

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 20, 1999**

President Kessler convened the May meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:05 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 20, 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; John Lukens and Michael Gordon, Board Student Representatives; William Wells, Vice Chairman of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Brian Gallagher, CEA; Sam Tuzza, Construction Manager; Tonya Asel; Lindy Bowser; Bill English; Leslie Finegold; Tom Gibson; David Kershner; Dr. Hugh Lipshutz; Donald Newmeyer; Louise Willis-Lorenz; students being recognized by the Board and their families and friends.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance. He recognized, on behalf of the Board, students who had distinguished themselves in the fields of academics, community service, technical skills, and music. Mr. Kessler and Dr. Durtan awarded each student a Certificate of Recognition. A complete list of those being recognized is attached to these minutes and listed as Attachment #1.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 03/25/99, the Community Relations Committee of 04/05/99, the Work Session of 04/12/99, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 04/12/99, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 04/14/99; the General Meeting of 04/15/99, and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings of 04/20/99 and 05/03/99, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8, and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 05/01/99, as shown in Enclosure #35. 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 referred board members to the Budget Transfers Report of 05/99; the Bond Fund Report for the month ending 04/30/99; the Capital Projects Report for the month ending 04/30/99; the General Fund/Federal Program Bills; the Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 04/30/99; the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report of 03/31/99; 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 04/30/99; the Budget Analysis of 05/07/99; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 04/30/99, as shown in Enclosures #9 through #20. Board members sought clarification of several items. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that the county and local municipalities contributed to the cost of property appraisals undertaken by the district in response to questions about or appeals of current tax assessments. Mr. Bickleman and Mr. Bell reported on the telecommunications refunds earned under the E-rate program. Mr. Bickleman advised that he would summarize fees related to PFM bond issues and present them to the Board for review prior to its meeting in June. Ms. Brown made but withdrew, pending Mr. Bickleman's report, a motion to not pay printing fees associated with the bond issues. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. Mr. Kessler noted that the architect's bills that had been explained and documented were being paid but that earlier outstanding issues remained outstanding. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Bickleman made the public presentation of the preliminary 1999-2000 school budget. The overview of data that he shared with the Board is attached to these minutes and listed as Attachment #2. Mr. Bickleman and Ms. Brown pointed out that some of the data was changing as more information became available and that the Board would receive periodic updates on the budget in Board Notes throughout the period between presentation of the preliminary budget and Board action on the final budget. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that the number of new technology positions would increase from one to two full-time equivalents if the Board approved the technology budget as presented. He also reported that only five para-professionals were included in the preliminary budget. Mr. Bell explained that the projected increase in district-wide copy costs reflected both past under-funding for this work and an increased demand for copy services. He also explained the steps being taken, with the cooperation of building principals and the assistance of the district vendors, to slow the rate of increase in expenditures for copy services. Mr. Klinger explained that the projected increase in the cost for substitutes was the result of increases in both the use of and rate for substitutes. He noted that funding for the current year was proving too low. He also confirmed that the preliminary budget figures did not yet include the impact of retirements. Several board members reminded their fellow board members and the public that they could refer questions and/or comments about the budget to administration throughout the review period leading up to final budget adoption. Ms. Brown commended Mr. Bickleman for an outstanding budget presentation.

Mr. Bickleman gave the Board a brief summary of the local tax reform meeting held by Public Financial Management at the Intermediate Unit the previous evening. He confirmed that he had had input into the data contained in the report presented during the meeting and noted that several board members and members of the

district's Ad Hoc Committee on Local Tax Reform had been in attendance. He considered the meeting very worthwhile. Mr. Carroll noted that the report gave the district an idea of the impact of a number of tax reform options and gave the ad hoc committee material to study. Ms. Brown asked if there were any additional volunteers willing to serve on the committee but received no nominations.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to a letter from Larry E. Fritz, Assistant Comptroller for Audits of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Budget, seeking a Board response to the Audit Report for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1995 and 1996. See Enclosure #21. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the response drafted by Mr. Bickleman and attached to the agenda. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Wells, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation. Mr. Wells introduced Ms. Bowser and Ms. Willis-Lorenz, district art teachers, who presented information about programs for which they received foundation mini-grants. Ms. Bowser's mini-grant offered second-grade students at Plymouth Elementary School the opportunity to visit Woodmere Art Museum. Students from the school were present to give their positive reactions to the trip. Ms. Willis-Lorenz' mini-grant helped fund a ceramic tile and paint mural related to the Keith Stimson memorial garden in the lobby of the high school. The mural is a multi-media work. Several departments at the high school were involved in its creation.

Mr. Wells presented four mini-grants and one major grant to the Board for its consideration and approval. The list of grants included mini-grants entitled "Nuclear Scalers", "Carolyn Cooney – Author Visit", "Framing and Displaying", "Walkway for Sculpture" and a major grant entitled "Chips and Zip – A Computer Program for the Future". Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the grants, as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to a letter from Representative Lita Cohen requesting Board consideration of a waiver of real estate taxes for a resident family. Dr. Durtan referred board members to correspondence from special counsel suggesting that the Board was not able to waive taxes but might be able to work out a payment plan. After discussing a number of potential options for assisting the taxpayers involved, the Board reached a consensus not to waive the taxes but to work through Representative Cohen's office toward finding an appropriate means of assisting the family in working through its tax problems.

Mr. Kessler referred the Board to a letter from Marsha Suskowski, Executive Director of Montgomery County Head Start, seeking assistance from the Board in locating educational space in the Borough of Conshohocken. Dr. Durtan advised

the Board that Head Start would still occupy one classroom at Conshohocken Elementary School in the coming year. He also noted that the district had been working on an option to place portable classrooms at Ridge Park Elementary School but that the option had been abandoned because the program wished to stay in Conshohocken Borough. He noted that there was no room for a modular unit at Conshohocken Elementary School. Mr. Carroll suggested that the program contact Sts. Cosmas and Damien School about the possibility of securing rooms at that facility.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report as shown in Enclosures #23 through #24. He noted that the report had been updated to include two additional retirements. Mr. Carroll asked if any additional resignations for retirement had come in, and Mr. Klinger reported that he was in receipt of two additional retirement notices. Dr. Durtan noted that total retirements stood at nine. Mr. Orlow asked if administration was working on a policy to bring district practices in line with state statutes on leave for professional development. Dr. Durtan indicated that it was. He also asked if the engineer position had been posted. Dr. Durtan confirmed that it had been advertised in the ILS and over Penn-link. He also advised that a similar position had been posted by another local district. Mr. Klinger suggested that the district might find it advisable to advertise in the Inquirer if the current listings did not produce a reasonable pool of qualified candidates.

Board Student Representatives Report: In response to a Board query, John Lukens noted that the meeting would be his last as a Student Board Representative and that he would be attending the University of Richmond in the fall. John provided an overview of senior activities as the school year draws to a close, including the PW Ping Pong Tournament, the senior picnic, the senior awards ceremony, the A/P testing, the senior prom and commencement. John thanked the Board and his teachers for the opportunities that they had offered him and the education that they provided him. Mike Gordon provided an update on other activities, including the memorial for Judy Gillespie and the junior prom. Mike also offered a heartfelt tribute to John, noting his many accomplishments as a PW student, including being named Exchange Club Student of the Year, and his outstanding record of service to his school and the community.

New Business: Mr. Kessler led the Board through the fairly extensive list of routine Board elections, appointments and action items that come in May each year.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to elect Mr. Bickleman to an additional term as Board Treasurer at an annual rate of \$6,438.00 for the upcoming school year. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to elect Barbacane, Thornton & Co. as the district auditor for the year 1999-2000 at an annual fee of \$12,000.00. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro paid tribute to the fine work of Frank O'Hara, the district's solicitor for many years. He also noted Mr. O'Hara's health and the district's increasing need for specialized legal services over the past several years were the reasons for the district's decision to seek a solicitor from a larger firm with more expertise in special aspects of school law. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to name Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Esquire of Fox Rothschild, O'Brien & Frankel, LLP as the Colonial School District Solicitor effective immediately. He reported that, consistent with his firms' proposal of May 5, 1999, Mr. Sultanik would be on an annual retainer of \$18,000.00 per year, prorated for the balance of the current school year, plus out-of-pocket expenses, for all covered items. He also noted that litigation rates and other rates would be set at \$130.00 per hour, unless specifically exempted from the proposal. Ms. Brown confirmed that the retainer covered attendance at all general Board meetings and routine legal questions and answers. Mr. Pinheiro pointed out that the hourly rates were for adversarial issues outside the normal routine. Mr. Orlow characterized the compensation arrangement as favorable to the district. On roll call vote, all but Mr. O'Neill in favor. Mr. O'Neill abstained. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to name First Union as a depository for school funds for the 1999-2000 school year in accordance with Section 621 of the Public School Code. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the list of investment banks, trusts and savings and loan institutions attached to the agenda for solicitation for interest rates on school investments for the 1999-2000 school year. Receipt of district funds is subject to confirmation of bank maintenance of legally required collateral. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to appoint Alicia Fabricio Board Student Representative for the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years and Steven Moore as alternate, in accordance with Board Policy 1-012. On roll call vote, all but Mr. Connolly in favor. Mr. Connolly abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to set the compensation for Mr. Bell as Board Secretary at \$5,150.00 for the 1999-2000 school year. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the execution of the 1999-2000 Special Education Services Agreement with MCIU for special education services in the amount of \$357,887.00. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the

