



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, March 17, 2020, 9:00 am

Avon Board of Education Office, Meeting Rm

Minutes

Attendance

Members Present: Debra Chute; Jason Indomenico;

Members Present (who attended telephonically): Jackie Blea; Jeffrey S. Fleischman; Bogdan Oprica; Lisa Seminara; Jay Spivak; Laura Young

Members Absent: David Cavanaugh

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

I. **Call to Order**

The March 17, 2020 Board of Education Regular Monthly meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Board Chair, Debra Chute. A roll call of Board members was taken to accurately record attendance of those who were attending the meeting via phone.

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The mission statement was read after the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting, February 25, 2020

Jason Indomenico moved to approve the February 25, 2020 minutes of the Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting noting a change to page 6 of the minutes to correct David Cavanaugh's name as seconding the motion to approve the Amazon Donation. Jackie Blea seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

IV. **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. Ms. Chute read, "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 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.

V. Items of Information and Proposals

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

Ms. Michaud indicated there was not much to report, as it is a slow period. The only item differing was last year the health insurance was journaled which makes the District a little behind this year in encumbrances and expenditures. December through March will be journaled for health insurance and administrative fees.

VI. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices – Jackie Blea, Chair

Ms. Blea stated that C&PP will be meeting again on May 5th and an agenda will be set when appropriate.

2. Finance – Jay Spivak, Chair

Mr. Spivak reported that during the last Finance Committee meeting discussion focused on a few Budget Transfers as well as the bids, which will be discussed later during the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 9am on April 6th.

3. Negotiations – Jason Indomenico, Chair

Mr. Indomenico stated that negotiations continue with food service workers and the secretaries, but things are in flux given the circumstances. Meetings will continue when circumstances return to normal.

4. Policy – Laura Young, Chair

Ms. Young reported on the March 10 Policy Committee meeting which focused on the Bullying Prevention/Intervention policy, various Bylaws and the Purchasing Policy in response to the audit recommendations. A meeting date for the next meeting has not yet been set.

B. Liaison Report

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

Ms. Blea reported that CREC has postponed their meeting to April. Concern is focused on providing meals to CREC students during the closure.

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

A. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute thanked the Board for their flexibility in making themselves available due to the disinfecting of school buildings in the evening. Ms. Chute also commended Superintendent Carnemolla for her swift and responsible action in keeping the students and staff safe. Ms. Chute stated her gratitude and full support to Dr. Carnemolla.

In response, Dr. Carnemolla thanked the Board and acknowledged that it was Board Appreciation month, which will be celebrated when the Board reconvenes together after this unprecedented time.

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

A. Hiring Report

Dr. Carnemolla reported that two new teaching assistants were hired for the elementary schools as well as resignations of paraprofessionals and a tutor. A long time custodian is also retiring in April.

B. Enrollment Report

The Enrollment Report showed there are 4 more students than last month and 23 more than the same time last year. Kindergarten registration continues and will be watched carefully.

C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Carnemolla reviewed with the Board the work regarding the Strategic Plan was continuing toward the District goals until the circumstances of last Friday changes the focus to dealing with the current school closure situation.

D. Updates

The Superintendent reviewed with the Board the federal government and CT State Dept. of Education's recent school closure guidance including supplemental/distance learning and the requirements to make up days no longer required with the 180 day waiver. The Governor has since closed all schools to March 31st in order to flatten the transmission curve of the virus. Currently there are some in District who are working remotely and some still working in the office and schools as things are in flux. Administrators and union presidents have been in conversation regarding the closure and what that looks like according to the contracts.

Dr. Carnemolla answered questions from the Board members and reassured the Board that everyone is still working whether it be on site or off. School staff, including school psychologists and social workers, will be in contact with students. The Superintendent went into further detail regarding the Commission of Education's suspension of the 180 day requirement which now does not require the days be "in person;" assuming this guidance will stand and the District can meet its own standards, the last day of school and graduation (barring any limitations on gatherings) remains June 17th. The Superintendent also explained the extent of the distance learning work that has already been given to students and stated that a meeting later that morning with administrators is planned to expand that work with online platforms. Learning experiences must be provided in order for students to receive credits. Issues regarding distance learning for students with special needs continues to be looked at. In regards to salaries, funding to support public agencies from the federal government to yet to be determined; changes and clarity is also being looked into regarding unemployment laws. The District was advised legally to meet our bargaining unit obligations regarding how many days are required to work including for hourly employees. To help ensure employees are not without a paycheck during the closure and that contract obligations are met, agreements were made with the bargaining units as to how pay would be distributed through the rest of the school year. State testing requirements and District assessments continue to be discussed as the District awaits clearer guidance from the State, including in regards to IEPs and Capstone presentations. Staff have been provided electronic devices to use at home; Chromebooks were sent home with students last week and will continue to be distributed to families who need devices. It is planned to have "face to face" learning when possible to do so. Dr. Carnemolla reassured Board members that we already have the tools, such as Google Classroom, to allow for distance learning interaction with students. Dr. Rusack added that report cards and parent conferences will be postponed and will be reassessed/rescheduled. The Board requested that information be added to the Facebook page to aid in communication, suggested live virtual lessons, to keep informed of what other districts are doing in regards to distance learning and ensure that no student falls through the cracks during this time. The Superintendent also confirmed that the health insurance for all staff during the closure remains intact.

IX. Consent Calendar

A. 19-20/47 Approval of Budget Transfers

***Jason Indomenico moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, Laura Young seconded.
The motion carried 8-0-0.***

X. Old Business

A. 19-20/46 Policy 6144 – Controversial Issues – Second Read

Ms. Young, Chair of the Policy Committee explained to the Board that the change to the policy and form was minor.

***Jason Indomenico moved to approve Policy 6144 – Controversial Issues as presented, Lisa Seminara seconded.
The motion carried 8-0-0.***

XI. New Business

A. 19-20/48 Athletic Uniform and Reconditioning Services Bid Award

Ms. Michaud explained this service was first sent out to bid five years ago which was awarded to Stadium Systems which has a relationship with Under Armour to provide the uniforms. This service will provide the uniforms as well as the reconditioning services such as repairs and cleaning. Stadium Systems was the only valid submission.

***Jason Indomenico moved to approve the bid award with Stadium Systems Inc. and Under Armour for Athletic Uniform and Reconditioning Services as presented, Laura Young seconded.
The motion carried 8-0-0.***

B. 19-20/49 E-Rate Award: Districtwide Fiber Connectivity

Ms. Michaud explained that the District participates in the federal E-Rate program, which is funded by the universal service fund and overseen by the FCC. The bid process follows federal guidelines for the districtwide fiber connectivity. There were two valid bids from Comcast, which is the District's current vendor, and Crown Castle. Due to the superior redundancy plan and being able to meet the District's current and future internet needs with Crown Castle's current fiber optics throughout Avon, as well as past issues with Comcast, the Administration recommends a transition to Crown Castle. Ms. Michaud was unaware if other school districts use Crown Castle.

***Jay Spivak moved to approve the bid award with Crown Castle for Districtwide Fiber Connectivity as presented, Jason Indomenico seconded.
The motion carried 8-0-0.***

C. 19-20/50 Districtwide Copier & Print Services

Ms. Michaud stated that a waiver was being requested, according to Policy 3300 because this contract was sought out through a consortium, which provided for better pricing. Ms. Michaud expressed approval of the current vendor, Office Works, their machines and the working relationship with the company that an extension of the contract was proposed for a new four year period.

***Jackie Blea moved to approve the continuation of our contract with The Office Works for Districtwide Copier and Print Services as presented, Jason Indomenico seconded.
The motion carried 8-0-0.***

D. 19-20/51 Policy 5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention, First Read

Dr. Carnemolla provided an overview of the changes to the Bullying Prevention policy to the Board; changes to statute were not reflected in the previous policy. The highlighted changes were made to reflect the procedures being followed to ensure the District is in compliance with state law. Changes to the

policy and regulations were made with legal counsel to bring the policy and what is done in the District to legal standards. Highlights of the changes to the policy were reviewed by Mr. Medic, which included definitions of cyber bullying; teen dating violence; and 19 points of the safe school climate plans. Notification of the onset of a bullying investigation was also defined more clearly to ensure timely notification to parents. Regulations and forms were also streamlined. At the advice of legal counsel, a supplemental was also added so that it can be placed in student handbooks. Dr. Carnemolla added that with the changes, the District's policy is more stringent than it needs to be. Mr. Indomenico, a member of the Policy Committee, noted that additional changes were needed.

E. 19-20/52 Bylaw 9132 – Standing Committees, First Read

Ms. Young commented that this Bylaw was in regards to how the Board operates in the form of committee work. Dr. Carnemolla explained that during this time, the schedule is being maintained except for having to wait for dates for upcoming negotiation meetings. How meetings are held will depend on the recommendations from the Public Health.

F. 19-20/53 Bylaw 9133 – Ad Hoc Committees, First Read

Ms. Young explained that FOIA wording was added to Bylaw 9133.

G. 19-20/54 Bylaw 9325 – Meeting Conduct, First Read

FOIA wording was also add to Bylaw 9325 as well as reference to vaping stated Ms. Young.

H. 19-20/55 Bylaw 9325.2 – Agenda Format, First Read

Ms. Young clarified to the Board that the agenda format was reordered.

I. 19-20/56 Policy 3300 – Purchasing

Although the District's legal counsel found no flaw in Policy 3300, an appendix was added to address the federal regulation as required by the audit conducted by Blum Shapiro explained Ms. Michaud.

Jason Indomenico moved to approve the addition of the appendix as required by Blum Shapiro to Policy 3300 – Purchasing as presented, Laura Young seconded.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

XII. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

Dr. Carnemolla explained what constituted a controversial issue in regards to Policy 6144.

Ms. Seminara thanked the Superintendent and the staff at PGS and TBS for the MakerSpace tours, which showed the program to be working very well. Ms. Young added that Valley Life wrote a cover story on the District's MakerSpace program.

XIII. Communication from the Public

Nancy D'Incecco, an Avon parent asked if communication was sent out regarding the availability of Chromebooks to which Dr. Carnemolla replied the communication was connected to the survey sent out to parents inquiring of the availability of electronic devices at home. The Superintendent stated that another communication would be sent out to inform parents of the need and availability of Chromebooks now that the District is moving forward with distance learning. Ms. D'Incecco also inquired where she could find minutes regarding discussion of controversial issues. Dr. Carnemolla responded that the minutes are posted online but no minutes will contain information of controversial issues regarding a student with redacted information as inquired by Ms. D'Incecco. Dr. Carnemolla clarified that the

discussion regarding controversial issues is in regards to instruction. A reminder was also given that the Board's Monthly meetings are also recorded and available on Nutmeg TV. Dr. Carnemolla will contact Ms. D'Incecco at a later time to provide additional information and answer any further questions.

Dr. Carnemolla took a moment to thank all the administrators, faculty and staff for all their efforts in preparing for the school closure, especially in these unprecedented times. Dr. Carnemolla also thanked the Board for their support.

Chair Chute expressed her appreciation of Dr. Carnemolla's work during this health crisis and supported her work with the staff.

XIV. Adjournment

***Jason Indomenico motioned to adjourn the meeting, Jay Spivak seconded.
The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 10:33am.***

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman, March 26, 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.