on the former WFIL Tract.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 10:34 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary