



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

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Tuesday, March 20, 2018—7:00 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Jackie Blea, David Cavanaugh, Debra Chute, Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Jason Indomenico, Houston Putnam Lowry, Bogdan Oprica, Jay Spivak, Laura Young

Member(s) Absent: None

Administration Present: Dr. B. Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Transition Administrator; 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 Debra Chute, Board Chair at 6:59 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Avon Achievers

A. Jennifer Mason, RBS Staff – in recognition for her work to eradicate outdated mental models of the aged. Mrs. Mason’s thoughtful and creative work in depicting centenarians as active, vital members of the community with deep, meaningful connections to our past teaches the next generation that the aged are valued members of our community.

B. Heidi Hjelle, RBS Staff - in recognition for her exceptional work as a para-educator. The students love her fun and caring personality and her smiling disposition is infectious. Mrs. Hjelle goes above and beyond her typical duties and is also a great resource for other para-educators in the program.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, February 27, 2018

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Laura Young to approve the February 27, 2018 Regular Monthly Meeting minutes as presented.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

V. Communication from Public

Please remember communications are generally limited to 15 minutes as a total maximum for all speakers, with each speaker limited to 3 minutes in accordance with standing Board policy. The Board may waive these limits in exceptional circumstances.

- Margaret Bratton asked if there were a rule, and if not, could one be created, as to how best to handle walk-outs/protests to ensure fairness and consistency no matter the issue.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

- A. Student Representatives Reports – Amir Johnson and Heather Monroe, Student Representatives
- Amir Johnson shared that boys basketball played their championship game at Mohegan Sun and unfortunately lost; hockey just won their championship game and the swimming team also went to their championship meet where some members broke records.
 - SATs are the next day should there be no delay or school closing.
 - March 14 exercised a walk-out where students shared experiences to speak out.
 - Requested a meeting where the Capstone experience can be reviewed.
- B. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs
- The month of February a second payments was made to the transportation company, Specialty Bus Transportation, for \$950,000.
 - All open purchase orders will be reviewed for estimates of year-end encumbrances.
- C. Primary Instructional Materials for Review – Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Asst. Superintendent
- The Curriculum Professional Development Council met on February 15th and proposed three new primary instructional materials – a book for 8th grade English Language Arts and Finance and Calculus textbooks for grade 10 and 11 courses approved earlier in the year. The three texts are: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass; Basic Finance: An Introduction to Financial Institutions, Investments, and Management; and Calculus Early Transcendentals. The requirements of a two thirds vote was met to move the books forward. The books will be available at the Board of Education office for inspection should the Board vote to move these forward.
 - Questions and Comments
 - Mr. Spivak asked for clarification if the Calculus textbook was for ECE Calculus or the AP Calculus BC/ECE Calculus. Dr. Rusack replied this textbook is for the ECE Calculus class should there be enough students enrolled for the course which was approved last year to run for the 2018-2019 school year.
 - Mr. Spivak expressed that due to the limited number of colleges that accept ECE courses, he is concerned that ECE courses not be stand-alone classes but done in conjunction with AP courses.
 - Mr. Oprica asked for more details regarding the dual options of AP and ECE courses. Dr. Rusack reminded the Board that the agenda item was not an approval of the books but to open a 30 day review of the books. The discussion of adopting the text will come after the 30 days.
 - Dr. Rusack added that because many more courses are offered in the high school's course of studies, the high school determines which courses are offered each year guided by the enrollment numbers for the various courses.
 - Mr. Lowry asked if the Calculus textbook would be used for both AP and ECE to which Dr. Rusack replied only for ECE.

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Jason Indomenico to start the 30 day review process for all three books.

The motion carried 7-2-0 (yay – Blea, Cavanaugh, Chute, Fleischman, Indomenico, Lowry, Young; nay – Oprica; Spivak).

- D. APS Course Additions, Changes, and Deletions 2013/2014 - 2018/2019 – Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Asst. Superintendent
- Dr. Rusack reviewed a list showing the progression of course additions, changes and deletions beginning in 2013. The academic level was phased out at the high school in 2015. Running

courses at the high school, even if listed within the Courses of Studies, is determined by the staffing, interests of students for each course and enrollment.

