



**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.*

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Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Community Room

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**Minutes**

**Attendance**

**Members Present:** David Cavanaugh; Debra Chute; Jeffrey S. Fleischman; Jason Indomenico; Bogdan Oprica (arrived 7:02 pm); Lisa Seminara; Jay Spivak

**Member(s) Absent:** Jackie Blea; Laura Young

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

- I. Call to Order  
*The February 25, 2020 Board of Education Regular Monthly meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Board Chair, Debra Chute. The mission statement was also read.*
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Presentations
  - A. Avon Achiever  
Abigail Chiu and Declan Mahoney (AMS students) – in recognition of their dedication to scholarship, community service and leadership in school.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Board of Education Special Meeting, January 13, 2020  
*David Cavanaugh moved to approve the January 13, 2020 minutes of the Special Meeting as presented, Jason Indomenico seconded.*  
*The motion carried by unanimous consent.*

B. Board of Education Special Meeting, January 15, 2020

*David Cavanaugh moved to approve the January 15, 2020 minutes of the Special Meeting as presented, Jeffrey S. Fleischman seconded.*

*The motion carried 6-0-1 (yay – Cavanaugh, Chute, Fleischman, Oprica, Seminara, Spivak; nay – none; abstain – Indomenico due to his absence at Jan. 15 meeting).*

C. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, January 21, 2020

*David Cavanaugh moved to approve the January 21, 2020 minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting as presented, Lisa Seminara seconded.*

*The motion carried by unanimous consent.*

D. Board of Education Special Meeting, January 27, 2020

*David Cavanaugh moved to approve the January 27, 2020 minutes of the Special Meeting as presented, Jason Indomenico seconded.*

*The motion carried by unanimous consent.*

V. Communication from Public

Chair Chute reviewed the parameters for those who wished to make a public comment. The parameters read were from the CT Association of Board Education Members.

- Each speaker may speak for 3 minutes
- Speakers may offer objective criticism of district operations and programs but the Board encourages members of the public to address complaints concerning individual District personnel go through the proper chain of command. The Chairperson may direct the member of the public to the appropriate means to address concerns brought before the Board; however, the Board will not respond with action but will take comments under advisement and direct the comments to the appropriate staff member to address outside the Board meeting.

There were no comments from the public.

VI. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representative Report –Addisen Ganiats & Alvin Guo, AHS Student Representatives  
Student reps were not in attendance and no report was given.

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

Ms. Michaud gave a mid-year recap with a “look back” from last year to this year. The only distinguishable variance was in object code 200 which is the benefits line due to a journal entry for health insurance and related fees in the month of January. Ms. Michaud stated that other than that, the trending looked very similar. Also, several payments related to Special Education evaluations and consultants in object code 300 were made; and District licenses fees for software packages were due and paid in January.

VII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair

In Ms. Blea’s absence, Ms. Chute reported that a special meeting was held recently with members of all the departments from Avon High School to speak on the various courses being offered. A shortened presentation will be given later in the meeting.

2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair

Mr. Spivak reported that during the last Finance Committee meeting discussion focused on the Budget Transfers, the audit and RFQ. Information was included in the packet provided to Board members and will be further addressed during the meeting. The next meeting is March 10<sup>th</sup>.

3. Negotiations – Jason Indomenico, Chair

Mr. Indomenico stated that negotiations continue with food service workers and negotiations with the secretaries have started.

4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair

In Ms. Young's absence, Chair Chute stated that a first read of a policy will be reviewed later in the meeting.

B. Liaison Report

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

No report was given in Ms. Blea's absence.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute reminded Board members of the MakerSpace tour to show the enrichment clusters at PGS and TBS on March 9 beginning at 8:30 am.

Ms. Chute also gave a review of the Legislative breakfast she and the Superintendent attended. The breakfast provides an opportunity for senators to listen Board of Education members and superintendents' concerns.

The Board Chair also updated the Board members on the resolution West Hartford put forward to the state in changing school times. Ms. Chute stated that in order for a change in school times to work, the state must participate in the change; however, there is no state law regarding start times as yet. It is still in the conversation stage at the state level but Ms. Chute stated that the Board may want to think about adding a resolution of their own to join in the change.

Ms. Chute acknowledged the generous Amazon donation of technology items and office/school supplies, with an estimated value of over \$25,000, arranged by Avon parent, Walt Evans.

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

A. Hiring Report

Dr. Carnemolla reviewed new hires of both certified and non-certified staff which included a special education teacher; long term sub for 6<sup>th</sup> grade; three para-educators as well as a new assistant director of nutrition services. There was also a resignation of a speech and language pathologist.

