



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, June 21, 2022, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Auditorium

Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001

Minutes

Attendance

Board Members Present: Jackie Blea; Debra Chute, Board Chair; Lynn Katz; Lisa Seminara; Thej Singh; Liz Sommerkorn; Jay Spivak, Board Vice Chair; Laura Young

Board Members Absent: Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Roberto Medic, Director of Human Resources; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent; Susan Russo, Business Manager

I. **Call to Order**

Deb Chute, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

A. **Roll Call**

Ms. Chute conducted a roll call of Board members and administrators.

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

III. **Mission Statement**

Ms. Chute stated the Board's mission statement and instructed the audience on instructions should anyone want to speak during public comment.

IV. **Recognition**

A. **Avon Achievers**

TBS – William Duffy, Principal; and Elizabeth Salvatore, Asst. Principal, presented:

- Chloe Ingves and Sofia Juliano (students) for exemplifying the school's CARES traits of Care, Acceptance, Respect, Empathy, and Safety. As a result, they have made TBS a better school community.

AMS – Jess Giannini, Principal; and Kristina Wallace, Asst. Principal, presented:

- Lauren Titone and Hannah Chiu (students) for being selected as CABA Student Leadership Award winners honoring them for their enthusiastic leadership skills, participation in extra-curricular activities and service to the community.

- Donna Beaudoin (staff) as she wraps up her 35-year career in Avon from Avon Public Schools; teaching students with a focus on their best interest, thoughtfulness, kindness and grace.

B. Recognition of Retiring Administrators

Dr. Carnemolla and Board Chair, Deb Chute, remarked on the District administrators who will be retiring at the end of the school year and presented each with a parting gift. Board members also shared their gratitude to each retiring administrator for their commitment to the District.

- Eileen O’Neil, APS Administrator
- Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent
- Michael Renkawitz, AHS Principal
- Dr. Robert Vojtek, APS Administrator

C. Recognition of Board Member

Board Chair, Deb Chute, recognized the service of Jay Spivak as Board Vice Chair having served three full terms in addition to agreeing to help the Board fill in for another year due to an exiting Board member. Board members and the Superintendent also expressed their appreciation for Mr. Spivak’s dedicated work and service.

- Jay Spivak, term - Jan. 2010 thru June 2022

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of May 17, 2022

Lynn Katz made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of May 17, 2022, Laura Young seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0

B. Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes of May 31, 2022

Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of May 31, 2022, Lisa Seminara seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0

VI. Communication from Public

Board Chair, Deb Chute, reminded the public of the guidelines for speaking during the meeting.

Erin Dawson, Avon resident and APS parent, commented on her excitement for Avon High School students to have the opportunity to attend the European Study Field Trip. Ms. Dawson asked to ensure that opportunities like these are made available to all students and there is no financial barrier for those who may have limited funding

VII. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representative Report – Charlotte Parry, AHS Student Representative

No student report was given.

B. Financial Report – Susan Russo, Business Manager

Ms. Russo informed the Board that the Finance Committee did not meet in June and therefore there was nothing to report.

VIII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair

The C&PP Committee did not meet; the next meeting will likely be in September.

2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair

The Finance Committee did not meet; there was nothing to report.

3. Negotiations – Deb Chute, Chair

Ms. Chute reported that negotiations with Administrators will start this summer and are currently working with the Safety and Security Specialists.

4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair

Policy Committee also did not meet and will most likely meet in August.

B. Liaison Report

1. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council – Jackie Blea, Board Rep.

Ms. Blea reminded Board members she had sent out links that they may find informative regarding CREC news. Also, an Open Choice working group has been formed with participating districts. Kristina Jordan, who runs the Open Choice program, has had very positive things to say about the Avon administrators as supportive partners in the program.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute thanked everyone for their work and efforts in achieving another successful school year.

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

A. Hiring Report

Mr. Medic, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the Hiring Report for June and stated that the hiring continues for staff to being in the 2022-2023 school year which includes certified and non-certified positions. The District is finalizing all certified hires as well as administrative hires. Mr. Medic also recognized those who retired as well as those who opted to no longer work in the District. Dr. Carnemolla introduced Tasonn Haynes, Family and Student Support Coordinator. The Superintendent updated the Board on the search for a new Assistant Superintendent as well as the second search for a new Principal for Avon High School.

B. Enrollment Report

The Superintendent reviewed the Enrollment Report explaining the fluctuations due to ongoing registrations with increases in PreK and Kindergarten with the increase of younger families moving into town. Dr. Carnemolla stated that she is looking forward to and will share with the District and Board information that will be provided by the enrollment study which is currently being done.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Focus Groups were conducted at the Middle and High School with approximately 300 students. The full report is not yet completed as data is still being processed. The annual Connectedness and Climate survey has been distributed to students with the surveys completed with PGS, RBS, TBS and AMS students in grades 3 and up. AHS students will be reminded to complete the surveys for their feedback.

