



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

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Tuesday, November 21, 2017—7:00 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Ken Birk; Jackie Blea; Deb Chute; Jason Indomenio; Houston Putnam Lowry; Jay Spivak; Kathy Zirolli

Member(s) Absent: Peggy Roell; Laura Young

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 7:00 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Avon Achievers
 - A. Leigh Boudreau, Christopher Bunel, and Christine Melnyk, TBS staff members – in recognition of having gone above and beyond in welcoming new students placed in their classes this year. They have built strong relationships with the new students by focusing to meet their needs, and the needs of all the students, which is exemplary. Ms. Boudreau, Mr. Bunel and Ms. Melnyk embody what it means to “capture a kid’s heart” so the children are ready to learn.
 - B. Cynthia Nelson, TBS staff member – in recognition of her service to the TBS community as a highly skilled secretary in the office since February 2012. She has been a dependable member of the team focused on serving the needs of students, staff, and parents as well as a contributor to the professional environment of the school office. We sincerely appreciate all of Ms. Nelson’s contributions to the school.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Board of Education, Regular Meeting, October 17, 2017
 - B. Communication/School Climate & Culture Meeting, October 24, 2017
 - C. Board of Education, Special Meeting, November 8, 2017
 - D. Policy Meeting, November 9, 2017

*Ms. Chute moved and seconded by Ken Birk to approve the October 17, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes and the November 8, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes.
The motion passed 7-0-0.*
- V. Communication from Public
There was no communication from the public.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representatives Reports – Heather Monroe, Student Representatives

It was reported that a Simsbury vs. Avon football game was played at Simsbury and that the high school held a Veterans' Day program on Monday, November 13 which was well received.

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

1. CMT Science results showed grade 5 students who were at or above goal increased 1% and grade 8 increased 8%. Performance level state goals show only 3% of 5th graders and 4% of 8th graders did not make state goals this year in Science. Avon is a member of District Reference Group (DRG) B. Scores show we are 8th of 9 in DRG A and 6th out of 20 for 5th grade in DRG B. Grade 8 shows Avon to be 1st in DRG A and 1st in DRG B.
2. Grade 10 CAPT tests were administered and results showed a decrease of 9%. 10% did not make state goals this year in Science. Avon was 5th out of 8 in DRG A and 11th out of 19 in DRG B. The drop in percentage is due to the move to the next generation of Science standards which caused some students to be tested on content they had not yet learned.
3. Students will no longer be tested on CMT Science and CAPT as the state moves to the next generation Science standards. Avon grade 11 students are required to participate in a new assessment this year, however, the district and students will not receive any scores.
4. Smarter Balance Summative Assessment is given to students in grades 3-8 and aligned with Connecticut Core Standards in ELA and Math. The assessment is also a way the state holds the districts accountable. ELA results showed that scores in four grades either increased or stayed the same in DRG A ranking while in two grades rankings decreased; in DRG B three grades went up and three grades went down in rankings. Math results showed that two grades remained the same while four grades decreased in DRG A ranking and in DRG B ranking one grade increased, two remained the same and three grades went down. On state rankings, for ELA Avon is 8th and 9th in Math. In DRG B, Avon grade 7 students placed first in mathematics and grade 8 students placed first in ELA and mathematics.
5. Interim assessments are smaller tests on specific content areas and now available to be administered prior to the state assessments. Data from assessments and other data points can be useful in determining patterns and trends in the scores, if there are students who might need additional support and the overall effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.
6. The Connecticut SAT School Day Assessment is for students in grade 11. Results showed a 2% drop in ELA and a 2% increase in Math. Achievement levels showed approximately 12% did not make goal in ELA and 1% did not make goal in Math. Energies will continue to focus on supporting students who score in the level 1 and 2 band with the Student Support Model at the high school. As compared to other districts, for DRG A, Avon is 8th of 8 in ELA and 4th of 8 in Math. For DRG B, Avon is 4th of 19 in ELA and 1st in Math. Statewide, Avon scored 14th in ELA and 4th in Math.
7. A five year overview of Advanced Placement (AP) participation, exams taken, and percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher at AHS was given. From 2012-2014, 17 AP courses were offered; in 2015, Economics, Government and Psychology were added; and last year AP Physics was added. In the past five years there was an increase in student participation in AP courses – from 478 students to 671 students. When compared to other DRG A and B schools, 91% of students scored 3, 4 or 5.
8. Next steps are to continue to look and analyze the data at the student level. A report will be given at a future Board meeting explaining AP and Early College Experience (ECE) courses, transferring of credit and costs associated.

Questions and Comments:

- Chair Lowry mentioned that students in grades 4, 5, 6 were not performing as well as expected in math with an approximate 10 point deviation and asked if there were any explanations. Mr. Lowry also wondered if this was an indication of certain grades needing additional support. Ms. Kryzanski agreed that there is a dip but the range in the state has the same dip and although it is an area of weakness there was growth from the previous year. Ms. Kryzanski also reminded everyone that this is just one data point and other assessments need to be looked at for further understanding of the students who did not make goal; perhaps some of the students are currently receiving support.
 - Chair Lowry asked if those who scored low in English and those who scored low in Math are the same students as this would be an indication of extra assistance needed. Ms. Kryzanski indicated that there are some students in both categories and some students who score low in just one area, however, with the various levels of support these issues are being addressed.
 - Mr. Spivak expressed his appreciation of the AP results showing that the majority of students who take AP classes score well but the percentage of students taking the courses compared to other districts is quite low. Are enough students encouraged to take AP classes? Can data be provided showing the percentage of students taking various AP courses compared to neighboring districts in DRG A & B? Dr. Rusack explained more time would be needed to provide that detail and she will try to include it in the future report regarding AP and ECE courses.
 - Ms. Blea agreed with Mr. Spivak in the importance of allowing the AP and ECE experience to more students. Ms. Blea also asked for an explanation of courses with only one student attending. Dr. Rusack explained those are students taking virtual high school courses.
 - Ms. Zirolli expressed that she would like to see improvement in the percent of students by gender in the Science assessments which once again shows a big gap between males and females.
- C. Primary Instructional Materials for Review – Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent
The Curriculum Professional Development Council (CPDC) met on October 26 met to review proposed material for the English Grade 8; Mathematics Grade 9-12; Social Studies Grade 8; Science Grade K; Science Grade 1; Science Grade 2; Science Grade 3, Science Grade 4; Science Grade 5; and ELA/Social Studies Grade 3. Each textbook received the required 2/3 approval from the CPDC and will commence the 30 day inspection period where the material is available for public review at the Central Office.
- D. Financial Report – Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs
There were two notable transactions for the month – OPEB payment of \$624,709 for health insurance coverage for retirees and \$622,289 for employee pension; otherwise it was an uneventful month and APS is in the black.
- Questions and Comments:
- Ms. Chute asked for clarity regarding a budget transfer for the flu vaccine. Ms. Michaud explained the budgeted item for flu vaccines given to staff was placed in the wrong line and needed to be corrected.
 - Mr. Birk asked if the OPEB account was pay as we go or whether it is invested. Ms. Michaud replied that it is invested and LPL Financial oversees the account.
- E. Superintendent’s Proposed 2018-2019 Budget – Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent
Dr. Paddyfote explained the budget is true to the district’s mission statement.
1. Budget priorities are:
- Meeting contractual obligations
 - Ensuring high quality instruction to improve student performance
 - Reassigning staff as needed

- Reducing reliance on grants, especially the IDEA grant as many current staff are hired under the grant
 - Leveraging district operation efficiencies
2. The proposed budget is \$57,478,605 which is an increase of \$1,172,197 or 2.08% which will allow the district to:
 - Maintain all current positions
 - Reassign personnel based on enrollment
 - Fund additional positions
 - Fund new strategic plan
 - Fund 5.15 positions currently in the IDEA grant
 - Provide summer custodial help
 - Provide a Board clerk
 - Provide new textbooks, Chromebooks, and supplies for K-12 Makerspaces and K-6 enrichment program
 3. The breakdown of salary drivers is:
 - Salary and benefits – 79.54%
 - Transportation (includes transportation for Special Education) – 5.22%
 - Utilities – 2.16%
 - Contracted services – 4.66%
 - Special Ed and Magnet tuition – 5.27%
 - Supplies and equipment – 2.97%
 - Others – 0.19%
 4. General fund revenue is generated by:
 - Fees collected
 - Grants
 - Open Choice attendance

Dr. Paddyfote thanked the administrative team, which includes principals and other staff members, for their work in developing the proposed budget presented.

Questions and Comments:

- Chair Lowry thanked Dr. Paddyfote for the presentation of the budget especially the low increase.
- Ms. Chute thanked the superintendent for the hard work and was impressed with the number that was presented.
- Ms. Blea also thanked the superintendent and is excited as to what is being done for the students and being provided for the district.
- Ms. Zirolli expressed her appreciation as well and particularly for the concise presentation.

VII. Consent Calendar

- A. 17-18/74 Approval of Budget Transfers
- B. 17-18/75 Approval of AHS Music French Field Trip to Digne-Les-Bains/Paris, Apr. 4-14, 2018
- C. 17-18/68 Policy 1120 – Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings, Second Read
- D. 17-18/70 Policy 1251 – Loitering or Causing Disturbance, Second Read
- E. 17-18/72 Bylaw 9323 – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination, Second Read
- F. 17-18/73 Bylaw 9325.2 – Agenda Format, Second Read

Ms. Zirolli moved and seconded by Mr. Birk to approve Items 17-18/68 through 17-18/75 as listed on the Consent Calendar.

The motion passed 7-0-0.

VIII. Old Business

A. 17-18/69 Policy 1250 – Visits to the Schools, Second Read

Policy Chair Zirolli explained the edits and references to other policies made to the policy were in response to the concerns expressed by Board members.

Ms. Blea moved and seconded by Ms. Chute to approve Policy 1250.

The motion passed 7-0-0.

B. 17-18/71 Bylaw 9132 – Standing Committees, Second Read

Policy Committee Chair Zirolli explained that the Finance Committee was elaborated to include Alternative Resources which included Regional Services issues.

Questions and Comments:

- Chair Lowry requested that the policy be made effective January 1 for the incoming Board. The Chair also asked for discussion as to whether the Audit Committee should be kept separate.
- Ms. Blea felt the Audit Committee should be kept as an independent piece of oversight to which Mr. Lowry explained that in the private sector they are kept separate but there are very few boards of education with audit committees, Avon is one of two boards. The Policy Committee has suggested combining the two.
- Ms. Chute asked for clarification as to why it would be necessary to separate the two committees as it seems logical that the Finance Committee would need to address any issues the audit process may find.
- Ms. Zirolli expressed from her personal experience that it is important that the Finance Chair know what is going on in the audit to stay on top of the issues. Combining the two will allow everything having to do with finance be handled efficiently.
- Finance Committee Chair Spivak saw the committee members and administration overlapped between the two committees and would appreciate the efficiency of having the two combined.
- Ms. Blea asked for clarification as to the benefits of having audit as a separate entity. Chair Lowry explained that usually no one on the inside of the organization would be on the audit process as they are checking on the work of the employees. This avoids any undue influence from the people who are being checked.
- Ms. Zirolli explained that the difference is that the Board of Education consists of nine people, while responsible for everything, are not employees of the district. Also the auditors work for the Town of Avon's Board of Finance more so than the Board of Education even though the Board of Education has a significant budget.
- Mr. Indomenico recalled that the audit committee only met once or twice and clarified that the committee members were not the ones to do the actual audit but reviewed the outcomes of the audit.
- Ms. Zirolli explained that this matter was discussed thoroughly at the last Policy Committee meeting and everyone on the committee was in agreement.

Mr. Birk moved and seconded by Mr. Indomenico to approve Policy 9132 effective January 1, 2018.

The motion passed 7-0-0.

IX. New Business

A. 17-18/76 Budget Transfer Item 2018-020

Ms. Zirolli moved and seconded by Mr. Spivak to approve Budget Transfer Item 2018-020.

The motion passed 7-0-0.

B. 17-18/77 Policy 5144.12 – Student Handbooks, First Read

Policy Committee Chair Zirolli explained the change to the existing Student Handbook policy codifies current practice and removes the responsibility from Board members to review the student Handbook. It was noted that the Handbooks are generally revised in the summer.

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

Assistant Superintendent Rusack explained the four new courses being recommended by the CPDC for the 2018-2019 school year – Principals of Finance and Investing; ECE AP Physics and Calculus that allows students college credit through ECE or AP and replaces AP Physics 1 and 2; American Sign Language 4, American Sign Language 3 and 4 will run consecutively which will allow students to finish the 4th year of the course; and Heritage Spanish 2 for native Spanish speakers who speak fluently but limited in the reading and writing of the language.

Questions and Comments:

- Mr. Spivak was happy to see the new business course being offered knowing that most people do not have an understanding of that area. Mr. Spivak asked for clarification about eliminating Physics 1 and 2. Dr. Rusack explained that Physics 1 and 2 were being blended into the new course and students could still take the AP exam but the second semester brings in the calculus piece.
- Mr. Spivak also asked if there was a change to current practice where most students cannot take AP Calculus as a junior when Physics is offered in the high school unless they took Geometry as an 8th grader. This may be reducing the number of students taking AP courses at the high school rather than increase AP enrollment as the Board had requested. Dr. Rusack replied that the Science Dept. looked into the students who would be taking the course and think they would be ready for the Calculus piece in the Physics course.
- Mr. Spivak expressed his concern of increasing the number of ECE courses after having collapsed levels as they are not part of a strategic plan at the high school and confusing as to honors and AP courses. Students are confused as to the courses they should be taking. Colleges do not seem to know what ECE courses are and would not accept the credits unless students took courses at a college or AP courses at their high school.
- Chair Lowry asked if students taking AP Physics without Calculus during the first semester expect to do well with the AP Physics exam. Dr. Rusack stated she would have to check with the Science Dept. to get an accurate answer.
- Ms. Blea would like more time in regards to ECE courses.
- Ms. Chute asked if the Heritage Spanish could be moved to the middle school. Dr. Rusack explained it works better in the higher level.
- Ms. Zirolli and Mr. Indomenico both expressed concerns over low enrollment numbers. Mr. Indomenico wanted verification that new teachers would not need to be hired. Dr. Rusack confirmed that classes would not run with low numbers and new staff for these courses are not in the 2018-2019 proposed budget.

