



**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
AVON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Tuesday, December 19, 2017—7:00 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Ken Birk; Jackie Blea; Deb Chute; Jason Indomenio (7:10 pm); Houston Putnam Lowry; Peggy Roell; Jay Spivak; Laura Young; Kathy Zirolli

Member(s) Absent: none

Administration Present: Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

- I. Call to order
The meeting was called to order by Chair Houston Putnam Lowry at 7:01 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Avon Achievers
 - A. Sarah Parsons, AMS Special Education teacher - in recognition of her dedication and passion that puts her work as a Special Education teacher at an unsurpassed level. Ms. Parsons' upbeat and positive attitude coupled with her unwavering commitment to better the lives of all the students in her care makes her an Avon Achiever.
 - B. Ayushi Hegde, AHS grade 12 student, and Shelby Little, AMS grade 8 student – in recognition for having been awarded the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendent's Student Recognition Award based on their service to others; academic achievements and leadership within the school community.
- IV. Chair's Ruminations – Houston Putnam Lowry, Board of Education Chair

This business is not intended to be the subject of any motions, but is intended to be an opportunity for the Board to have a short discussion on the topics indicated.

 - A. Thank you to retiring Board members.

Chair Lowry reordered items on the agenda to acknowledge and thank retiring Board members Ken Birk, Peggy Roell and Kathy Zirolli.
- V. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Board of Education, Regular Meeting, November 21, 2017
 - Mr. Birk asked that it be clarified in the minutes that he had asked if the OPEB contribution by the Board is the full Annual Required Contribution (ARC) given the 2015 ARC was over \$1 million.
 - B. Board of Education, Special Meeting, November 30, 2017

- C. Policy Committee, December 4, 2017
- D. Board of Education, Special Meeting, December 4, 2017
- E. Board of Education, Special Meeting, December 6, 2017
 - Ms. Roell asked that it be noted The Connecticut SAT School Day Assessment is for students in grade 11, not grade 1.
- F. Board of Education, Special Meeting, December 12, 2017

Mr. Birk moved and seconded by Ms. Roell to approve the Board of Education Minutes with the noted edits.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

VI. Communication from Public

- A resident thanked Ms. Roell and Ms. Zirolli for their dedicated service on the Board of Education and acknowledged Ms. Roell's selfless service during her tenure as Board Chair. The resident also commented on the shooting incidence in New Mexico where a 21 year old shooter disguised himself as a high school student to gain access into the school. The resident asked to change the policy of Avon High School having an open campus as it creates opportunity for those looking to do harm.

VII. Items of Information

- A. Student Representatives Reports – Amir Johnson and Heather Monroe, Student Representatives
 - No report given.
- B. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs
 - Ms. Michaud reported it was an uneventful month but made the first payment for transportation of \$1.1 million, which was later than usual due to a change in staffing at Specialty Transportation.
- C. Algebra I A/B Pilot – Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Rusack shared the following:

- In the past 4 years, approximately 35-45 students needed to repeat Algebra 1 transitioning from 8th grade to 9th grade.
- Approximately 20 students each year who take geometry as a freshman, have to take Integrated Algebra during their sophomore year as opposed to moving on to Algebra 2.
- After watching this issue during the past few years it was determined it is more of a developmental/pacing issue rather than an issue with the curriculum. It was determined that students would benefit from taking Algebra 1 over a two year period as opposed to repeating the course; students would take Algebra 1A in 8th grade and Algebra 1B in 9th grade. Algebra 1A would cover linear functions and Algebra 1B would cover exponential and quadratic functions.
- With this change students would still be on the same track as they were before if they were to have to repeat algebra 1 in 9th grade with Geometry in grade 10; Algebra 2 in grade 11 and Pre-Calculus or Trigonometry/Statistics in grade 12.
- To address this, the plan is to pilot an Algebra 1A class starting second semester and next year the students would take Algebra 1B in 9th grade. Teachers will be reaching out to the parents and students who would benefit from this option to explain the change and inquire if their child would like to participate in this option.

Questions and Comments

- Chair Lowry asked for confirmation that this plan would be for some students not every student to which Dr. Rusack confirmed. A rubric will be developed so the determination can be made in 7th grade as to the students who would benefit from this.

- Chair Lowry also asked if students would be losing anything academically with this option. Dr. Rusack replied the only thing students would be losing would be the higher math electives in 12th grade. Ms. Roell added that the students would be losing the higher math electives anyway should the student have to repeat the course, this gives the student more opportunity for success.

