

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, FEBRUARY 14, 2000**

President Kessler convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:35 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on February 14, 2000.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; and Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 01/04/00, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 01/07/00, the Work Session of 01/18/00 and the General Meeting of 01/20/00, and the General Meeting of 02/02/00, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5. Board members had no questions or concerns with the minutes as presented.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler noted that the following financial reports would be on the agenda for Board consideration the following Thursday: the Budget Transfers for February 2000, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report and Capital Fund Report for the month ending 01/31/00; the Food Service Report for the month ending 11/30/99; 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 01/31/00; the Budget Analysis of 02/07/00; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 01/31/00, as shown in Enclosures #6 through #17. Board members asked a number of questions seeking clarification of the percentage of taxes collected and the lack of prior year data on food service profits and losses. Mr. Bickleman explained the former by outlining the assumptions made during the budget process each year and Mr. Klinger addressed the latter by noting that the department had a new computer program that did not contain prior year data today but would in future years. Mr. Bickleman also explained a correction that would be made to the Tax Escrow Report prior to the general meeting the following Thursday.

Staff Report: Mr. Kessler announced that Mr. William Wells, Chairman of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation, would present several mini-grants and one major project to the Board for its consideration at the general meeting on the following Thursday.

Old Business: Mr. Kessler noted that a resolution to transfer \$500,000.00 from the District's Bond Fund to its Capital Reserve Account would be on the agenda for the Thursday meeting. Mr. Kessler and Mr. Bickleman explained the nature of reserve accounts. Mr. Marchozzi asked about the significance of moving the funds. Mr. Orlow explained that the Buildings & Grounds Committee was recommending the transfer to bolster the reserve for emergency capital projects. He noted that the funds were available from the recent bonds because the district had not used much of the contingency fund set aside for the construction of the science wing at the high school. Dr. Durtan confirmed that the Board had discussed, but not yet taken action, on the transfer. Mr. Kessler noted that making the transfer would not be an irreversible decision by the Board.

Mr. Kessler advised that the proposed 2000-01 school calendar would be on the agenda for Thursday's meeting for Board information. Mr. Johnson provided a brief summary of the Board consensus on 08/28/00 as the start date for the coming school year, as shown in Enclosure #18. Dr. Durtan advised that he had provided a draft of the calendar to the CEA for its review and possible input as provided in the collective bargaining agreement. He reported that the CEA had requested that the Board defer action on the calendar for one month so that the CEA Executive Committee would have a chance to forward comments to the Board. Mr. Orlow received an explanation from Dr. Durtan on the scheduling of in-service days throughout the year. Dr. Durtan noted that the October in-service was for early follow-up on initiatives for the year and that the March in-service came during a long period without a holiday and provided an opportunity to give students a break while addressing legitimate in-service issues.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler noted that four items of correspondence would be on the agenda for Thursday's meeting - Enclosures #19 through # 21 and an additional item. Elise Kaplan, district resident, asked for the opportunity to address the Board the following Thursday. John S. Grispon, I. U. Board President and Dennis Harken, Executive Director provided information on the upcoming I. U. Board election and budget approval process. Michael T. and Beth Ann D. Hatfield, district residents provided a petition expressing concern with the start date for the coming school year. Joseph V. Oravitz, Executive Director of PSBA, wrote to advise the Board of the unanimous action of the PSBA Executive Board supporting the district's performance-based compensation program. Mr. Kessler read the PSBA resolution in full to the TV audience at home.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #22 and #23. Board members had several questions related to the reports. Dr. Durtan responded to a question on a .67FTE teaching position at the high school by noting that it represented two blocks in the schedule plus proportionate preparation time. Mr. Klinger responded to questions about the number of budgeted but unassigned positions still unfilled and the status of the on-going search to find a suitable replacement for a technology specialist who resigned earlier in the year. He indicated that the final budgeted but unassigned position had been filled but only for the second semester. He also advised that the district was in the final stages of hiring a replacement for the technology specialist.

New Business: Mr. Kessler referred board members to a series of Board Policies being considered under second reading. See Enclosures #24 through #27. He noted that Board Policy #216, Students Records Policy, was designed to replace two older policies on student records for regular education and exceptional students. He also noted that revisions to the policy on the activities code of ethics primarily dealt with adjustments to the sanctions for a third violation of the code. There was no significant discussion of the policies that evening.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to three additional policies that would be under consideration by the Board on first reading the following Thursday night. See Enclosures #28 through #30. The first enclosure was a new policy on prohibiting student possession of weapons on district property. Dr. Durtan reported that there had been minimal changes to draft since the Board last had an opportunity to review it. These changes included modifications to the definition of a weapon and the inclusion of a statement that cutting tools would be considered weapons only where harm or intent to harm were demonstrated. Dr. Lipshutz suggested that this language should include the concept of harm being reasonably inferred rather than demonstrated. Board members discussed some language options but reached a consensus on including the language that Dr. Lipshutz had suggested. Mr. Pinheiro expressed concerns about adults, other than law enforcement officials, possessing weapons on district property. Other Board members echoed these concerns. After some discussion, the Board reached a consensus to refer this issue to the district safety officer and administration for review and investigation prior to their drafting an appropriate policy addressing Board concerns.

Dr. Durtan summarized the impact of recommended action on the second and third enclosures dealing with the modification of one current Board policy on amending and suspending policies and by-laws and the deletion of another on the same issue. Dr. Durtan noted that the revised policy was a simplified version of the PSBA policy on the subject and that it addressed the Board practice of requiring two readings to adopt a policy. Board members discussed various aspects of the policy and eventually reached a consensus to require a super-majority to suspend a policy.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the annual request for funding for the Summer Consortium of the Arts. He reminded the group that the program provided a five-week summer arts experience for students in grades five through twelve who are talented in the arts. He noted that the Board would be considering a funding request for \$6,300.00 at its meeting on Thursday. Mr. Kessler praised the high quality of the program but raised some philosophical issues with funding it. In response to questions from board members, Dr. Durtan reported that the district had a liaison to the consortium, that it had experienced fairly consistent attendance in the summer program over the years, and that it had never turned interested and recommended district students away. He also indicated that the program would probably be held at Upper Merion this summer.

Solicitor's Report: None

Committee Reports: None.

Other Comments: In response to Board queries, Mr. Bickleman reported that he had had no further communication with Plymouth Township on the possibility of the district securing, on the township's behalf, local income records for taxing purposes. Mr. Kessler reiterated the Board's willingness to work with the township on alternative ways of securing the data that it was seeking. Mr. Kessler also reported that the Board had met in executive session from 6:30 p. m. to 7:30 p. m. that evening to discuss legal and personnel matters.

Public Comments: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**