- Questions and Comments
 - Ms. Blea asked how many Chinese teachers would there be by school year 2018-2019 and if it were an elective course in grade 6. Dr. Rusack replied there would be a minimum of four possibly five teacher; also all students take Chinese until it becomes an elective in grade 7 with the choices of Chinese, Spanish and French.
 - Ms. Young stated that as she recalled it cost the district approximately \$90,000 for three teachers and asked what the financial impact would be to add more teachers. Dr. Rusack stated that it would be an additional \$30,000 per teacher and factored into the budget.
 - Ms. Young also inquired how the courses are evaluated to which Dr. Rusack replied they are evaluated by the Confucius Institute (CI) and Avon is working with CI to align their evaluation with Avon's format. The Chinese teachers are certified and evaluated in the same way as all certified teachers.
 - Ms. Young asked whether there were any courses not run due to the 22 positions cut to which Dr. Rusack replied only two courses did not run – graphic design and astronomy.
 - Mr. Spivak asked if the ECE Statistics listed in the course of studies was in conjunction with AP Statistics as the course of studies did not match the listing of the courses presented. Dr. Rusack replied if the courses were offered in conjunction the course name would list the two with a slash (/) and will verify the courses in question.

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

- Curriculum & Professional Practices

Ms. Blea, C&PP Committee Chair, shared that AHS Principal, Mr. Peling, and AMS Principal, Mr. Kimball spoke of how they were working together regarding student discipline and putting a supportive system in place for students. Discussion was also had regarding AP and ECE. Dr. Rusack reviewed the list of additions, deletions and changes with the committee as well.
- Finance

Mr. Spivak, Finance Committee Chair, shared that at the last meeting the photography contracts were discussed especially in regards to student privacy and consolidating the hiring of photography companies. Preschool tuition was also discussed. Dr. Carnemolla added that the district was waiting on legal advice regarding the photography bid process.
- Negotiations

Mr. Indomenico, Negotiations Committee Chair, shared that the committee is trying to reach an agreement with the security personnel but things are unchanged.
- Policy

Ms. Young, Policy Committee Chair, shared that the committee has been working on policies regarding Business and Non-Instructional Operations. Great input was given by the Interim Superintendent and welcomes the thoughts of the new Superintendent for new strategies. The committee will be taking a break in April.

B. Liaison Reports

- Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council

Ms. Chute had nothing to report as the Council has not met; the next meeting will be in May.
- Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance

Mr. Cavanaugh had nothing to report as the next meeting is March 26th.
- Board Representative to Avon Town Council

Mr. Indomenico reported that the March 1st meeting had discussion on the artificial turf field with no action taken. Also discussed was the fund transfer for school security which the Town Manager approved and will now move to the Board of Finance. Next meeting is April 5th.

- Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council
- Ms. Blea had nothing to report and the next meeting will be held on March 21.

VIII. Chair's Report – Debra Chute, Board Chair

The Chair thanked Dr. Paddyfote for her wonderful service as Interim Superintendent and welcomed Dr. Carnemolla to the district. Dr. Carnemolla's welcome reception, held on Monday, March 12th, was well attended. Ms. Chute expressed her anticipation of the energy and vision Dr. Carnemolla brings to the district and looks forward to a productive partnership.

IX. Superintendent's Report – Dr. B. Heston Carnemolla

Dr. Carnemolla thanked the Board for the welcome reception and was glad for the opportunity to meet so many people with the district and community. Dr. Carnemolla stated that she has also taken the time to familiarize herself with the Avon Public Library and Avon Senior Center. Dr. Carnemolla is planning to have "office hours" available to meet with the parents and community and is looking at where best to hold the hours. Dr. Carnemolla thanked Dr. Paddyfote for being a tremendous resource in the transition especially during the middle of a school year.

- A. Hiring Report – included two new hires, a resignation and a transfer
- B. Enrollment – shows APS up 6 students since February
- C. School Security Update – Dr. Carnemolla shared that she has spent a significant amount of time with the Town Manager, Police Chief, Dir. of Security, Dir. of Operation and the Dir. of Fiscal Affairs on the topic of school security.
 - John O'Neill was brought back as the School Resource Officer (SRO) on March 15 and is working closely with the district's Director of Security, Jim Connelly, who is a retired state trooper.
 - There will be full scale review of the district's safety plans and procedures.
 - Funding in the amount of \$932,412 has been requested in the Capitol Improvement Funds for the purposes of school security.
 - Security upgrades, based on the recommendations of the Town, Avon Police and Fire Departments, have been prioritized:
 1. Enhanced security for the main entrances at AMS, RBS and TBS. This includes constructing an entrance foyer and visitor door at the middle school, adequate signage at TBS and a second visitor door at RBS.
 2. Implementing a cyberlock system on all exterior entry ways with programmable key fobs unique to each user identical to the system at the town. This will also allow first responders to have access to the buildings.
 3. Increasing security in the courtyard entranceways at RBS.
 4. Installing exterior cameras at all schools to provide 360 degree coverage; interior cameras beginning with the high school when funds are available. There has been a plan since 2013 to install cameras which is currently being reviewed by the Avon Police Dept.
 5. Security bollards in front of all main entrance doors to protect from oncoming vehicles.
 6. Visitor identification systems for all buildings using state issued ID from all visitors. Does a quick check and produces a temporary visitor's badge.
 - Safety committee meetings are one of the top priorities at each school.
 - Questions and Comments
 - Ms. Young asked if the \$932,412 was a combination of the capital improvement for security plus the grant. Ms. Michaud said the grant will be reimbursed. The money for

school security comes from what was in the capital improvement budget plus the requested transfer from the middle school science labs.