VIII. Proposals
None

IX. Consent Calendar

Any member may remove an item from the consent calendar and it will be considered in full in the ordinary course after the consent calendar is voted upon.

- A. 17-18/89 Approval of Budget Transfers
- B. 17-18/77 Policy 5144.12 – Student Handbooks, Second Read

Ms. Roell moved and seconded by Ms. Zirolli to approve Items 17-18/89 and 17-18/77 as listed on the Consent Calendar.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

X. Old Business

A. 17-18/78 Avon High School New Course Recommendations

Dr. Rusack explained the course recommendation was tabled at the last meeting and has asked Mr. Salerni, AHS Science Coordinator to give an overview of the ECE AP Physics with Calculus course:

- Physics with calculus is for those who want to pursue engineering or physics in college. AP does offer both physics with algebra and physics with calculus base. Some high schools offer physics with algebra, with calculus as a second year course, though Avon High has never offered that.
- APs were revised a few years ago to split up the content and there is now AP Physics I and AP Physics II. AHS responded and combined AP Physics I and II so that students would take a double period and receive two credits which had many obstacles. While students receive a comprehensive Physics education, they are not getting the calculus background.
- Physics with calculus would count more substantially for college. Avon High currently has two teachers certified by UConn to teach physics with calculus. Students would also receive four UConn credits, which would also exempt students from having to take the course should they go to UConn for engineering or science.
- Would keep AP Physics I and add AP Physics C for the high achieving students

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Spivak asked for clarification between the courses and the length of the periods for each course. The AP Physics I will be one period; there would no longer be AP Physics II and AP Physics C would be 1.5 periods due to the extensive lab work associated with the course.
- Mr. Spivak asked if the AP Physics will replace the Honors Physics class to which Mr. Salerni replied that it is more beneficial for students to take the AP class and get the college credit for virtually the same level of work and the Honor Physics class may be phased out.
- Mr. Spivak also asked how students can take Physics with Calculus in their junior year when most students hadn't yet taken Calculus. Mr. Salerni explained that the new state assessment in science that was taken sophomore year and now moved to junior year went from 10-15% physics to 30% physics. There is now very little chemistry on the exam; chemistry has been integrated into 8, 9, 10 and 11 grade and made the focus on physics in

grade 11. The Physics with Calculus course has minor calculus the first semester with basic derivatives which can be taught and does not see it as an issue.

- Mr. Spivak also commented that the virtual high school might be outdated as it still say Physics B to which Mr. Salerni agreed it was four years old and outdated.
- Mr. Spivak asked Mr. Salerni for better explanation of the vision between ECE and AP. Communication needs to be better not just in the Science Department but throughout the high school. Mr. Salerni explained that people are just getting certified in the past six months and the high school is just starting to find the way and will revise along the way as more information is received. Will look at how students respond as well as the college response to ECE as far as college admissions and credits.
- Mr. Spivak expressed concern that much of what is done is directed to students at the top or the bottom but not enough focus on the students in the middle. Mr. Salerni replied that the Science Department is very proud of the various levels offered to meet the academic needs of the different groups of students.
- Ms. Young asked how this positions Avon compared to other high performing high schools in supporting the engineering track. Mr. Salerni replied that looking at some of the other DRG B schools they all do different things. Our philosophy has been to offer four years of strong options to meet the students' needs and not have students repeat courses.
- Ms. Blea ask if there were unintended consequences for eliminating Physics II. Mr. Salerni replied that very many of the students taking Physics I and II are doing so with the intention of majoring in physics and engineering and then not getting the full credit they would if they were to take Physics I and Physics C instead. Students will still receive a full, comprehensive Physics education.
- Mr. Indomenico asked what some of the cons are with this. Mr. Salerni responded that the only logistical thing is that if there were a student taking Physics I and Physics II and were not going to go into engineering or physics they could possibly receive college credit for both courses. It is a huge problem for science and engineering majors.

Ms. Chute moved and seconded by Mr. Birk to approve Item 17-18/78 Avon High school New Course Recommendations.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

XI. New Business

A. 17-18/90 Discussion and Possible Action on 2018-2019 Board of Education Budget

Dr. Paddyfote thanked the Board for listening to all the department heads and principals who presented their budgets as the team did a wonderful job putting the budget together. Dr. Paddyfote expressed her hope that the Board liked and understood the budget and that it would stay intact as much as possible as it would be a great budget for the incoming superintendent to work with next year.

