

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 14, 1998**

President Kessler convened the September Work Session of the Colonial School Board of Directors at 9:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on September 14, 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; Carol Cohen, CEA; William English; Brian Gallagher; Gary Grenier; Dr. Hugh Lipshutz; Michael Macaninch; and Janet Ranheim.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance. He also announced that the Board had met in executive session from 7:30 p.m. to review legal matters.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 8/17/98, the General Meeting of 8/20/98, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee of 8/24/98, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #3. Mr. Pinheiro requested that the last sentence on the first page of the minutes of the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 8/24/98 be deleted. Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Bell to make the change.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Kessler referred board members to the Bond Fund Report, Capital Reserve Fund Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 8/31/98; the Budget Analysis of 9/3/98; the Accounts Payable and Contracted Salaries Payable Lists of 6/30/98; the Hourly and Retroactive Payroll Accrual for 1997-98; the Final Pre-Audit Budget Transfers of 1997-98; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 8/31/98, as shown in Enclosures # 4 through #16. Dr. Durtan noted that an updated Reconciliation of Cash Accounts was included in the yellow sheets given to board members prior to the meeting. In response to a query from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bickleman reported that the funds reported under "Insurance Premiums Reimbursement" in the Treasurer's report included monthly COBRA payments from staff and quarterly benefits premiums paid by retirees. Ms. Brown noted that the Accounts Payable, Payroll Accrual and Final Pre-Audit Budget Transfer Reports were year-end items done annually prior to the audit. She noted that the

budget transfers were made to cover expenditures in areas where such expenditures exceeded the amount originally budgeted and that such transfers were routine accounting practice as long as the total actual expenditures did not exceed total budgeted expenditures. In response to a comment from Mr. Pinheiro, Mr. Bickleman noted that a recent update in the amount of tax collected to date indicated that the district was 1.67% ahead in collections over the previous year. He reported that late receipt of payments from a mortgage holder accounted for much of the increase over previously reported receipts. Mr. Kessler asked if a mechanism could be created so that large construction invoices were not paid prior to Board review. Mr. Bickleman responded that he could isolate such bills on the Bond Fund Report and hold them for payment until the Friday following Board approval of the payment of bills each month. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the architect and construction manager, in addition to district administrators, would be checking these invoices prior to forwarding them for payment approval. Board members found the procedures acceptable.

**Budget Report:** None.

**Staff Report:** None

**Old Business:** None

**Correspondence:** Mr. Kessler noted that there was one piece of correspondence requiring a Board response. Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. English, a trustee of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, who introduced Ms. Ranheim from the Genesis program at the high school. Ms. Ranheim explained how a mini-grant from the foundation was used to reinforce initiatives within the Genesis program. She highlighted student involvement in a ropes course which fostered teamwork, a mentoring program among Genesis students, and a leadership program which brought positive peer pressure into the program. She thanked the foundation for its financial support. Mr. Grenier, Executive Director of the Lincoln Center, thanked district and school administrators for their support and encouragement of the Genesis program.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report containing recommendations on additions, terminations, suspensions, demotions, leaves of absence, promotions, suspensions, transfers and resignations of staff; changes to the substitute list; and recommendations for the appointment of adult evening school instructors, as shown in Enclosures #18 through #20. Board members had no questions on the report. Dr. Durtan directed Board attention to the enrollment data for the third day of classes in Enclosure #25 and reported that the data for the tenth day of classes should be available for the meeting on 9/17/98. He highlighted enrollment in the second grade at Ridge Park Elementary School and noted that there were four classes with 26, 24, 23, and 24 students respectively. Mr. Orlow asked if the early start of school had affected student

attendance, and Dr. Durtan reported no significant change in attendance patterns during the first week of school.

**New Business:** Mr. Kessler reported that the student trip request shown in Enclosure # 21 would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. Mr. Pinheiro and Mr. Orlow both commented favorably on the field trip proposed for middle school students to Wallops Island and the Cape Cod Sea Camp. They noted that similar trips in the past had been very successful. Mr. Pinheiro also noted that students had to meet certain school criteria to participate in the excursions.

Mr. Kessler noted that a transportation contract and three special education contracts, as shown in Enclosures #22 and #23 would be action items for the meeting of 9/17/98. Mr. Pinheiro raised the issue of unexpected special education costs and noted that a student who had recently moved to the district would require \$80,000.00 in annual educational and auxiliary support. In response to a Board query, Mr. Shipman advised that it was not possible in Pennsylvania for a district to decline to serve such profoundly needy students.

At Mr. Kessler's request, Dr. Durtan advised the Board that the district was entering the third year of a three-year extended day enrichment program and that it was appropriate to evaluate the program and plan for the future. He recommended reconvening the ad hoc committee that had originally worked on the program to collect and review data and make recommendations to administration and the Board on the future direction of the program. He suggested that original members be invited to return and that new members be appointed where original members were no longer willing or able to serve. Mr. Orlow suggested that parents with experience with the current vendor be appointed to the committee. Dr. Durtan noted that Ms. Iannelli, the Curriculum Supervisor who would chair the committee, was already seeking parent input. Mr. Carroll asked what criteria would be used to evaluate the program, and Dr. Durtan noted that the committee would develop the criteria and solicit parent reaction to the program. Mr. Kessler asked Dr. Durtan to bring a list of nominees to the Board at its October meeting. In response to Board queries about personnel problems within the current program, Dr. Durtan noted that the district would have to take a look at the requirement that only certified teachers be involved in the program. He advised that the pool of certified teachers was becoming smaller and that other options may offer greater stability and flexibility.

Dr. Durtan reported the addition of one item of new business to the agenda, an addendum to the district's lease agreement with the Norristown Area YMCA for the extended day enrichment program at Conshohocken Elementary School. He noted that a provision formerly in place to allow for the use of an all-purpose area in an elementary school for the program had not been included in the lease agreement. Dr. Durtan stated his belief that it would be necessary to re-establish the provision so that space could be made available for the program at Conshohocken Elementary

School. He referred a draft addendum prepared by Mr. Bell to Mr. O'Hara for review prior to the Thursday meeting of the Board.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. O'Hara advised that he would be making a recommendation to the Board on the appointment of an appraiser for a pending tax assessment appeal. In response to a query from Mr. Pinheiro, Mr. O'Hara advised that there would be no code or ethics violation if a board member were to vote on a district contract with a firm with which he or she did business as long as that board member had no substantial financial interest in the contracting firm.

**Committee Reports:** Mr. Connolly announced that there would be a Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting on Wednesday, 9/16/98 at 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room to review the results of construction bids for the high school science wing and consider alternates. He noted that the bids had been competitive and had come in lower than originally anticipated. He encouraged all board members to attend and advised that the public would be welcome. Mr. Connolly noted that the architect would be present to review the bid results with the Board. Dr. Durtan suggested the possibility that, if the Board reached consensus on the issues before it, the acceptance of the bids could become an action item at the meeting of 9/17/98. Mr. Kessler advised the public that the bids and the architect's summary of them were available for public review in the District Office.

**Public Comments:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary