

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, OCTOBER 16, 2000**

President Kessler convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:40 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 16, 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; Patricia Iannelli, 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; Scott Helfand; Brian Gallagher and Deborah Scott.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/13/00, Work Session of 09/18/00, the General Meeting of 09/21/00, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 09/25/00, the Special Meeting of 09/25/00 and the Personnel Committee Meeting of 10/05/00, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #6 on the agenda for the general meeting the following Thursday. Mr. Kessler noted that two additional sets of minutes had been provided to board members as yellow pages and would be on the agenda for Thursday's general meeting. Board members had no questions about the minutes. Dr. Lipshutz noted that page 3417 of the minutes reflected his late arrival at the general meeting of 09/21/00 and asked that the record show that he had attended Back-to-School Night at Whitmarsh Elementary School just prior to joining the meeting then in progress. Mr. Kessler reported that he and Mr. Carroll would be attending the PSBA Convention on Thursday evening and would not be able to attend the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors that night.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the financial reports which were listed as Enclosures #7 through #17 on the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. They included the Budget Transfers for 10/00, Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, and Capital Reserve Fund Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 09/30/00; the Budget Analyses of 10/10/00; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending

08/31/00. Mr. Kessler noted that there would be updated versions of the Bond Fund Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the general meeting on Thursday. Mr. Pinheiro asked why the district was still holding funds for the general contractor who had worked on the science addition at the high school. Mr. Bell explained that there were a number of outstanding problems that the contract needed to address and that Mr. Morcombe was working with the contractor to resolve them. Mr. Orlow asked if the architect for the all-weather track signed off on bills from the general contractor before they were paid. Mr. Bickleman reported that he knew that Mr. Morcombe was working on the bills and would check with him to verify the extent to which the architect was involved in the review of the contractor's bills. Mr. Marchozzi noted that the district was somewhat behind in its tax collection efforts compared to the previous year. He asked Mr. Bickleman if he were concerned about the issue. Mr. Bickleman indicated that he was not overly concerned and fully expected the district to realize the projected tax revenues listed in the annual budget. He noted that a slower payment rate for delinquent taxes was temporarily affecting the collection rate.

Old Business: Mr. Kessler noted that a revision of Board Policy #230 – Public Performances by Students would be coming before the Board for action on second reading at the general meeting on Thursday. See Enclosure #18 on the Thursday agenda. Board members had no questions or concerns about the latest revision of the policy.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler noted correspondence from Joel S. Jaspen and Donald R. Berger requesting that the Board accept the discount amount of taxes on their properties as payment in full. (See Enclosure #19 on the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday.) Mr. Kessler noted that the gentleman reported that they had not properly received the tax bill. He also indicated that the solicitor had provided an opinion that the school code did not provide for the Board granting exceptions to standard procedures for the payment of taxes. Board members had no comments on the request.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #20 and #21 on the agenda for Thursday evening. He noted that the enclosures contained information of personnel changes and additions to the substitute list that were recommended to the Board. Dr. Durtan also reported that the annual employee listing, including annual salaries, had been distributed to board members, was available in the Personnel Office, and traditionally had been accepted by the Board at its October meeting. Mr. Marchozzi noted that the one individual on the substitute list had been flagged with the word "emergency" rather than listed with a subject area. Mr. Klinger explained that the individual was considering a career change to teaching, was able to work for 15 days without formal certification, and had worked successfully as a social studies substitute on several occasions. Mr. Klinger also indicated that he had met with this individual and provided him an introduction and orientation to the field and the district. He

confirmed for Mr. Marchozzi that the information on the list reflected the substitute's area(s) of certification and not necessarily their fields of study. Mr. Kessler asked about audits of the data contained on the employee list and requested that administration randomly pull five or six employee listings and confirm that all of the data contained in them was accurate.

New Business: Mr. Kessler directed the attention of board members to Enclosure #22 on the agenda for Thursday's meeting, a request from Olga Sominina, a CMS language teacher, for Board authorization of a student trip to Greece during spring break. Dr. Durtan noted that the request met district guidelines and that the Board would be endorsing the potential educational value of the trip if it authorized the trip but would not be providing any funding or accepting any liability. Dr. Durtan responded to a question from Mr. Kessler by confirming that the Board had approved similar requests for permission to solicit participants from the middle school for trips abroad. He also noted that the application materials contained statements of the parents' and students' responsibilities. Mr. Marchozzi reiterated his earlier request that the district check State Department Travel Advisory for warnings about travel abroad and share any pertinent posted warnings with parents. He also suggested that copies of the advisories be attached to the release forms that parents had to sign before students could take the trips. Mr. Pinheiro supported these recommendations and suggested that the district require parents to return signed copies of the advisories to the district along with the completed liability release forms. Mr. Marchozzi noted that the advisories could be found on the internet at www.travel.state.gov. Board members also briefly discussed the effect that excess snow days could have on the trip and the sponsor and parents' responsibilities to verify that the travel agency handling trip arrangements was a responsible one.