Dr. Rusack informed the Board that all the K-5 writing units have been completed and will be published on the website as drafts. Curriculum work continues with K-5 Social Studies having begun today; which it was embedded in the English Language Arts curriculum, it will stand alone. Work also continues on the new Black and Latino studies for the Fall. Dr. Carnemolla remarked that while curriculum work is a big part of the Strategic Plan it is never done. She thanked Dr. Rusack, Ms. Kryzanski, administrators, Department Coordinators and teachers for their endless work and putting the District in a much better place for the upcoming school year. Action steps related to Teaching and Learning will be reviewed on the Blueprint moving forward stated the Superintendent. Dr. Carnemolla thanked Dr. Rusack for her work.

D. Updates

Dr. Carnemolla shared that the Technology Department has collected technology devices from staff and students with numerous updates that will be done to staff laptops as well as inventorying student devices before redistributing them next school year.

Ms. Russo informed the Board on the status of the Pine Grove alarm system was approved in the budget and is trying to get it through the bid process with the Town. However, with supply chain issues, the bids came back \$118,000 more than was approved and now the Town has asked that the project be held off to wait for additional bids, for prices to come down or the additional \$118,000 be included in the next Capital budget request for work to be done during the Summer of 2023. Ms. Russo clarified that the current alarm system is working but needed to be brought up to the standards of other alarm systems in the District.

Dr. Carnemolla thanked the school PTOs for their generous support and donations of the schools which help provide students with opportunities that might be outside the norm of what the District provides such as the recent hugely successful celebrations at Pine Grove School, 30 Year Anniversary; Blazer's Bash at Roaring Brook School, Blazer's Bash; the Car Parade at Avon High School; and the recognition for Mr. Renkawitz. In response to an earlier comment, the PTO also helps to provide for students and families in need, which has increased in the recent years.

XI. Consent Calendar

- A. 21-22/73 Approval of Budget Transfers
- B. 21-22/74 Approval of AHS European Study Tour to Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, and Krakow from April 5-16, 2023
- C. 21-22/75 Approval of Donation of Musser 3 Octave Xylo-Rimba from Mr. Timothy Urso to TBS, valued at \$800.00
- D. 21-22/76 Approval of Donation of \$808.00 from RBS PTO to RBS' Orientation Day
- E. 21-22/77 Approval of Donation of \$4,900.00 from RBS PTO to RBS' classroom stipends
- F. 21-22/78 Approval of Donation of staff appreciation lunches from RBS PTO to RBS staff, valued at \$4,051.23
- G. 21-22/79 Approval of Donation of playground enhancements from RBS PTO to RBS, valued at \$2,167.87
- H. 21-22/80 Approval of Donation of grade level storytellers from RBS PTO to RBS, valued at \$2,500.00
- I. 21-22/81 Approval of Contract for Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent
- J. 21-21/82 Approval of Contract for Assistant Director of Nutrition Services
- K. 21-22/83 Approval of Contract for Assistant to the Superintendent
- L. 21-22/84 Approval of Contract for Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- M. 21-22/85 Approval of Contract for Business Manager
- N. 21-22/86 Approval of Contract for Bus Driver/Courier
- O. 21-22/87 Approval of Contract for Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant
- P. 21-22/88 Approval of Contract for Database Coordinator
- Q. 21-22/89 Approval of Contract for Director of Human Resources
- R. 21-22/90 Approval of Contract for Director of Nutritional Services
- S. 21-22/91 Approval of Contract for Director of Operations
- T. 21-22/92 Approval of Contract for Director of Security & Safety
- U. 21-22/93 Approval of Contract for Finance Assistant
- V. 21-22/94 Approval of Contract for Human Resources Specialist
- W. 21-22/95 Approval of Contract for Licensed Registered Occupational Therapist
- X. 21-22/96 Approval of Contract for Licensed Registered Occupational Therapist

- Y. 21-22/97 Approval of Contract for Payroll Specialist
- Z. 21-22/98 Approval of Contracts for School Nurses
- AA.21-22/99 Approval of Contract for Senior Network Administrator
- BB.21-22/100 Approval of Contracts for Technology Support Specialists

Laura Young asked to remove Item B 21-22/7 Approval of AHS European Study Tour to Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, and Krakow from the Consent Calendar for further discussion.

Board Chair Chute approved the request and moved the item to New Business for discussion. Hearing no other requests made a motion to approve the remaining items on the Consent Calendar as presented, Thej Singh seconded. The motion passed 8-0-0.

