



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, February 27, 2024, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Library

Avon High School
510 West Avon Road
Avon, CT 06001

Minutes

Attendance

Board Members Present:; Christopher Campbell; Debra Chute, Board Chair; Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary; Ramesh Kandipilli; Lynn Katz; Nicole Russo; Thej Singh, Board Vice-Chair; Sarah Thompson

Board Members Absent: Suzanne Szekeres

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Jess Giannini, Assistant Superintendent; Roberto Medic, Assistant Superintendent; Susan Russo, Business Manager

I. **Call to Order**

Board Chair Deb Chute called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

A. A.Roll Call

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

III. **Mission Statement**

Ms. Chute read the Board's Mission Statement.

IV. **Recognition/Presentations:**

Avon High School student Cameron Kraft was recognized by the board for his hard work and dedication to creating and making the Central Office Signs (depicting each office).

V. **Approval of Minutes**

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting minutes of January 16, 2024

Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of January 16, 2024, Ms. Katz seconded.

Motion passed 8-0-0

VI. **Communication from Public**

No communication from the public

VII. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representatives Report - Lillian Peng and Nikolai Meltser, AHS Student Representatives. Nikolai was not present Lillian read the report for all schools:

AHS: Black Student Union honored the contributions of African Americans to our nation's history through curated morning announcements; Literary Arts hosted an Open Mic Night; Senator Dodd visited and spoke at the high school; Squash team won the national championship; Girls indoor track came in 3rd in state Class M championships; Rhapsody, the high school's acapella group did singing telegrams to raise money for a Roaring Brook student battling cancer; 16 students qualified for the US Biology Olympiad Semifinals.

AMS: Arioso Choir sang at the Wolfpack game; Artwork of AMS students has been displayed in the public library for the month of February; 2 AMS students qualified for state MathCounts; Winter dance last Friday.

TBS: Choir and Orchestra concerts were held in January; Battle of the Books is underway until March 15.

PGS: Feb. 7 was World Read Aloud Day; Family Skate Night took place on the 11th; Boosterthon Dance Party will be held on the 29th.

RBS: Is rehearsing for their production of Finding Nemo

B. Financial Report – Susan Russo, Business Manager

Ms. Susan Russo gave a summary of the financials for the period ending January 31, 2024:

- There were variances in the Administrative budget line due to Mr. Renkawitz leaving and Ms. Lisa Cleveland taking his place at Roaring Brook.
- Non Certified had some deficits as we are finding the nurses needing to work extra hours (field trips etc.) and the needs of the students needing paraeducators rising (one to one); and there has been some staff movement in the custodial and maintenance department.
- Other expenses saw HVAC deficits - have begun to separate out the HVAC costs from all other expense costs to evaluate routine and repair costs for each school.
- Tuition costs are slightly higher than expected/budgeted
- Visitor Management system has been installed in the Central Office
- An item brought to the attention of the Board is the negative balance in Nutrition Services; there has been a decrease in students handing in the Free/Reduced lunch application, so as a district, we have been trying to get the word out to parents to load money into the accounts of their students, and/or fill out the Free/Reduced Lunch application if applicable, as well as reminding them to pay the balance owed on their account.

Ms. Thompson asked if this was typical amount in the negative balance and Ms. Russo answered that no, this is higher and not typical of what they have seen.

- SPED costs have increased due to increased student needs
- Overall for the end of January: Just over 3.5 M or 5.34% unencumbered, last year at this time the unencumbered amount was just over 4.0 M or 6.24%, which can be directly ties to SPED tuition

VIII. Committees & Liaison Reports

B. Committee Reports-

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Ms Katz reported that the last meeting was February 13th where part of the meeting Professional Learning was discussed and Ms. Katz wanted to give a shout out to all those that research and plan Professional Learning for the whole district: Jess Giannini, Jodi Kryzanski, Elizabeth Ferry, Tiffany Fox and all the Curriculum Leaders. Also discussed were the primary instructional materials that are on the agenda tonight.

2. Finance – Ms. Chute reported that the last meeting was February 13th and wanted to point out that there is a donation letter on the Consent Calendar from the Avon High School PTO to support multiple opportunities for students, and wanted to thank them for that. Next meeting will be 4/16.
3. Negotiations – Ms. Chute reporting for Ms. Szekeres that they are in the beginning stages of talks for Custodian/Maintenance Contract as well as the Paraeducator/Interventionists/Nutrition Services Contract.
4. Policy – Ms. Singh reported that the committee met on January 30th and those policies are on the agenda tonight. Next meeting was to be 3/5 but will need to be rescheduled.