Mr. Kessler noted that the Board had received three draft calendars for the 2001-02 school year that illustrated the impact of starting school before and after Labor Day. Dr. Lipshutz noted that, while the Board's intention was to pick a start date for the new school year first and then adopt a calendar, he found it difficult to select a start date without knowing what the end date would be. He advised that he was generally in favor with starting classes after Labor Day but was uncomfortable with having classes end in the third week in June. Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Gallagher if the CEA had any preliminary reaction to the drafts. Mr. Gallagher reported that the association had sought teacher input and that draft #3 was preferred by more teachers (@48%) than draft #4 (@40%). He responded to a question from the Board about the possibility of modifying spring break by indicating that his feeling was that the staff would not look favorably on changing the traditional full-week break. Dr. Lipshutz indicated that he would like to see a calendar that had the start of school after Labor Day and the end of school in the second week in June. Mr. Johnson sought reaction on a couple of start dates during the week before Labor Day, and Mr. Gallagher found no significant problem with any of them. Mr. Orlow sought clarification of the number of votes necessary to pass a school calendar, and

Dr. Durtan stated his belief that, since the issue did not involve the expenditure of funds, only a majority of the board members present was necessary to adopt a calendar. Mr. Pinheiro noted that many high school students were back on campus in August because practices for fall sports and other extra-curricular activities began before school started. Mr. Yunker expressed a preference for classes to begin after Labor Day. Board members briefly considered the affect that certain schedules would have on traditional graduation schedules.

Mr. Kessler noted that the Board would be considering Thursday night the two transportation contracts contained in Enclosures #24 and #25 on the agenda for the October general meeting. Dr. Durtan stated that the two contracts represented the most efficient and cost effective way of providing the required service. Mr. Johnson responded to a question from Mr. Marchozzi about the cost of the contracts by summarizing the methods for calculating the cost of the two contracts based on mileage rate of \$0.32.

Mr. Kessler advised board members that the fund raising budgets for 2000-01 had been provided for Board information in Enclosure #26 in the agenda for the meeting on Thursday. Mr. Pinheiro wondered if the \$2,750.00 budget for the high school cheerleaders included funds for traveling to an out-of-state competition. Dr. Durtan stated that he would find out.

Dr. Durtan reported that the revised professional development plan contained in Enclosure #27 was developed to comply with Act 48. He indicated that the PA Department of Education had granted an extension until November 30th to file the report. He also noted that the original draft had been reworked and cleaned up in response to earlier Board comments. He asked that Board members contact Ms. Iannelli if they had any questions. Mr. Carroll had some questions about the composition of the committee. Dr. Durtan noted that the members were selected by the groups that they represent. Mr. Carroll noted that one teacher was listed as a parent on the committee and expressed some concern that the timing of the committee meetings made it inconvenient for many parents to attend. Dr. Durtan noted that the Board would be approving the composition of the committee when it approved the plan.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: None.

Additional Comments: Mr. Kessler reported that the Board had met in Executive session immediately prior to the work session from 7:30 p.m. to handle personnel and collective bargaining matters. He also noted that the Personnel Committee had met in Executive Session from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to discuss personnel issues.

Public Comment: Mr. Dovberg offered several comments on items covered during the meeting before reading a prepared statement to the Board. He expressed his belief that the proposed student trip to Greece was worthwhile but felt it was an unnecessary charade to justify the trip in terms of students supplementing a program in Latin. Mr. Dovberg indicated that he agreed with Mr. Gallagher that Draft #3 of the calendar for the coming school year was the best one. He also sought clarification of the cost of the two transportation contracts on the agenda for Board action on Thursday. Mr. Yunker stated a preference for having the contracts written in terms of cost per day rather than mileage rates.

Mr. Dovberg read a prepared statement. He congratulated the Board for eliminating the five-minute rule on public comment at its general meeting in September. He commented on the 40-minute tag-team presentation by a husband and wife during which they expressed concern about the low number of district high school graduates attending ivy-league schools. He felt that attendance at such schools was no indication that their graduates would fare any better than other quality institutions of higher learning. Mr. Dovberg also commented on an eight-minute presentation by another parent who spoke about the lack of air conditioning at Plymouth Elementary School. He felt that the cost-benefit ratio of fitting out an elementary school with air conditioning did not warrant such an undertaking. Mr. Dovberg expressed his belief that a parent who wanted to know who the best teachers were simply had to ask other parents. He also agreed with Dr. Durtan that the district should look at students on a one-to-one as individuals. He also expressed dismay that many residents remained interested in school issues only as long as they had children in district schools.

Mr. Dovberg wish Dr. Durtan farewell and noted that he had kept the district on an even keel throughout the ups and downs that had occurred during his tenure as superintendent. He expressed hope that the Board, district administrators and staff would do all in their power to make Dr. Cotter's transition as the new superintendent as pleasant, effective and rapid as possible. He expressed the hope that he would look at Colonial United Taxpayers as a loyal ombudsman of the district and consider the perspectives of all, not just the parents. Mr. Dovberg also reported how impressed he was by Ms. McKeaney, the teacher who had been recognized last month as an outstanding teacher. He noted that one of the purposes of the recognition and the substantial monetary reward that accompanied it was to inspire students to go into the field of teaching. He felt that the goal of such a program was much like that of the district's performance-based pay initiative. When he asked for Board reaction, Mr. Kessler concurred.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**