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Chute was very excited about the budget, however, given the answers of many of the principals wishing for teaching assistants, she wondered if teaching assistants were already confirmed for next year. Dr. Rusack replied that the Title I grants and Open Choice grants had come in for this fiscal year and will need to calculate how many positions it will cover for January. Ms. Michaud added that moving positions or other expenditures to the general budget would be supplanting and that is a danger that would prevent putting TAs back into the grant. If we cannot maintain the positions we would lose the grant funding for these positions in the future.

- Ms. Blea inquired about the SAC tutor position to which Dr. Rusack explained that all the tutor positions were included in the general budget. The teaching assistants have been provided one per grade level for the lower elementary grades and are dependent on grants. Tutors are for intervention and TAs are for assistance. Dr. Rusack said that the cost for TAs is approximately \$25,000 for a total of \$150,000 for six TAs.
- Mr. Indomenico asked for clarification that if we were to put TAs in the general fund the grant funding would not be available to the district. Ms. Michaud replied that these are formulary grants and we would not be allowed to spend the money on putting these positions back in the future and must find other areas to spend the funds for intervention.
- Mr. Birk asked if it would increase spending to which the Chair said it would increase roughly \$225,000, including benefits.
- Mr. Birk also asked if this is already employing the IDEA grants to which Dr. Rusack explained that the difference is that the IDEA grants is for certified teachers. Also with Special Education, there are other things that can be purchased like assistive technology whereas some of the other grants are written more tightly as to for what the funds can be used. Dr. Paddyfote added that the positions that Dr. Mearman has are essential whereas the teaching assistants are helpful.
- While understanding Ms. Chute's desire to ensure teaching assistant positions, Mr. Spivak does not want to jeopardize the use of the grant funds should the district be in need of the funds in the future.
- Ms. Chute explained her concern was because the funding wasn't available at the beginning of the year and the funding isn't guaranteed to be timely when it would be good to have those supports in place in the beginning of the year especially after hearing from the principals as to how important these roles are in the schools.
- Ms. Young expressed that though these positions are not certified, we can appreciate their importance given the class sizes and the makeup of the classes. Ms. Young asked that should the grant funds not come in where else could funding be found for these positions. Chair Lowry replied that there is always the opportunity to ask for a supplemental appropriation. Dr. Paddyfote also added that enrollment would need to be evaluated and there may be opportunity for adjustment.

Ms. Chute moved and seconded by Ms. Young to amend the motion to fund teaching assistants for the kindergarten to 2nd grade levels in the upcoming budget.

The motion failed 2-6-1 (Yay – Chute, Young; Nay – Birk, Indomenico, Lowry, Roell, Spivak, Zirolli; Abstain – Blea)

Ms. Zirolli moved and seconded by Mr. Spivak to adopt the 2018-2019 Board of Education General Fund gross budget in the amount of \$57,478,604.91 having a gross increase of 2.08% over the prior fiscal year.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

B. 17-18/91 Consolidated Title I, II and III Grants – Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Rusack gave an overview of the grants:

- This year, the district was awarded \$115,759 in the Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies grant which is a decrease of \$86,000 from last year and tends to fluctuate from year to year. The money will be used to fund five tutors at PGS, RBS, TBS and AMS which was determined using a poverty formula; the high school did not qualify. Also within the grant, funds must be expended on

homelessness. The district will use \$200 to purchase books/and or materials focused on homeless awareness.

- Title II, Part A – Supporting Effective Instruction is a professional development grant where the district was awarded \$48,209. Funds in the amount of \$9,600 will continue to support TEAM mentors. The professional development funds will support the Understanding by Design and curriculum facilitation consultant (\$25,000); training on culturally responsive practices; and the Welcoming Walkthrough Protocol (\$12,929.79). A portion of the funds will also be allocated to the Farmington Valley Academy Montessori (\$679.21).
- With the Title III – Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students grant, Avon’s portion of the Avon Public Schools and Windsor Locks Consortium for the fiscal year 2018 grant is \$13,082. These funds will be used in their entirety to partially fund a tutor at Pine Grove School to support our English Learners.

Ms. Zirolli moved and seconded by Ms. Chute to approve Item 17-18/91 Consolidated Title I, II and III Grants.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

XII. Superintendent’s Update – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote

A. December Hiring Report – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent

There were some retirements, certified and non-certified hires and a resignation.