Ms. Zirolli moved and seconded by Mr. Spivak to approve Item 17-18/78, Mathematics, Grade 10-12, Principals of Finance and Investing; World Language, Grades 9-12, American Sign Language; and World Language, Grades 9-12, Heritage Spanish 2. ECE/AP Physics with Calculus was not approved and will be brought back for future discussion.

The motion passed 7-0-0.

X. Chair's Ruminations – Houston Putnam Lowry, Board of Education Chair

The Chair had no items for rumination.

XI. Superintendent's Update – Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote

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

Two tutors were hired and the district wide courier resigned.

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

November saw new enrollment of 13 students but total enrollment numbers are lower than what we started with in August.

C. Veterans' Day Program in the Schools

Dr. Paddyfote was impressed and proud that Avon held school on Veterans' Day and felt the programs and students were all phenomenal at each school in honoring the veterans. There were 20-25 veterans in attendance along with some Board members. Dr. Paddyfote also expressed her appreciation to Louis Reis, district wide courier, who came to the rescue of transporting stranded veterans after their coach bus left unexpectedly for an emergency.

XII. Such Other and Further Business That May Come Before the Meeting - None

XIII. Communications from Board Members - None

XIV. Committee Reports & Future Meeting Dates

A. Alternative Resources/Regional Services - Mr. Spivak

No longer meeting as it will collapse into Finance Committee.

B. Audit - Ms. Young (absent)

Ms. Michaud reported that field work is completed for the Board side. She is in the process of responding to four questions.

C. Capital Budget - Mr. Birk

Will not be meeting again as it too will be consolidated with Finance Committee. Work will continue regarding the middle school science rooms.

D. Communications/School Climate & Culture - Ms. Blea

Monday's meeting will be canceled. December will be used as a planning meeting for the restructured committee. At the October meeting in Hartford a parent shared her appreciation of the communication she was receiving from the district and felt well informed. She did express her concern of the gap time for students who do not live in town between when school is dismissed and sports begin at the high school. Chair Lowry replied this situation will be looked into to provide a solution.

E. Finance - Mr. Spivak

Nothing new to report.

F. Personnel - Ms. Roell (absent)

Conversation will be held during Executive Session regarding the proposed collective bargaining agreement with the para-educators.

G. Policy - Ms. Zirolli

The next meeting will be a special meeting in order to avoid three consecutive nights of meetings. The meeting will be held prior to the Dec. 4th meeting at 6:00 pm at the high school. Ms. Zirolli also asked all committees to contemplate Dr. Paddyfote's suggestion to hold all Board meetings on a Tuesday night.

H. Board Representative to Curriculum Professional Development Council - Ms. Chute

Aside from the review of new curriculum, Dr. Mearman presented the SRBI process during the October meeting. Excited that with the restructuring of the Communications Committee more Board members will be able to hear from the CPDC.

I. Board Representative to Avon Board of Finance - Mr. Birk

The Board of Finance discussed the status of the state budget. The Town Manager is optimistic of meeting the deficit of \$360,000. The ECS funding was originally \$700,000 but may come in between \$500,000 and \$600,000 which is more than the \$0 expected and budgeted by the Town.

J. Board Representative to Avon Town Council - Ms. Roell

No report given.

K. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council - Ms. Blea

Budget was discussed as well as families displaced from Puerto Rico.

XV. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public.

XVI. Executive Session

Chair Lowry motioned and accepted by unanimous consent to enter into Executive Session to discuss the possible action concerning ratification of a proposed successor collective bargaining agreement with the para-educators and to invite in Dr. Paddyfote and Ms. Michaud.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:42 p.m.

- A. Possible action concerning ratification of a proposed successor collective bargaining agreement with the para-educators.
No action was taken.

The Board entered Public Session at 8:50 p.m.

I. Adjournment

The Board adjourned Public Session by unanimous consent at 8:51 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Zirolli, Board Secretary

Katharine F. Zirolli

November 30, 2017