



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, September 27, 2022, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Library/Media Center

Avon Board of Education
34 Simsbury, Avon, Connecticut 06001

Minutes

Attendance

Board Members Present: Jackie Blea; Debra Chute, Board Chair; Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Board Secretary; Lynn Katz; Lisa Seminara; Thej Singh; Liz Sommerkorn; Sarah Thompson; Laura Young

Board Members Absent: none

Administration Present: Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla, Superintendent of Schools; Jess Giannini, Assistant Superintendent; Roberto Medic, Assistant Superintendent; Susan Russo, Business Manager

I. Call to Order

Deb Chute, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

A. Roll Call

Ms. Chute conducted a roll call of Board members and administrators and welcomed new Board member, Sarah Thompson.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Mission Statement

Ms. Chute stated the Board's mission statement stating it reflects the reason for the work being done together.

IV. Elections

A. 22-23/08 Election of Vice Chair

B. 22-23/09 Discussion of Board Subcommittee Chairs and Members

Explaining that the previous Board Vice Chair retired his position, Board Chair Ms. Chute asked Board members for nominations.

Lynn Katz nominated Thej Singh for Vice Chair, Liz Sommerkorn seconded the nomination.

By unanimous consent, Thej Singh was elected as Vice Chair of the Board of Education.

Ms. Chute announced new assignments to the Board Committees with Sarah Thompson joining the Negotiations and Policy committees; Ms. Chute will step off the Policy Committee and join the Finance Committee.

V. Avon Achievers

- A. Presentation from AHS & AMS Students about School Climate and Connectedness Work
AMS Students – Aariz Adam; Lorenzo Castro-Rodriguez; Nabeel Chasmawala; Abir Dutta; Lila Gauthier; Violet Jakupco; Emma Lasota; Sankeerth Manukonda; Shreyas Nair; Ayaan Panjani; Ramona Robbin; Majek Saikia; Suri Singh; Kam Vivekanandan
AHS Students – Diya Arunraj; Aradhana Chetnani; Vikramaditya Chetnani; Mridulla Ganesh; Jackson Green; Marjan Inayat; Maevyn Jackson-Moody; Keith Klemm; Mark Li; Makena Logan; Neda Meghrou; Cole Milardo; Beranna Perusse; Manasi Pravin Kumar; Sayde Rek; Ariella Reynolds; Audra Schliewen; Toby Schwartz; Abhirami Srivel; Nitin Suresh Kumar
AMS Faculty – David Addy; Sarah Chaves; Mary Dean; Tiffany Gooding; Patrick Linton; Gene Macy; Gretchen Sonju
AHS Faculty – Aimee Davis; LeAnne DiGiuseppe; Chaker Dridi; Tasonn Haynes; Jeffrey Lombardo; Ben Lukowicz; Colin McDermott; Rose-Marie Mouning; Kathleen Skelly; Michelle Zajac

Avon High School Principal, Dr. Stephanie Lockhart, and Avon Middle School Principal, Kristina Wallace, introduced the staff and students who participated in a summer workshop led by School Climate Consultants around the concept of school climate and connectedness with the ultimate goal of knowing that every student feels safe and connected that walks through Avon Schools. Avon Middle School students, Violet Jakupco and Majek Saikia, and Avon High School students Vikramaditya Chetnani and Cole Milardo, gave an overview of the workshop and spoke about why they volunteered to attend the workshop during their summer and what they gained from it. The AMS/AHS School Climate/Connectedness presentation is attached to the end of these minutes.

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of August 23, 2022

Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of August 23, 2022, Lisa Seminara seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

VII. Communication from Public

Alex Chen, Avon resident and APS parent, appeared before the Board to again express his concern with high school students' use of cell phones and the sharing of cell phones among students to play video games during school hours. Mr. Chen was concerned that not only were video games accessible but the possibility of pornography being shared without parents' being aware which he feels is exacerbated by the school allowing students use of phones between classes. While girls may not be as addicted to video games and porn, Mr. Chen felt that they create mental health problems, encourage violence against one another which may target girls, and lead to school shootings. He asked that the school take immediate action.

VIII. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representative Report – Charlotte Parry and Lillian Peng, AHS Student Representatives
The Board Chair welcomed Lillian Peng to the Board as the Junior Class Representative and welcomed back Charlotte Parry who is now the Senior Class Representative.