Question and Comments

- Mr. Spivak asked for an explanation on a transfer to which Dr. Rusack answered it was due to personal reasons.

B. December Enrollment Report – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent

Enrollment is below what we anticipated in August.

C. College Board AP District Honor Roll

AHS Principal, Mr. Peling, had shared with Dr. Paddyfote that Avon earned the distinction of being 1 of 10 high schools in Connecticut and 1 of 447 school districts nationwide to be on the AP District Honor Roll. The honor roll consists of 447 school districts in the United States and Canada that simultaneously achieved increases in access to Advance Placement courses for a broader number of students and also maintained or improved the rate of their AP students earning scores of 3 or higher on the AP exams.

Questions and Comments

- Mr. Spivak asked for an update on the percentages of students taking College Board AP exams compared to other districts in DRG A and DRG B to which Dr. Rusack said she will follow up with in the January or February meeting. Dr. Paddyfote added that this information will go before the Curriculum & Professional Practices committee before being brought to the Board.

XIII. Communications from Board Members

- Mr. Birk thanked both Ms. Roell and Ms. Zirolli for their service and commitment in serving the Board and the Town.

XIV. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Alternative Resources/Regional Services - Mr. Spivak

No longer exists as a separate committee; consolidated into the Finance committee.

B. Audit - Ms. Young

No longer exists as a separate committee; consolidated into the Finance committee. Awaiting a draft audit letter.

- C. Capital Budget - Mr. Birk
No longer exists as a separate committee; consolidated into the Finance committee.
- D. Communications/School Climate & Culture - Ms. Blea
Ms. Blea reported on the last Communications/School Climate & Culture meeting. Dr. Paddyfote, Dr. Rusack and Dr. Mearman were in attendance and Dr. Rusack reported on the work that is being done in terms of the response to the school climate survey. Additional information can be found on the December 18th Communications/School Climate & Culture meeting minutes.
- E. Finance - Mr. Spivak
Nothing new to report
- F. Personnel - Ms. Roell
Will be discussed in Executive Session
- G. Policy - Ms. Zirolli
Nothing new to report on Policy. Ms. Zirolli wished everyone the best of luck going forward and to enjoy continuing the good work. Ms. Zirolli also addressed Chair Lowry and said that she has an answer to his question: "I stand for and with The truth, way, and life". Chair Lowry explained that Ms. Zirolli's statement was to a question Mr. Lowry generally asks of candidates to take a position for or against truth in 10 words or less.
- H. Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council - Ms. Chute
Nothing new to report, next meeting is in February
- I. Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance - Mr. Birk
The Board of Finance approved the final fiscal year transfers.
- J. Board Representative to Avon Town Council - Ms. Roell
Did not attend the last meeting
- K. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council - Ms. Blea
There was no meeting in December.

XV. Communication from Public

- New Board member, Bogdan Oprica thanked the outgoing members of the Board. He asked about the Algebra adjustment from 8th to 9th grade and whether, the students that transferred to Avon from other states, the common core would have mitigated any issues. Dr. Rusack explained that the issue is not with the common core; not every state has moved Algebra I down to grade 8 and offer Algebra I in the high school.
- A resident commented on the robotics club at Avon High School and asked that the situation be reconciled and also asked if the district would be open to consider 4H volunteers. Dr. Paddyfote commented that this is an issue best left for the principal to respond.

XVI. Executive Session

*Ms. Zirolli moved and seconded by Ms. Roell to enter into Executive Session and to invite in Dr. Paddyfote and Ms. Michaud.
The motion passed 9-0-0.*

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:21 p.m.

- A. Possible action concerning ratification of a proposed successor collective bargaining agreement with the para-educators.

The Board entered Public Session at 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Roell moved and seconded by Ms. Cute to approve the Avon Para-Educators' contract retroactive from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. The new contract represents a total cost increase to the Board as follows:

Year 1 – 2.37% (GWI=1.50%)

Year 2 – 2.01% (GWI=2.00%)

Year 3 – 2.29% (GWI=1.50%)

The total cost increase is 6.67%

Additionally, the Avon Para-Educators will be migrating to an HSA beginning July 1, 2018.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

I. Adjournment

The Board adjourned Public Session by unanimous consent at 8:31 pm.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Zirolli, Board Secretary

Katharine F. Zirolli

December 22, 2017