

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JANUARY 18, 2000**

President Kessler convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:53 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on January 18, 2000.

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

Board Members Absent: Jack Pinheiro.

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Dr. Ann Stormes, Director of Educational Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Allan Dovberg, President, Colonial United Taxpayers; and Paul Ruzicka, outgoing Director, Center for Technical Studies.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance and recognized Mr. Johnson who presented Mr. Ruzicka with a plaque honoring his dedicated service to students of Colonial School District and the Center for Technical Studies over the course of more than 20 years as an administrator with the center. Mr. Ruzicka spoke briefly of his rewarding experiences during his period of service and his pleasure in working with staff and board members from Colonial, Norristown Area and Upper Merion School Districts.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 12/06/99, the General Meeting of 12/06/99, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 12/16/99, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 01/03/00 and the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 01/05/00, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5. Board members pointed out several recording and stylistic problems with the minutes of the General Session and asked Mr. Bell to make the necessary corrections and adjustments prior to Board action the following Thursday.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler noted that the financial reports for the months of December 1999 and January 2000 would be on the agenda for Board consideration the following Thursday. The reports included the Budget Transfers for those months; the Bond Fund Reports, the Capital Projects Reports and the Capital Fund Reports for the months ending 11/30/99 and 12/31/99; the Food Service Reports for the months ending 09/30/99 and 10/31/99; the Outstanding Investment Reports, the Cash Flow Summaries, the Comparisons of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Tax Escrow Reports, and the Reconciliations of Cash Accounts for the months ending 11/30/99 and 12/31/99; the Budget Analyses of 12/13/99 and 01/08/00; and the Treasurer's Reports for the months ending 11/30/99 and 12/31/99, as shown in Enclosures #6 through #17. Board members asked a number of questions seeking clarifications of different sections of the reports. They sought

and received reassurance that it was normal for the Food Service Reports to reflect a defect in the first quarter or two of the fiscal year because of substantial up-front expenditures. They also learned that there were still outstanding payments to be made to contractors for work on the science wing at the high school. Mr. Bickleman walked the Board through the reports that reflected revenues and expenditures relating to district bonds and capital projects. He provided information on budget transfers in the area of security equipment and supplies and agreed to provide both account numbers and descriptions in future transfer reports.

Staff Report: Mr. Kessler announced that Kelly Canally Brown of Family Services of Montgomery County would present information on the FAST Program at the general meeting on the following Thursday.

Old Business: Mr. Kessler noted that an update on the elementary technology process was on the agenda for the regular monthly board meeting. See Enclosure #18. Dr. Durtan indicated that administration was seeking Board direction on the technology recommendations. Dr. Stormes gave an overview of the process that the committee had followed in developing its recommendations. She emphasized that the committee had first assessed the need for hardware and software to support meeting Pennsylvania standards, five-year reading goals and national technology standards and then had worked with the I. U. in locating products to meet those needs. Board members sought clarification and confirmation of the finances involved in the upgrade of technology in the district's elementary schools and details of the work recommended at Colonial and Conshohocken Elementary Schools. Mr. Orlow reminded the group that a decision to move forward with upgrades at Colonial and Conshohocken Elementary Schools should be made within the context of a plan for all of the elementary schools. Dr. Durtan advised that Mr. Graham would be available at the Thursday meeting to answer Board questions and noted that there was sufficient time for the Board to refer the topic to the Curriculum Committee for review prior to final action at the February meeting. Mr. Kessler suggested that the Board defer considering a referral of the issue to committee until after speaking with Mr. Graham.

Mr. Kessler noted that Dr. Durtan and Mr. O'Neill had attended a meeting of the Pennsylvania Association of Growing School Districts. Mr. O'Neill provided a brief overview of the organization and expressed the view that it offered little to the district. He felt that there was no need for the district to become involved at this time and recommended that the Board take no action on Enclosure #19.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler noted that there were five items of correspondence on the agenda. He suggested that no Board action was required on Enclosures #20, #22 and #23 which were expressions of opinion on educational vouchers and flexible grouping and a recognition of the community service efforts of several district students. He indicated, however, that the Board would need to consider acceptance of a gift from the trust of Joshua Morris, as outlined in Enclosure #21, and might wish to reconsider the first day of school for 2000-2001 as requested in Enclosure #43.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #24 and #25. He noted that his report included the move of a number of long-term substitutes to temporary professional employees as required by state regulations. He also pointed out the additions to the district's substitute lists and noted that a recommendation to appoint adult evening school staff, subject to enrollment, would be on Thursday's agenda. There were no questions on the report.

New Business: Mr. Kessler referred board members to a request from Plymouth Township to obtain state income tax information. Mr. Bickleman responded to questions about the request. In response to a Board query, Dr. Durtan and Mr. Bickleman indicated that this was the first time that the township had made such a request of the district. Several board members questioned that authority and the propriety of the district securing the information for the township. After some discussion, Mr. Kessler asked administration to refer the request to the solicitor for review and an opinion. See Enclosure #26.

Mr. Kessler noted that the routine transportation contract in Enclosure #27 and a series of trip requests contained in Enclosures #28 through #31 and Enclosure #44 would be on the agenda for the general meeting the following Thursday. Dr. Durtan confirmed that no class time would be lost for the ski trip and that no Board funding had been requested for the DECA trip to the state competitions. He also reported that participants would not go to nationals, even if they were eligible, because they would miss too much class work under block scheduling.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to a list of policy additions and changes as shown in Enclosures #32 through #37. Mr. Shipman briefly outlined the policies. He noted that the district was simplifying its policy on student records and that the policy on possession of weapons was written to comply with Act 26. He pointed out that the latter specifically referred to "intent to harm" and allowed flexibility in reacting to violations of the policy. These measures were incorporated in an attempt to avoid the rash of complications that other districts had experienced with their "zero tolerance" policies. Board discussion focused on the remaining two policies: Medical Management of Anaphylaxis and Activities Code of Ethics.

Though all board members recognized the importance of managing medical emergencies such as anaphylaxis and acknowledged the need for developing emergency care plans, several questioned the need to develop policies to deal with individual medical conditions. After considerable discussion, the Board seemed to reach consensus to direct administration to draft a general policy requiring medical management and emergency care plans for students with identified medical problems and to develop administrative regulations to cover some of the specifics of students' individual needs. Several speakers, including Dr. Durtan, Mr. Shipman and Dr. Lipshutz, noted the importance of deferring to the instructions of the medical provider.

Many board members raised questions and posed hypothetical situations involving the application of the proposed revision of the activities code of ethics. Much of the discussion centered on the timing of sanctions or penalties for violations, the length of any exclusions from participation in activities, and the opportunities for reinstatements at a later date. Several board members expressed the belief that the penalties should be as consistent as possible and that exceptions could be made for those penalties mandated by PIAA. Mr. Yunker advocated a statute of limitations on offenses. Dr. Durtan defined “zero tolerance” as no acceptance of bad behavior but some discretion in setting punishment. Some board members suggested moving forward with the recommended changes and then referring the policy to committee to address the other issues raised. Others expressed their on-going concern with a policy that they viewed as ill conceived and poorly written. Dr. Lipshutz reminded the group that the main purpose of the current revisions was to update penalties for third offenses. Dr. Durtan indicated that the changes on which the board seemed to have reached a consensus could be incorporated into the policy prior to its formal reading the following Thursday. The first of those changes involved designating the penalty for third offences by participants in other than those in PIAA athletics as the penalties outlined under the section of the policy entitled “Third Offense – Drug Use”. The second set the starting date for penalties for offenses during the summer as the starting date of the school year or the starting date of the activity or athletic season, whichever comes first.

Mr. Kessler advised that bids for marker boards and carpeting would be on the agenda for Board action on Thursday evening. See Enclosure #45. Board members asked Mr. Bell to confirm the funding source for the projects, to clarify some of the charges and to delineate the areas of the building in which the products would be used. Mr. Bell provided some preliminary information and advised the Board that he would have a full report for them at the Thursday meeting.

Solicitor’s Report: None

Committee Reports: None.

Public Comments: Mr. Dovberg expressed his happiness with the Board’s decision not to spend \$10,000.00 on joining the Pennsylvania Association of Growing School Districts. He noted that the district was already a member of PSBA, a lobbying group representing school districts, and he felt that the district should rely on PSBA services. He also commended the Board for referring the request from Plymouth Township for access to state tax records to the solicitor. He felt that providing that information could be considered an invasion of privacy. Mr. Dovberg reiterated his concern that the district policy on an activity code of ethics was ill conceived, and he posed some situations in which individuals could circumvent the poorly worded policy. He also queried how many student days DECA participants would lose if they went to the state competition and learned that they would be out three days of block scheduling, the equivalent of six days of class instruction under the former schedule. He asked the Board to consider this fact when acting on the trip request. Finally, Mr. Dovberg sought assurances that the district would not restrict the right of students to carry EpiPens on their persons since their immediate

use during cases of anaphylactic shock could be a life or death issue for the affected students. Board members and administrators indicated that the instructions of the medical provider would be honored in all cases.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 10:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**