C. Liaison Report

1. Capital Region Education Council – Mr. Campbell reported that there was no meeting this month but a forum was held where over 50 Superintendents were present and the major topics of discussion were the funding for Magnet schools and the discussion on diverse faculty. Next meeting will be on March 20th.

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

D. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute reported that she and Dr. Carnemolla met with Representatives Currey, Kavros DeGraw and Senator Seminara regarding the ECS situation, and were able to understand the process better and share their concerns. Ms. Chute thanked the administration from each school for sending out the newsletters every week, it is appreciated.

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

A. Hiring Report

Mr. Medic spoke to the hiring of long term substitutes to cover medical leaves of staff members as well as hiring additional Paraeducators for the growing needs of our SPED population. Most of the new hires and resignations are non-certified this month. In the next few weeks they will be focusing on staffing for the 2024-2025 school year.

B. Enrollment Report -

Dr. Carnemolla reported that we are only up 8 students from this time last year, we continue to take in Kindergarten registrations, and monitor how PreK looks for class sizes and student needs.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Carnemolla discussed several updates at this time:

- The Math Pilot program continues to move forward.
- Stop the Bleed, medical training for all staff.
- Administrative Team Professional Learning- Learned about data management with Performance Matters Platform, thank you to Elizabeth Ferry and Cynthia Feivelson for coming out and showing us what we can do with data desegregation. Excited to use this new tool going forward.
- Bridges program is going strong.
- Mr. Giannini and Mr. Sturm are continuing to do the TBS self study.

D. Updates

- There had to be a change to this year's school calendar to accommodate the Primary Election voting. Primary voting is on April 2nd, and schools will be closed as it is not feasible to run school with voting going on, but teachers will have a Professional

Learning day on April 2nd. Therefore there will be school on March 15th, which was the original Professional Learning day . The town tried to look for other places to vote, but according to the law, Primary voting had to take place in the same place as the actual vote in the fall, and therefore had to be held at the schools.

- Graduation is June 12th, working on all aspects of that event now.
- PTO Leadership is in full swing planning end of year events, busy with dances,lunches, finishing fundraisers etc.
- There is early stage planning of an 8th grade celebration, more details to come.
- Project graduation is in full swing with the car parade and other events being planned.

XI. Consent Calendar

23-24/31- Budget Transfers

23-24/32 - Donation from Avon High School PTO to AHS (\$4,597.99)

Ms. Katz made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, Mr. Fleischman seconded.

Motion Passed 8-0-0

XII. Old Business-

23-24/30 - Appointment of PACTAC Advisory Council Member

Nutmeg TV consists of 8 towns, and this person will represent the community and have a seat at the table to give input on community programming.

Ms. Chute moved to appoint Marc Reich to the Plainville Area Cable TV Advisory Council, Mr. Fleischman seconded.

Motion Passed 8-0-0

XIII. New Business

23-24/33 -4118.51 - Employee Use of District Computer Systems and Electronic

Dr. Carnemolla stated that there are small updates from Board Counsel to add in Smartwatches and social media sites to the policy.

Ms. Singh made a motion to approve revised policy 4118.51, Ms. Nicole Russo seconded the motion.

Motion passed 8-0-0

23-24/34 - 5112.1 - Admission to public Schools at or before age of 5

Dr. Carnemolla mentioned there was a previous discussion for this policy at the previous Board meeting, legislature changed the law to have students be 5 by September 1st to be eligible to enter Kindergarten (Avon policy previously was January 1st). Exceptions for those not the age of 5 by September 1st can petition to the school district and have the child assessed for eligibility to enter Kindergarten before age 5.

Ms. Singh made a motion to approve new policy 5112.1 Admission to Public Schools before Age 5, Ms. Thompson seconded the motion

Motion passed 8-0-0

23-24/35 - 5112 -Eligibility to Attend Avon Public Schools

Dr. Carnemolla stated that this policy had to be updated as it is related to policy 5112.1. This policy generally revolves around residency and eligibility, but a portion does refer to admission to Kindergarten that needed to be amended due to the new legislature regarding being 5 years old by September 1st.

***Ms. Singh made a motion to approve revised policy 5112, Eligibility to Attend Avon Public Schools, Ms. Katz seconded
The motion passed 8-0-0***

23-24/36 - 5131.71 - Student Use of Districts Computer Systems and Internet Safety

Dr. Carnemolla mentioned that this policy mirrors the employee policy about computer use, with the same additions of Smartwatches and Social Media sites. One other change that the Policy Committee recommended was to add a paragraph found in the employee policy, which references one's privacy, into the student policy to be consistent. Dr. Carnemolla noted that the paragraph needed to be edited to say 'student' instead of 'employee'.

***Ms. Singh made a motion to approve the revised policy 5131.71, with the edits discussed, Ms. Nicole Russo seconded.
The motion passed 8-0-0***

23-24/37 - 5144 - Student Discipline

Dr. Carnemolla began by stating that this policy gets updated numerous times because generally speaking this whole policy is connected to the laws and statutes we have to abide by. Tonight there are only a couple of changes, one being considering individual circumstances for each student discipline matter, and to whenever possible reinforce positive student behavior/restorative practices so that it does not require engagement with the discipline system. The other change is to add AI, Artificial Intelligence, and the misuse of AI.

***Ms. Singh made a motion to approve revised policy Student Discipline, Mr. Kandipilli seconded.
The motion passed 8-0-0***

23-24/38 - 5144.4 - Recess and Play Based Learning

Dr. Carnemolla began by stating that this policy is required by CT General Statutes, ensuring that play based learning is being taught in the classroom. For Avon Public Schools, this isn't an issue, we already do this here in Avon. Because it was not recognized as a form of learning for some districts, it was decided by the state to make it mandatory.

***Ms. Singh made a motion to approve the revised policy 5144.4, Recess and Play Based Learning, Ms. Katz seconded.
The motion passed 8-0-0***

23-24/39 - 6210 - Parental Access to Instructional Materials

Dr. Carnemoll stated that we are ahead of the game here in Avon, but the statute recently changed to ensure all boards of education in CT adhere to these mandates. Our curriculum is 90% or more online, and available to anyone to view, this is also to ensure that parents have access to the instructional materials that are being utilized in class.

***Ms. Singh made a motion to approve revised policy Parental Access to Instructional Materials, Mr. Campbell seconded.
The motion passed 8-0-0***

23-24/40 Primary Instructional Material- Novel Rebecca- CPDC met on February 1st, and 2 recommendations came out of that meeting. These 2 books will remain on review at the District Office until the 30 days are concluded.

The novel, Rebecca, will be utilized for 12th graders taking the ECE True Crime Then and Now elective English Course. This novel will be used when studying societal concerns and modern day crime, and how it is woven into novels. The Teacher will use this as a primary resource, so all students will read this text.

This has not yet been out for review the full 30 days, so will be approved at the next Board Meeting.

23-24/41 Primary Instructional Material - Social Studies 8th grade textbook

Mr. Giannini stated that the second Primary Instructional Material up tonight is the 8th grade Social Studies textbook, American History: Beginnings to 1877 (My World Interactive). Mr. Giannini began by saying that last year the 7-12 Social Studies curriculum was revised and the committee realized a great new option was available for 8th grade social studies textbooks and decided after discussion and a vote that this textbook was the best option to move forward. This textbook is an updated version of the one the students have now, but is more interactive, more multimedia experiences and a larger library for online platforms.

This has not yet been out for review the full 30 days, so will be approved at the next Board Meeting.

XIV. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.

XV. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Ms. Katz wanted to say she had a blast reading to the 4th graders at PGS this past week. Kudos to the administration and the Library Media Specialist Ms. Angela Antonelli.

Mr. Campbell wanted to give a shout out to the Bingo night at RBS, and the next one is March 8th.

Ms. Thompson wanted to talk about the kindness parade at RBS, but knows it is only one event/theme that happens throughout all our schools.

Ms. Nicole Russo wanted to tell everyone about Finding Nemo Junior, the production being put on at RBS. She also wanted to tell everyone that AMS Arioso did an amazing job at the Wolfpack game singing the National Anthem, and wanted to thank all the teachers and everyone doing such a great job supporting the arts.

XVI. Adjournment

At 8:07 p.m. Mr. Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Thompson seconded. Motion passed 8-0-0

Minutes prepared by Christine Sardinkas, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary