



Monthly Meeting
Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury Road, Avon, Connecticut

Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility.

Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Community Room

Minutes

Attendance

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

Member(s) Absent: Jackie Blea

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Roberto Medic, Director of Human Resources; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

I. Call to Order

The Board was called to order in public session by Debra Chute, Board Chair at 7:00 pm
The mission statement was also read by Chair Chute.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Avon Achiever -

A. Jenessa Blascak (PGS Staff) – in recognition for being a valuable member of the Pine Grove School community. Ms. Blascak’s work as a reading specialist and instructional coach has made a positive impact and her efforts to implement new instructional programs and approaches has shown her to be a true leader.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, February 26, 2019
Mr. Lowry moved, Ms. Young seconded, to approve the February 26, 2019 minutes.
The motion carried 8-0-0.

V. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Summary of District Test Results: Smarter Balanced Assessment; Connecticut SAT School Day Assessment; and Advanced Placement Participation and Results - Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent and Jodi Kryzanski, Program Director

Dr. Rusack and Ms. Kryzanski shared the 2018 results for Avon Public School's CT Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments that was administered in grades 3-8; CT School Day SAT Assessment for grade 11; Advanced Placement Class participation and exams; and the next generation Science Standards Assessment for grades 5, 8 and 11 and explained the various components and results of the tests.

The 2018 CT Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment is required by CT Statute that students take mastery exams in reading, writing and math. This test is administered to all students in grades 3-8. The content is based on the Connecticut Core Standards which define learning expectations for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level and was first administered in 2015. Ms. Kryzanski reported that Avon students continue to perform well on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment.

The 2018 Connecticut School Day SAT Assessment is the primary accountability measure used in Connecticut for all 11th grade students and also satisfies the state statute that states all grade 11 students be administered a nationally recognized college readiness assessment approved by the State Board of Education that measures essential skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Avon Public Schools' students are ranked among the highest in Connecticut (5th in English Language Arts and 3rd in mathematics).

A five year overview of the AP course participations and exams was given. In 2017-2018 school year 20 AP courses were offered. In a five year period, the district has gone from 475 students taking the courses with 440 students taking the exams to this past year of 730 students taking AP course and 640 students taking the exams. There was a decrease of student who scored three or higher on the exams showed a decrease of 93% to 85%.

The Board continued the discussion in regards to what the results showed and asked for clarification on standard deviations to which Ms. Kryzanski said she would return with an answer after consulting the website. Ms. Kryzanski reminded the Board that these standardized assessments are only one way of looking at student growth and skill against the common core standards. The Board thanked Dr. Rusack and Ms. Kryzanski for all the data. Board members asked how this data could be used to support the work within the District and what the Board could do to further help. Questions were asked if dips in scores might indicate issues with the curriculum and instruction in specific grades and whether there was any indication to show whether students are doing better or learning more since the inception of the common core to which Ms. Kryzanski replied that ultimately when students are assessed again in grade 11 their scores are consistently high which shows positive growth, though there may be subgroups that need additional attention. Board members were concerned that participation in AP courses seemed low even though Avon has high performing students and whether the College Board's AP Potential might help identify and encourage students who should be taking AP courses. Dr. Nestler-Rusack and Ms. Kryzanski replied that they would come back with some of the answers after further study of the issues. The Board acknowledged their excitement to see that AP participation has increased which indicates more students taking the risk of post-secondary experiences.

- B. Student Representative Report – Addisen Ganiats & Amir Johnson, AHS Student Representatives
Addisen Ganiats reported that the classroom SAT exam will be held next week; Spring sports have started; and the college fair is scheduled for April 1 at 6:30pm.

C. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs

Ms. Michaud stated that the Finance Committee meeting was not held in March. There was minimal change of .5 % between January's and February's financial report. The unencumbered balance is 13%. The second transportation payment which was hoped to have been made at the end of February was not made due to reconciling issues but was cut in March for \$854,000 bringing the total expense to date to \$1.9 million with a last payment in June of approximately less than \$100,000. All schools have been asked to review all open purchase orders and encumbrances. Additional transfers will be coming through as more variances are rectified. Ms. Michaud also said that the District did not receive from Open Choice the amount as expected as Avon was only at 3% of Open Choice enrollment not 4% as hoped. However, the District was notified that the Early Beginnings grant will be received again of about \$90,000. A supplemental request will be submitted when the funds are received.

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair
In Ms. Blea's absence, Chair Chute reminded Board members that minutes are in the packet.
2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair
Mr. Spivak stated that the Finance Committee did not meet in March, but will meet Thursday, April 4 at 6 pm.
3. Negotiations – Jason Indomenico, Chair
Mr. Indomenico had nothing to report.
4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair
The Policy Committee will be meeting March 26 to discuss medication administration, sexual harassment and dress code.

B. Liaison Reports

1. Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council – Bogdan Oprica and Deb Chute, Board Rep.
Ms. Chute shared about the last Curriculum Professional Development Council full day meeting held – 21st Century Skills was defined; the SRBI process was closely looked at as to improving the District's alignment with State requirements; a speaker from CREC spoke of restorative practices within the school setting.
2. Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance – David Cavanaugh, Board Rep.
Mr. Cavanaugh stated that the Board of Finance had not met, next meeting will be on April 1 for the Budget Workshop.
3. Board Representative to Avon Town Council – Jason Indomenico, Board Rep.
Town Council met on March 7 with discussion concerning potential impact with the Governor's proposal on teacher pension cost share and HB 5249 regarding the turf fill which the Town Council did not think was a concern, next meeting April 4. Turf field committee is meeting March 20 to recommend to the town council what contractor to use.
4. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council – Jackie Blea, Board Rep.
No update was given due to Ms. Blea's absence.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Chair Chute had no update to share and move the meeting to the next agenda item.

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

A. Hiring Report

The Superintendent shared that there was not much to report in regards to hiring, some resignations and a change to a nursing position.

B. Enrollment Reports

The enrollment remains steady, up 4 from last month, fluctuations are due to people moving in and out of town.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Carnemolla shared that the work on other goals on the Strategic Plan are starting to move forward. ELA vertical team, held first meeting last month with another one next Tuesday. On Thursday, the first meeting of the Social Emotional Learning workgroup will be held with all facets of staff who are volunteering to meeting after hours to reduce time staff is out of buildings.

The Superintendent acknowledged the Board as March is Board Appreciation Month. Dr. Carnemolla thanked the Board members for their services and the countless hours of work given in support of the school system that many times people do not realize is done without compensation. There are 166 public Boards of Education in the state of Connecticut which serve over half a million students and no Board member is paid.

X. Consent Calendar

A. 18-19/40 Approval of Budget Transfers

B. 18-19/41 Approval of Avon High School Course Proposal Recommendations

Mr. Lowry moved, Mr. Cavanaugh seconded, to approve Items 18-19/40-41 as listed on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried 8-0-0

XI. New Business

A. 18-19/42 Discussion concerning Proposed Legislation regarding Regionalization of Schools

Based on the tenor in the community and questions Board members received the Board clarified their position of the proposed legislation on regionalization of schools. Many Board members presented testimony in opposition of the bills and the voice and presence of parents showed how many were opposed to regionalization. Deadline for the Education Committee to pass this legislation is April 1 and it is anticipated that it will not happen this year. Testimonies are available online, with 300 written testimonies submitted, zero were in favor. Board members stated they have an obligation to the community to be watching the regionalization situation and any future bills like this very carefully and will take action/take a stance if needed. The Board suggested the Superintendent look into having Board members' names be put on the list of CT Conference of Municipalities in hopes of being picked by the governor for continued discussion. Regionalization will take away local control; Town Council and Board of Finance would most likely take the same stand with the Board of Education, however, shared services is different from forced regionalization and perhaps the District should explore ways of sharing services internally with the Town or externally with other districts. The Superintendent reminded the Board that many organizations including CABA and CAPSS are watching the situation very carefully.

B. 18-19/43 Possible Action on the Proposed Legislation regarding Regionalization of Schools

On a motion made by Mr. Lowry, seconded by Ms. Young, it was voted:

RESOLVED: The Avon Board of Education opposes any legislation concerning the forced or incentivized regionalization of public schools. We recognize that we have been elected to serve on

behalf of Avon students. We have an excellent school system that has attracted many families to our town. As a local Board of Education, we work together in a non-partisan manner, to provide the best possible education for students, while upholding our fiscal responsibility to the community. Any forced outside authority over our schools would have a negative impact on the education of our students.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

C. 18-19/44 Proposed 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

The Superintendent brought to the Board's attention a proposed school year calendar for 2020-2021. Board members discussed the thoughts of a possible March break, starting school after Labor Day, and the timing of April vacation. The Superintendent reminded the Board of issues that conflict with staffing that may have children in other districts as well as the standardized testing window which opens in March. Likewise, a break in April instead of March allows for the possibility of make-up days in April, when necessary.

Mr. Lowry moved, Mr. Cavanaugh seconded, to approve the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar as presented.

The motion carried 6-2-0. Yay – Mr. Cavanaugh, Ms. Chute, Mr. Fleischman, Mr. Indomenico, Mr. Oprica, Ms. Young. Nay – Mr. Lowry, Mr. Spivak.

XII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Mr. Oprica asked for suggestions on how to be proactive to the legislation being proposed. Mr. Lowry stated he is watching the situation closely and will let the others know if there are recommendations for action. Put on the list of people of those who will be considered. Mr. Lowry suggested that the District can consider hiring a lobbyist to keep an eye on the situation if needed.

XIII. Communication from the Public

Sarah Beaudoin, an Avon parent, thanked the Board for being an advocate and expressed her concern that middle level courses are being removed. Ms. Beaudoin asked the Board to consider what the rationale of getting rid of the middle level was when there is a concern of the emotional needs as well.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Lowry moved, Mr. Cavanaugh seconded, to adjourn at 8:37 pm.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, March 26, 2019

Minutes are approved at the next regular monthly Board meeting, and any corrections to the minutes, if needed, will be made at that time.