- Mr. Lowry stated that he remains unconvinced that camera are a good idea and would rather have gunshot detectors in the interior of the buildings as it is more economical and does not require manpower to man the cameras.

Houston Putnam Lowry made a motion to close the High School as an open campus effective immediately.

The motion failed as it was not seconded.

Houston Putnam Lowry made a motion to close the High School as an open campus effective the next academic year.

The motion failed as Ms. Blea asked for additional discussion prior to voting on the motion.

- Ms. Blea asked for time to have more discussion in order to allow public input.
- Mr. Fleischman stated that he is in favor of the cameras. To talk about school security only in an active shooter situation fails our duty in providing safety for our students. The cameras provide opportunity to monitor other security risks.
- Mr. Fleischman asked Dr. Carnemolla if the decision to obtain the visitor ID system was on hold as it was decided at a previous meeting to move ahead with the system. Dr. Carnemolla replied that the priority list was recommended in order of importance by the Avon Police Dept. after their assessment and not the priority of funds. Heather Michaud confirmed that the system was voted on and a purchase order is in place.
- Mr. Lowry replied to Mr. Fleischman adding that the cameras will not be motion sensitive and not monitored. They will only be useful in playback which diminish their value substantially. Mr. Fleischman commented that the videos are another tool should there be other security concerns such as school fights; students missing; bullying; an intruder in the building; suspicious bags or packages. All these happen much more regularly in a school and when we don't have interior cameras we fail our students in providing security for them. Mr. Fleischman added that there will be more use of interior cameras than gun detectors.
- Ms. Blea said that she recalled that during the meeting to transfer the funds for school security it was mentioned that the cameras would not just be rewind but would be monitored. There are security monitors who could be watching and it was understood that the videos would be patched to the Avon Police Department in real time. Perhaps clarity is needed.
- Dr. Carnemolla commented that the plan is to have the videos fed live to the Avon Police Dept. but would not be monitored at all times to protect student privacy. However, should there be an incident, the police can see what is happening in real time. This situation is being reviewed by legal counsel to ensure data privacy as required by state and federal statutes. Other logistics are also being reviewed and discussed. To be most effective, it requires someone to monitor the cameras and at present there is personnel that is available to do that but to designate someone to monitor all cameras at all time is not available at this time.
- Mr. Lowry added that technology is available where alerts are sent out when cameras detect motion. Mr. Lowry does not feel it probable that 275 cameras will be monitored but mostly used as a rewind tool.
- Ms. Young recalled the discussion to install cameras was based on best practices used all over the state, not just for active shooter situations but to help with all the situations

Mr. Fleischman mentioned that happen on a daily basis. Monitoring the cameras is part of the design and should be discussed further.

- Ms. Blea asked about the timing of implementing the items discussed. Dr. Carnemolla replied that structural things must be designed to meet code requirements and in order to not disrupt school the target date for installation will be sometime this summer with the hope of completion by the start of the next school year.
- Chair Chute expressed her appreciation for the work being done in conjunction with the Avon Police and Fire Department as it is crucial to have their input and the district proceed with fidelity and integrity.

X. 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. 17-18/102 Approval of Budget Transfers

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Jay Spivak to approve Item 17-18/102 as listed on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

XI. New Business

A. 17-18/103 Avon High School New Course Recommendation

Dr. Rusack explained the CPDC recommended a new year long skinny block course (45 min), Algebra 2 Skills which supports students enrolled in Algebra 2 and is a credit bearing course as a supplemental course. This is a continuation of a sequence as there is already an Algebra I Skills, and a Geometry Skills course which offer more intensive support. The course is not open enrollment but for students who need skill development due to gaps in instruction or learning. A discussion was had with the Director of Guidance regarding the use of the word “skills” in the course title and feels the word is appropriate and transparent on transcripts to colleges.

• Questions and Comments

- Mr. Spivak mentioned that he did not remember approving an Algebra I Skills or Geometry Skills course and asked if the courses needed because of the collapsing of levels. Dr. Rusack replied that those courses did not go through the CPDC or Board. These are courses needed to support a handful of students who are new to the district or struggling with content. Dr. Rusack feels these courses have been successful in helping the students and sees the need for Algebra 2 students.
- Mr. Spivak also asked if the word “skills” might not have a negative effect on transcripts to colleges to which Dr. Rusack replied that skills is a clear indication on the transcripts that this is an instructional class. Showing support is needed is not a bad thing should they need the support in college.
- Ms. Young asked how many students is considered a small handful needing this course to which Dr. Rusack replied 20-30 students over the course of the year. Ms. Young expressed concern that the academic level was eliminated only to add skills level courses. And will skills level courses also be added to other subject courses such as English Language Arts? Dr. Rusack replied that she is not seeing the foundational skill gap.
- Mr. Oprica thanked the administration for providing a solution to a need.
- Ms. Blea expressed her concern about this showing up on transcripts. Ms. Blea also commented on the inconsistency of voting on one Skills course and not having done that on the other two. Also worried about the demographics of the Skills classes regarding

- 504 and IEPs. Dr. Rusack replied that the numbers are equally balanced with all types of students in the classes and not an identifiable subgroup.
- Mr. Fleischman reminded the Board that not everyone is college bound and this population of students may either not be looking at college but we still need to give students the support they need to be successful with our curriculum. Also, different colleges have different expectations and different standards. Some students may see students who need extra support as a strength. We should not make students feel embarrassed and ashamed should they need the additional support. This course helps the students get the support they need.
 - Ms. Blea added that it is only out of concern of what is best for students that she is concerned about the naming of these courses and also wanted to know the timeline as to these supports to ensure the students continue to receive the support they need.
 - Ms. Young is also interested about the timeline and how is this going to be perceived by NEASC? Dr. Rusack commented that it is temporary and will be phased out. She believes it will be viewed as fine as it is a small group of students that need supports and not a whole level of classes.
 - Student Rep, Amir Johnson, added that this prevents students from having to repeat Algebra 2 after having had to drop down to Integrated Algebra. Amir asked how students are identified in needing the support. He asked the Board to be mindful of not just offering more advanced courses earlier on but to think of the students who need the support. Dr. Rusack replied that students get identified through the student assessment performance and then the SRBI model collecting data. Through teacher recommendation and assessments the student is move up to the level of support needed.

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Jason Indomenico to approve Item 17-18/103 Avon High School New Course Recommendation.

The motion carried 8-0-1 (yay – Blea, Cavanaugh, Chute, Fleischman, Indomenico, Lowry, Oprica, Spivak; nay – none; abstained – Young).

B. 17-18/104 Preschool Tuition

Ms. Michaud provided a memo regarding the Preschool program expansion and has asked to increase the per diem tuition for five days vs. the current three days – 180 days vs. 108 days.

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Jeffrey S. Fleischman to approve the motion to increase the three year old program from \$1,670 to \$2,783 for fiscal year 2018-2019. This tuition adjustment is contingent upon the 2018-2019 budget passing which includes increasing the preschool three year old program from three half days per week to five half days per week.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

XII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

- Mr. Fleischman acknowledge Mr. Renkawitz, TBS principal, for attending and speaking at the cub scout pack dinner to show support and encouragement for our students. In addition he expressed support of Mr. Lowry’s suggestion of closing the high school campus, he agrees with Ms. Blea that there needs to be more robust conversation with building administration.
- Ms. Blea asked for confirmation that closing the high school campus falls on the Board. Also, Ms. Blea asked the district to focus on the minority recruitment of minorities as there are some CREC activities coming up in March.

- Mr. Indomenico echoed Mr. Fleischman's comments about the open/close campus debate. He feels that this is an issue people care about and should be added to a future agenda to allow people to show up for conversation.

XIII. Communication from the Public

There was no public communication.

XIV. Executive Session

A. Discussion of Pending Litigation Doe et al. vs. Mastoloni et al.

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Jeffrey S. Fleischman to move into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation Doe et al. vs. Mastoloni et. al

Invited to join the Executive Session were: Dr. B. Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Transition Administrator; Attorney Joanna Zelman.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

The Board recessed at 8:31 pm.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:41 pm.

The Board left Executive Session and entered Public Session at 9:42 pm.

XV. Possible Action related to Pending Litigation Doe et al. vs. Mastoloni et al.

Houston Putnam Lowry moved and seconded by Jackie Blea to approve the settlement, in the amount of \$62,500.00 to be paid by the Avon Board of Education's insurer, the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency on behalf of the Avon Board of Education, in full and final settlement and release of all claims made or that could have been made in the lawsuit of Doe, et al. vs. Mastoloni, et al. The final terms of which are to be negotiated by the Superintendent of Schools. The decision to settle this claim is for purely business reasons only. The Avon Board of Education denies any liability.

The motion carried 9-0-0.

XVI. Adjournment

The Board adjourned Public Session by unanimous consent at 9:43 pm.

Minutes Prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S Fleischman

3/29/2018