B. Enrollment Report

The Enrollment Report showed there are 4 more students than last month and 23 more than the same time last year.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Carnemolla reviewed with the Board the work regarding the Strategic Plan. The building administrators meet every two weeks and just had a meeting with Dr Belair doing continued calibration around rigorous teaching and learning from a districtwide standpoint. Review of districtwide strategic blueprint and various school improvement plan goals continue as a team as well as other meetings with individual administrators. A mid-year check-in report will be brought back to the Board as the District looks at what is left to do before school is over and what needs to be done during the summer.

D. Updates

The Superintendent thanked everyone for their time and efforts in putting together the 2020-2021 budget as well as for their time reviewing the Course of Studies for the high school. Dr. Carnemolla also expressed her appreciation to the high school administrators and staff who came out for the C&PP meeting.

The Superintendent informed the Board of the conflict with the April Finance Committee meeting due to the town-wide budget meeting. Due to the necessity of reviewing the supplemental appropriations for the April Board meeting, scheduling the Finance meeting takes priority in April. Mr. Spivak reminded Finance Committee members to participate in the survey sent out regarding their availability and suggested committee members call in if they cannot attend any of the suggested dates and times.

Dr. Carnemolla also reminded the Board members to check the Board's calendar for the upcoming meetings regarding upcoming meetings including negotiations and town-wide budget meeting dates.

The option to have another Board retreat was also discussed.

X. Consent Calendar

A. 19-20/38 Approval of Budget Transfers

B. 19-20/39 Approval of Contract for Corey MacLaurin, Assistant Director of Nutrition Services  
***Jay Spivak moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, Jason Indomenico seconded.  
The motion carried 7-0-0.***

XI. New Business

A. 19-20/40 Avon High School 2020-2021 Course of Studies

AHS Principal, Mike Renkawitz; AHS Assistant Principals, Dr. Devivo and Dr. O'Neil; and Guidance Director, Todd Dyer presented the 2020-2021 Course of Studies. Mr. Renkawitz thanked everyone for their contributions and valuable input in revising the course of studies. Mr. Renkawitz stated that the Course of Studies meets all four focus areas of the Blueprint of Excellence and went on to review the changes to last year's Course of Studies:

Changes included:

Graduation requirements

Modifying description of course levels to include college experience courses

CP designation included

Business Ed has its own section, not under math, increased offering

Seal of Biliteracy information

Changes to course offerings:

Intro to business

Algebra II and Advanced Algebra II

Applied Topics in Math

ECE American Studies – interdisciplinary

ECE Writing About the Unspeakable

ECE Writing Through Our Times: Satire and Comedy

ECE True Crime

ECE Post 9/11 American Culture

AP/ECE European History

ECE Human Rights  
Civil rights Movement  
Classical Studies  
Religious Studies  
Improv for the Real World  
Acting Techniques  
Percussion  
Spanish VI

Mr. Renkawitz also shared the various methods planned to get the information to both students and parents, which included:

- Information letter to parents, to be sent out Feb. 7
- Grade 8 elective exploration night on Feb 13
- Distribution of student and parent workbook, worksheet
- Student and teacher mini conferences
- Override process which is a gateway to communication between student, teacher, and parents
- Student communication – announcements, emails
- Meeting with counselor

Mr. Dyer spoke of changes to represent what is being taught and to also accurately record on transcripts courses such as Algebra II and Adv Algebra II. Mr. Dyer spoke about the purposeful conversations teachers are having with students regarding courses as well.

The discussion was opened to Board members. Board members thanked everyone for the informative presentation and asked several questions including whether it is possible for students to receive schedules before summer. High school administrators explained the process prior to student receiving their schedules. After the override process, which does not end until May 1, all recommendations are reviewed by department coordinators to decide which courses would be offered and who would be teaching the various courses. Mr. Renkawitz stated that the goal this year is to let students know by June 1 what courses they have scheduled but an exact schedule by June 1 could not be promised as not all staffing will be known by that time. Complexity and variables in high school make that difficult. Mr. Renkawitz also said an estimate of enrollment in AP courses can be provided at a future meeting or the information can be sent through superintendent. It was also stated that tracking enrollment of virtual high school was difficult as registration for virtual classes does not start until fall and is student interest in classes may change by fall. Dr. Carnemolla reminded everyone that the first preference was for student to take actual classes taught by teachers at the high school and virtual high school was to be used only if a specific course was not available due to various reasons. The virtual high school catalogue is online and available to students. Students can expect confirmation of courses by June 1 and an actual schedules early August with a two month window to allow students to go through the override process and make necessary changes. Chair Chute thanked the high school administrators for making themselves available to the Board for both the Curriculum & Professional Practices meeting as well as for tonight's Board meeting.

***Jeffrey S. Fleischman moved to approve the AHS 2020-2021 Course of Studies as presented, David Cavanaugh seconded.***

***The motion carried 7-0-0.***

B. 19-20/41 AHS Wrestling Field Trip to Guilford, CT on Feb. 21 and Feb. 22

Dr. Carnemolla explained that although District policy requires the Board to approve field trips, the request for the wrestling field trip was received after the last Board meeting and take place prior to

tonight's meeting. Policy also allows the Superintendent to approve the field trip, which Dr. Carnemolla did, but still sought the Board's approval for insurance purposes and to ensure this was a formally approved event.

***David Cavanaugh moved to approve the AHS Wrestling field trip to Guilford, CT on Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, Lisa seconded.***

***The motion carried 7-0-0.***

C. 19-20/42 Amazon Donation (est. value \$25,834)

Dr. Carnemolla explained the donation came about through the actions of a parent who came in to register his children last summer and wanted to help out the District through his position at Amazon. The Board acknowledged their appreciation for the generous donation.

***Jason Indomenico moved, to approve the Amazon Donation, David. Indomenico seconded.***

***The motion carried 7-0-0.***

D. 19-20/43 Audit Findings for FY 2018-2019

Ms. Michaud explained that the audit revealed there was no material findings and everything was well aligned with the District's policies and best practices procedures. However, the Federal government established new procurement standards of which the District received a deficiency due to the District's procurement policy not meeting the standards according to Blum Shapiro. The District's legal counsel, who helped write the District policy, negotiated on the District's behalf to remedy the deficiency. The corrective action states an appendix must be attached to the procurement policy, Policy 3300, to address federal procurement guidelines. There are no other ramifications and nothing was procured in federal violation. No action from the Board was needed but amending Policy 3300 will be reviewed by the Policy Committee.

E. 19-20/44 Avon High School Course Proposal Recommendations

Dr. Rusack stated that the course proposal recommendations were for name changes to Algebra II and Advanced Algebra II as well as a title change and some content change from Consumer Math to Applied Topics in Math. Dr. Rusack informed the Board that this was addressed by Mr. Dyer at CDPC.

***Jason Indomenico moved to approve the Avon High School Course Proposal Recommendations as presented, David Cavanaugh seconded.***

***The motion carried 7-0-0.***

F. 19-20/45 School Facility RFQ

Dr. Carnemolla stated that she was not seeking action by the Board but merely wanted to have a discussion on the Town-wide development and its impact on the school system. After several meetings with the Town regarding potential development, the Superintendent thought a space utilization study to review the District's use of facilities, life span of facilities, capital systems, etc. would be extremely helpful. An RFQ, Request for Qualifications, would help discover companies interested in taking on the project. Dr. Carnemolla explained that an RFQ is usually done when a district is doing a construction project, this is a little different since no construction is being done at the moment. The District had potential interest from eleven firms, mostly architectural firms. The bid will close on March 4. The findings from the study, in conjunction with the town's finding will provide input from both sides. The Superintendent hoped the student would provide the best options for use of all facilities including the Central Office. The student will also include enrollment studies and will also give insight as to enrollment numbers using information they get from the town on

potential development. Dr. Carnemolla warned the Board that the District only has one school year to prepare should there be development in town. Various Board Chairs are keeping each other informed in town. Chair Chute sends enrollment report each month to Town Council and Board of Finance. The Superintendent was concerned that although an inventory is known at each school to quantify the number of classrooms and its stated capacity, developers have a lack of awareness of the actual use of the rooms and its limitations (classroom vs. special needs, codes, kindergarten class sizes, etc.). There was no action needed.

G. 19-20/46 Policy 6144 – Controversial Issues – First Read

Chair Chute reminded the Board that no action needed as it was a first read of the policy. A suggestion was made that the word student be added to the form, which the Superintendent agreed. Dr. Carnemolla stated that all similar policy forms were recently revised and that the form for this policy was revised to remain consistent. Few changes were made to the policy itself and the form was streamlined. The Superintendent reminded the Board that the form is part of the policy's regulations, which the Board does not approve. No action was taken.

XII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

There was no communication from Board members.

XIII. Communication from the Public

There was no communication from the public.

XIV. Adjournment

***David Cavanaugh motioned to adjourn the meeting, Lisa Seminara seconded.  
The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:26 pm.***

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

*Jeffrey S. Fleischman, March 5, 2020*

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