XI. Old Business

- A. 21-22/70 Approval of Primary Instructional Materials Recommendations

Dr. Rusack reminded the Board that the recommended primary instructional materials discussed at the last Board meeting underwent a 30 day review period which just concluded. The material seeking approval are:

- *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr for ELA Grade 6
- *It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime, Stories from South African Childhood (Young Reader's Version)* by Trevor Noah for ELA Grade 7
- *Calculus and Its Applications, 14th Edition* by Goldstein, Lay, Schneider, Asmar for Mathematics Grade 12
- *PFIN7* by Billinsley, Gitman, Joehnk for Mathematics (Business) Grades 9-12
- *Discovering Our Past: A History of the World* by Jackson J. Spieglvogel for Social Studies Grade 7
- *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, 11th Edition* by Kamensky, Sheriff, Blight, Chudacoff/Logevall, Baily for Social Studies Grade 11

Lynn Katz made a motion to approve the Primary Instructional Materials Recommendations as presented. Laura Young seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

XII. New Business

- A. 21-22/101 Ratification of Superintendent's Contract for 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2025

Board Chair, Deb Chute, stated that the Board recently conducted an evaluation of the Superintendent and expressed her sincere gratitude of the Superintendent's work in the District and with the Board as well as her commitment to the students and collaborative spirit with the staff. Each Board member shared their appreciation and thoughts of the Superintendent. Dr. Carnemolla thanked everyone for their kind words and expressed her appreciation for being allowed to do what she is so passionate to do.

- B. 21-22/102 2022-2023 Board of Education Meeting Dates

Lisa Seminara made a motion to approve the 2022-2023 Board of Education Meeting Dates as presented. Liz Sommerkorn seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

- C. 21-22/103 End of Year Fund Allocation Request

Ms. Russo reviewed her memo showing anticipated savings based on the encumbrances and known liabilities and reminded the Board that the numbers change on a daily basis as payroll and invoices are processed. The anticipated savings is around \$750,000 with the largest of these savings from certified staff new hires that were placed on lower steps. Another area of savings is

due to money saved from the pension and OPEB or other post-employment benefits due to market conditions right now. Magnet enrollment continues to decline as are prices for ChromeBooks and laptops. Ms. Russo proposed buying some of the budgeted items for next school year; outfit the high school community room to fix technical issues in the room and allow it to be used for Board and community meetings; purchase additional textbooks and stock bookshelves in grades K through six and to offset the OPEB liability with the saved money.

Jay Spivak made a motion to approve the End of Year Fund Allocation Request as presented.

Jackie Blea seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

D. 21-22/104 Supplemental Appropriation – Open Choice Tuition

Ms. Russo explained the monies received through the Open Choice Attendance Grant stating that every year Avon participates in the Open Choice program funds are received from the State for our attendance of students in the program and receives an additional allocation for the preschool students through the program. This enrollment number is based on the October 2st enrollment numbers given to the State. The actual revenue collected was \$706,709 from the PK-12 Open Choice Attendance Grant. The Early Beginning Grant funds totaled \$149,500. The Supplemental appropriation of \$184,209 will be requested from the Town as the grant money is given directly to the Town. Ms. Russo further explained that every year the Board reviews the amount being received, what is planned to be spent on, move it on to Town Council who then moves it forward to Town Finance for additional appropriation. The money must be used for students and will be used for additional educational supplies of instructional equipment and supplies for Visual Art, Music, Science, Wellness & World Language; textbooks for Business, Social Studies and Math and ELA instructional supplies. Purchasing these items now will offset some of the costs for the next school year. Dr. Carnemolla clarified that when budgets are being developed the Open Choice funds are taken into consideration during the planning of purchases. The Superintendent added that it has been more difficult to fill the seats than in past years, perhaps due to parents' COVID concerns.

Jay Spivak made a motion to approve the Supplemental Appropriation of Open Choice Tuition as presented. Lynn Katz seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

E. 21-22/74 Approval of AHS European Study Tour to Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, and Krakow from April 5-16, 2023

Board members discussed the concern of having a trip like this during uncertain environment to the area to where these students would be going, the risk management with respect to funds families would be paying and the type of assessment done to determine whether or not the field trip would take place. Dr. Carnemolla shared the details of the conversation she had with the high school principal and teacher regarding the possibility of the field trip and explained that in order for the school to move forward with the long process of planning this trip Board approval must first be sought. Contracts are reviewed by the District's attorneys to ensure there are all the applicable clauses and language to be able to support students and families and staff members if a return of money is necessary should the trip be canceled. International conditions that are not conducive to taking students to another country of any advisories from the State Dept. is something that is closely monitored throughout the process up until the time the students and staff depart. The Board asked for more details at a future meeting regarding the equity of being able to provide this type of opportunity for all students, including opportunities for pay to play, other field trips, clubs, extracurricular activities, etc.

Laura Young made a motion to approve the AHS European Study Tour to Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, and Krakow from April 5-16, 2023. Liz Sommerkorn seconded.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

XIII. Communication from Public

There was no additional communication from the public.

XIV. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

There were no additional comments from Board members.

XV. Executive Session

A. Discussion of Safety & Security All-Hazard Plan

At 8:49 pm, Chair Chute asked to enter into Executive Session and invited Dr. Carnemolla, Dr. Nestler-Rusack, Mr. Medic, Ms. Russo and the Director of Safety and Security, Jim Connelly to join the discussion of the Safety & Security All-Hazard Plan.

XII. Return to Public Session

At 9:49 pm the Board left Executive Session and returned to Public Session.

XVI. Adjournment

At 9:50 pm, the Board adjourned by unanimous consent.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, August 19, 2022