funding was for low incidence handicaps. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve those projects listed in the memo attached to the agenda and for which cost estimates for the 1999-2000 Federal Program Allocation had been given. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to adopt for use during the 1999-2000 school year the textbook titles listed in the memo attached to the agenda. Dr. Stormes noted that these titles represented additions to the approved list. In response to a query from Mr. Orlow, she reported that the books requested for the sixth-grade consumer science program represented an additional classroom set and that the cost was built into the tech life program and did not represent new money. On roll call vote, all but Ms. Brown in favor. Ms. Brown opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the bids attached to the agenda. The bids had been analyzed on the basis of quality and cost, and the lowest bidder was being recommended. The bids included those for elementary and secondary art supplies, general supplies, industrial supplies, janitorial supplies, science supplies, asbestos abatement in PW cafeteria #7, and fuel. All but the asbestos abatement bid would be paid from the operating budget. A fully detailed and analyzed copy of each bid had been made available for review in the district office. On roll call vote, all in favor but Ms. Brown. Ms. Brown opposed. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report: After some discussion, Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve a statement, in language developed and approved by the solicitor, indicating that the district had no objection to opening a paper street which abuts district property at Ridge Park Elementary School. Board members made it clear that they wished no infringement of or easement on district property. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report. The report had been made the previous Monday.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson asked his fellow board members for approval of the budget for the Center for Technical Studies. He noted that the budget would be \$3,603,105.00 for the 1999-2000 school year and the district contribution would be \$1,143,196.00. Mr. Johnson made and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the budget as presented to the Board. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Johnson also reported that Mr. Ruzicka, the Director of the Center for Technical Studies, would be retiring in January 2000 and the joint committee would be searching for his replacement. He also reported on the many scholarships

awarded to center students, including those to students attending Plymouth Whitemarsh High School.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro noted that Mr. Cognato, assistant principal at Colonial Middle School had just earned his doctorate. He also reported on an employment agreement that the Personnel Committee was recommending for Mr. Klinger, the district's Director of Personnel. Under the agreement, Mr. Klinger's title would become Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel. The agreement would extend Mr. Klinger's present contract for three years up to June 30, 2003, guarantee Mr. Klinger a minimum salary increase of 3.5% in each of the three years, allow him to take his medical benefit premiums as salary and, in return, limit some benefits available to him under the terms of the CASEA agreement. Mr. Carroll had some questions about Section 125 benefits plans and received confirmation that the district currently had a plan in place that was available to all employees. He expressed concern about whether the district would offer other employees a plan similar to that offered to Mr. Klinger. Mr. Pinheiro responded that it would be offered to other employees who would be assistant superintendent category. Other board members noted that the district was extending some benefits to a good employee which the district would like to retain. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the contract. On roll call vote, all in favor except Ms. Brown and Mr. Carroll. Ms. Brown and Mr. Carroll opposed. Motion carried. The Board also took notice of the fact that four candidates for the Board had won both the Republican and Democratic primaries and would be listed on both ballots in the fall.

Finance: No formal report. Ms. Brown made a motion to appoint Kyle Sollie, a tax attorney, to the district's Ad Hoc Committee on Local Tax Reform. She believed that he would be a positive addition to the committee. Mr. Orlow seconded the motion. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Yunker reported that a joint meeting of the Curriculum and Buildings & Grounds Committees had been held on May 17th to review the districts security and disaster/emergency operations plans and to review the need for para-professionals at the high school when block scheduling begins in the fall. Mr. Orlow noted that the joint committee had not been able to complete its agenda for the evening and would be reconvening to review ideas from district and building administrators for improving building security and to continue discussions on the subject. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the district is constantly working on issues of health and safety in its schools and that the current deliberations were part of an on-going process.

Transportation/Buildings and Grounds: Mr. Orlow noted that the Board deferred at its April meeting consideration of a 731 form for asbestos removal work which will be part of the renovation project in cafeteria #7 this summer. Mr. Bell explained that the form was required by the state and that it was simply a

confirmation that specifications for the work had been drawn up correctly. He noted that the consulting firm drawing up the specifications would not be involved in the actual asbestos removal work and that the Board had awarded a bid for the removal work to another firm earlier in the meeting. Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the filing of the form. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson reminded board members who had not already done so to return photographs for the annual report to Dr. Durtan.

Legislative: Mr. Carroll reported on increased funding in the state budget for special education, increases in the school lunch program, six bills under consideration in the legislature on technical education, a grant program for safe schools, and the opportunity to nominate members for the charter schools appeal board. Mr. Kessler reminded board members that they had an opportunity to provide input into PSBA's legislative platform. Both he and Mr. Carroll indicated that they would be taking advantage of this opportunity.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary