



Curriculum & Professional Practices

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.

Monday, February 3, 2020, 5:30 pm

Avon High School, Community Room

Workshop Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members Present: Jackie Blea, Chair; Debra Chute; Jeffrey Fleischman, Bogdan Oprica (left at 6:15 pm)

Board Members Present: David Cavanaugh, Bogdan Oprica, Jay Spivak, Lisa Seminara, Laura Young

Board Members Absent: Jason Indomenico

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent; Michael Renkawitz, AHS Principal, Diana DeVivo, Assistant Principal, Dr. Eileen O'Neil, AHS Assistant Principal

Others Present: Shirley Moy, Board Clerk; AHS Department Coordinators – Jenna Aylsworth, Lisa Berliner, Samantha Spitzer, Jaclyn Lawlor, John Salerni, Betsy Sanborn and Todd Dyer, Director of Counseling

- I. Call to Order
Committee Chair Blea called the workshop meeting to order at 5:30 pm.
- II. Approval of October 22, 2019 Minutes
*Debra Chute moved, Jeffrey S. Fleischman seconded, to approve the October 22, 2019 Curriculum & Professional Practices minutes as presented.
The motion carried 4-0-0.*
- III. Discussion of the Avon High School 2020-2021 Program of Studies
Mr. Renkawitz thanked all the coordinators for attending and gave an overview of the recently revised AHS Course of Studies which is to help students and parents in their selection of high school courses.

The Course of Studies includes information on:

- the four focus areas of the Blueprint of Excellence

- graduation requirements
- grading system
- the various levels of courses (CP or H designation to help clarify courses)
- pathways to a college experience (AP, ECE, Tunxis courses)
- separate listing of business courses
- the new courses approved by CPDC and the Board

Discussion included:

- Seal of Biliteracy - Lisa Berliner explained the eligibility to have students recognized for their mastery of more than one language. Students must have full four years of English and a mid-range proficiency in another language. will be offered to current seniors for any world language offered at the high school, however, it may be expanded to other languages later on. The program utilizes online testing and the cost is paid by the students/families.
- Jackie Lawlor spoke on the Typical Math Course Sequence including Algebra II and Advanced Algebra II as well as applied topics in math such as consumer math.
- Todd Dyer spoke on the research done to be sure Avon students are college ready in math and have Algebra II which colleges want in their math sequence as well as college programs currently available to Avon high students.
- Jenna Alysworth and Betsy Sanborn spoke on the interdisciplinary courses including American Studies and the various disciplines including ECE courses.
- Principal, Mike Renkawitz, explained to the Committee how they would roll information to parents regarding the course recommendations and selection which included an informational letter to parents; announcements; Elective Exploration Night for grade eight students; one on one conversations with teachers/counselors and students; emails to students; advisory; handouts; and meetings with counselors. There will also be an opportunity for parents to discuss course recommendations during the Spring parent/teacher conference time. Mr. Renkawitz was confident that students were getting the information from various angles and would be well informed in their decision making. Todd Dyer added that hard copies of the Course of Studies will be distributed, as it seemed to be more helpful to have paper copies where students can make notations as to their choices and/or questions. The selection of courses is a systematic, collaborative process.
- Potential changes for 2023 – Mr. Dyer explained the changes made to graduations requirements beginning with the Class of 2023 including the change from 22 ½ credits to 25 required credits; a requirement of full credit for health in addition to PE/Wellness; and a Capstone Project or mastery assessment (senior project) balanced with either internship or community service and work experience (multiple pathways). Dr. Carnemolla added that regardless of what graduation requirements the state will put forth through legislation, the District has agreed with the area districts to move forward with these changes.
- John Salerni explained the Honors Physics was renamed ECE/AP Physics I as it required almost no change to what was already being taught and offered students the opportunity to prepare for the AP Physics exam and also apply for credit through UConn. The information that Honors Physics and ECE/AP Physics I being the same course with the same rigor was disseminated to students in the past. Mr. Salerni added that they have seen an increase in the number of students enrolled in ECE/AP Physics and a significant growth of enrollment in all college level science courses.
- Mr. Renkawitz addressed the issue of course or level changes and explained that the importance of making the change quickly, before Oct. 1st) while also giving students the opportunity to succeed in the course. Mr. Renkawitz and Ms. Sanborn also stressed that

going too late into the semester to make a change will make it difficult for the student to adapt as the curriculum will be different in the different courses. Ms. Lawlor added that changing one course may impact a change in other courses as well depending on the student's schedule. Dr. Carnemolla stated that dropping/changing a course too late in the semester will affect the grade negatively which is shown on the transcript. It was suggested that more communication be shared with students and families regarding the drop/change procedures. There was a question as to how to factor grades when students level down. Mr. Salerni added that if a student was really struggling it was hoped that the teacher would have contacted the parents to offer options even before Oct. 1st.

The rest of the meeting time consisted of the high school committee addressing questions from Board members including topics on Algebra II pathway track; how credits look on the transcripts for a co-taught class; interdisciplinary classes; Capstone; options available for advanced students once they are finished with the math sequence or advanced science courses; college credit programs; Science sequence; dropping or changing levels; honors level vs ECE/AP; effective communication to students and families; equity and parity through all the sections; alternative environment or affiliated programs for serving Avon's students; additional credit opportunities; opportunities for gifted and talented; dual enrollment; being sensitive to content in text/books and informing parents of potential concerns; allowing alternative reading material; the selection of material/text process and ideas on how to make the contents of reading material more apparent to the public.

Board Chair, Deb Chute, expressed her appreciation for the preparation and efforts of the high school committee and how students are encouraged to challenge themselves while providing wide opportunities.

Dr. Carnemolla explained that Avon provides more oversight through the CPDC than most districts with recommendations coming from the teachers. The discussions at CPDC allows the perspectives to be shared and vertical articulation in the alignment between grades. Dr. Rusack added that CPDC allows for different lenses to the conversation.

Mike Renkawitz informed everyone that he will send the course of studies as a draft out to students and parents to get the course selection process started.

Dr. Carnemolla explained the importance of the Board voting approval of the Course of Studies and to allow Board members a broader picture of what courses the Avon graduate has experienced.

Chair Blea thanked everyone for all they shared.

IV. Adjournment

Jeffrey S. Fleischman moved, Jackie Blea seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jackie Blea, Curriculum & Professional Practices Chair

Jackie Blea, February 19, 2020

Minutes respectfully received by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, February 19, 2020