Charlotte Parry shared Avon High news reviewing preseason Fall sports and that the football team won their first game last week; new clubs such as Astronomy Club, Craft Club, Improv Club and Squash Club have been created; Student Government is preparing for the upcoming Pep Rally and Homecoming; and the Senior Class officers are brainstorming class fundraisers and class t-shirts. At Avon Middle School the PTO has brought back school breakfast; students wrote notes and attended the Hometown Heroes ceremony; Open House was held last week; students will be presented drug awareness education this coming month; and the PTO will hold a One and

Done fundraiser. Thompson Brook School just celebrated their 20th anniversary; Student Council is in place; field trips to Winding Trails are upcoming; 5th graders enjoyed Camp Read A Lot where students read their favorite books outside and Gifts of Love’s Weekend Backpack program is available to students.

Lillian Peng shared with the Board news about Roaring Brook and Pine Grove Schools. At RBS, an all school assembly was held last week and introduced the “focus word” which is hope – what hope looks like, sounds like, and how they can model and demonstrate it. RBS is also planning on renovating their interior courtyard with the assistance of a student advisory board; hosted a classroom walk-through; restarting “Mystery Readers;” as well as hosting Art Appreciation. Parents are reminded to practice safe driving to ensure the RBS parking lot is safe for everyone. At PGS, last week was Curriculum Night which had a great turnout of parents. The Superintendents visited classrooms together; there was a Summer Reading Ice Cream Social; an event to welcome new families; Family Movie Night; a new nature trail/outdoor classroom was cleaned up and mulched by many volunteers; universal screenings in reading and math will begin and the first PGS Community meeting will be held on Sept. 30th.

B. Financial Report – Susan Russo, Business Manager

Ms. Russo provided a summary on the unaudited fiscal year end balance which was \$2,997.46. Ms. Russo also explained the budget transfer to allocate budget to match year to date actual expenditures; the Facility User Fund unaudited balance was \$164,396.48 with funds used to refinish the gym floors at Avon High School; gym floors are scheduled to be refinished at Roaring Brook School next summer; the Technology Protection Plan had an unaudited ending balance of \$27,661.64 with funds being used to purchase Chromebooks to replace those that were either damaged or destroyed; and the Special Education Escrow account is being used for 6 settlements totaling \$867,776.07. Ms. Russo also reviewed for the Board the financial highlights for month ending August 2022 explaining the savings and deficits in salaries, the variances in supplies and textbooks due to pricing and shipping increases; and tuition and transportation costs for Special Education, with more financial information to be provided at a later date when outplaced student contracts are finalized.

IX. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum & Professional Practices

Committee Chair, Jackie Blea, reported that the first meeting of the year will be held on October 25 at 6:30 pm and will be a virtual meeting.

2. Finance

Committee Chair, Lynn Katz, stated that the Budget Transfers and bus contract extension that were discussed at the last Finance Committee meeting will be brought to the full Board tonight for vote and that Mr. Altimus, Director of Operations, provided an update of the completed capital projects and shared a draft of capital project requests for the 2023-24 year.

3. Negotiations

Committee Chair did not have anything to report.

4. Policy

Laura Young, Policy Committee Chair, stated that under New Business tonight 5 policies will be brought forth as the District tries to catch up with the new requirements of the General Assembly. A Special Meeting will also be scheduled to create an opportunity for the entire Board to hear from legal counsel regarding the new changes.

B. Liaison Report

1. Board Representative to Capital Region Education Council

Ms. Blea suggested that the Board members review CREC’s website to gain a better understanding of they do and how many students they serve. CREC is working on some bus issues, especially for Open Choice students and after school transportation, and staffing challenges. Ms. Blea stated that she is serving on their policy committee as well as an Open Choice working group that is planning to meet with some State people to share their concerns. Ms. Blea reminded Board members to reach out to her should they have anything they would like to relay to CREC.

X. Chair’s Report – Debra Chute, Board Chair

A. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute reminded Board members that a date needed to be set to meet with Board counsel to go through all the work that has been done at the State level. She also recognized Ronnie Kumar as a recipient of the Hometown Hero award as well as District Director of Security, Jim Connelly who was also a recipient of the award. Mr. Connelly was nominated by Avon students which speaks volumes because they feel connected and feel safe because of him. Ms. Chute also expressed her appreciation of those who came out tonight and how invested they were to give up two days of their summer vacation for the important work that was done. She expressed her appreciation of the students who gave the presentation tonight and the staff that are invested in this work. She hopes that future Board meetings would continue to have students join in the Board meetings. Ms. Chute also thanked the administrators and staff for the positive feedback she received for the open houses at the five schools.

XI. Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla

A. Hiring Report

Dr. Carnemolla welcomed and introduced the two new assistant principals, Mark Summa, at Avon Middle School, and Jamaal Lee, at Avon High School, and described the hiring process for these positions. Mr. Medic stated that while staffing is an issue at many other districts, as of August 29th, the District was fully staffed for all certified, direct teaching positions, which speaks of the hard work of building administrators and staff at the Central Office. There are over 600 positions within the District of certified and non-certified and currently there are only 10 non-certified vacancies and 2 resignations, said Mr. Medic.

B. Enrollment Report

Dr. Carnemolla reviewed the enrollment stating that the District is up 5 students from last month as registrations continue due to home sales. The Superintendent said that she will be talking more about space utilization and enrollment when the study has been completed, hopefully by Spring if not sooner.

C. Strategic Plan Update

The Superintendent prefaced the Strategic Plan Update by explaining that waiting for data from the State and then taking the time to review the data to make determinations and plan over the past few weeks amidst hiring and opening the school year delayed the presentation to the Board. However, during tonight’s meeting, all four Focus areas of the Blueprint for Excellence would be discussed.

Mr. Giannini highlighted the goals of Focus Area I on Student Learning and spoke on the State’s guidelines on reading, Science of Reading; core phonemic awareness instruction in grades K-1; revised read and writing units in grades K-12; Data Teams; and expanding PSAT to grade 9 students. Mr. Giannini reviewed District student performance data from 2021-2022 utilizing formative and summative assessments; Aimsweb for universal screenings; Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) for students in grades 3-8; CT School Day SAT for grade 11 students and Next Generation Science Standards Assessment (NGSS). The District’s test results were presented and explained by Mr. Giannini and key takeaways from the data was also shared with

the Board. Data results from SBA showed that 8th graders placed #1 in DRG B on the ELA assessment and #2 in Mathematics; CT School Day SAT placed Avon's 11th grade students 14th out of 192 districts in ELA and 8th in Math. Mr. Giannini shared with the Board what the District has planned to meet the needs of students. Answering a Board question, Mr. Giannini replied that the District is relaunching its Curriculum and Professional Development Council this coming week to focus on instruction, common assessments and how best to help students through Professional Learning Teams (PLT), Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT) and Data Teams. Responding to a Board comment, Dr. Carnemolla stated that in grades K-8 grading is more standardized by changing report cards and how expectations are reported while work at the high school level continues. She also described the work of the CPDC where teachers and administrators across the District get together to have the conversations regarding curriculum and learning, look at assessments, look at curriculum, look at programming, and teaching strategies. All courses have not yet been reviewed.

Tasonn Haynes, Student and Family Supports Coordinator, and the Superintendent presented Focus Area II: Personal Growth & Relationships. Dr. Carnemolla gave an historical overview of what had been done in this area including a Climate and Connectedness survey given to students in grades 3-12, done this spring and reminded the Board of surveys done in the past related to the pandemic and social emotional needs. The Superintendent explained that conducting annual student surveys became a State requirement since 2010 to gauge how safe and connected students feel at school. She explained that not only did they conduct surveys they also conducted focus groups that consisted of a good cross-section of over 100 grade 7-12 students with both Open Choice and Avon students to be able to share their experiences. The conversation were kept confidential and were summarized without student names. The main questions showed that 96.1% felt they very much or somewhat feel they belong at their school; 92.5% of students have a teacher or other adult who they felt will help them if needed; 96.3% felt very much or somewhat safe at school. In response to a Board member's question, Dr. Carnemolla explained that there is no rule when in the school year a survey is conducted, the District uses an end of the year feedback from the students. The Superintendent added that the most participation the District has seen from students is just under 30% and less than that at the high school. 95.5% very much or somewhat feel they have friends at school whom they can count on; 89.5% very much or somewhat feel other students treat them kindly/with respect; and 96.8% feel adults treat them kindly/with respect. Students were given opportunities to write additional comments on the surveys if they wanted to provide more detail to their responses, which many did. For students in grades 5-12, 81.3% felt very much/somewhat comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas at school which means if students are truly engaged and connected with their learning then they feel they have a safe space to have a discussion, especially in politically charged sorts of topics. Answering a Board member's question, Dr. Carnemolla replied that from the data collected through the focus groups, the lower percentage was due more to their peers than faculty making them feel uncomfortable. 84.6% felt very much/somewhat that they could get help from a school counselor, social worker or psychologist which the Superintendent expressed was low especially with the years of work that has been done in this area but hopes this number will go up by the end of the year with renewed efforts in making sure students understand what those people are here to do, who they are, where to find them and letting students know they have open access to counselors, school psychologists and school social workers. Answering a Board question, Dr. Carnemolla stated that these staff are out and about with the students so they can be integrated like the rest of the faculty and staff while still attending to their caseload of students. Dr. Carnemolla summarized the School Climate & Connectedness qualitative data that was garnered from the survey and focus groups of students from grades 3-12 which showed that teachers are seen as knowledgeable, approachable, and provide students with a sense of belonging; most students report having close friendships with other students and positive relationships with peer

groups; and students expressed great pride in the quality of the education they receive and generally enjoy coming to school. Additionally, some students of color & LGBTQ+ students feel less connection to school than their counterparts; inappropriate language used indirectly and “casually” by students; and students at AMS and AHS report a need to establish more formal and informal opportunities for connections between various groups of students to build a more inclusive community. While nearly a third of the students declined to indicate their race, it was mostly Asian students reporting targeted inappropriate language used towards them. The Superintendent responded to a Board question stating that there have been a few instances of Asian students and/or their parents reporting slurs being used, many times they’ve been with young students repeating something they’ve heard and using it for shock value or to upset someone. The takeaway is how does the District continue to educate students around appropriate language and the types of things that might be offensive to different parts of the population.

Mr. Haynes summarized the key takeaways from the survey and focus groups and shared with the Board plans of “what’s next” in advancing the work forward. Mr. Haynes spoke of partnering with CREC for much of the work in designing trainings for the teachers to provide an inclusive environment; understand the impact of using inappropriate language; facilitating respectful dialogue that allows all students “safe space” for sharing thoughts/opinions and partnering with the TBS leadership team in updating the District’s Choice Family Engagement plan for all schools in conjunction with the Open Choice Office to meet with Choice families in Hartford to engage with them. In response to a Board question, Mr. Haynes replied that while initially planning just for TBS, the plan expanded to include all Choice families at all schools. Dr. Carnemolla added that Engagement Plans were already in place for the District but TBS had been in the forefront in the past years because students from both lower elementary schools were combining in one building. There were already structures in place there that the administrators and staff had been utilizing to build connections for families of new students to the District as well as to facilitate the combination of students and families from two schools into one. Mr. Haynes gave a quick review of the work being done in the internship program as well what is being done to address the barriers for Hartford students to take part in the program. Guidance is also being developed for the District’s LGBTQ+ students with professional development created for teachers providing them with information, guidelines, and protocols in how they can better support LGBTQ+ students. AHS & AMS are reviewing how to utilize their student assemblies, FLEX times and advisory periods to provide information to students on support services and for community building activities. In response to a Board question, Mr. Haynes replied that they are working on creating conditions in the classrooms so people can feel safer to share their thoughts; to facilitate a safer environment. The Superintendent added that while it is a possibility that students didn’t complete the survey because they didn’t feel comfortable, from the data collected, it showed that students had no problem speaking to adults so students could have either shared their thoughts on the survey or spoke to an adult or both; students were also informed about the consultants coming in to work with them and they were allowed to sign up to meet with them in groups or one-on-one. Dr. Carnemolla felt it was more the timing of when the survey went out in the high school that resulted in the low number of responses received.

The Superintendent reviewed for the Board Focus Area III – Communication and Partnerships which focuses on two-way communication between students/parents and those who work in the District. Mr. Haynes explained and gave a brief overview of the Internship Program at the high school level which partners students with business sectors in the local area and even as far as India. Responding to a Board question, Mr. Haynes explained this is a foundational year after restarting from the pandemic and hopes to secure additional partnerships. Interest is also growing among the students. Ms. Maria Mascoli is working diligently in trying to secure the partnerships with the businesses and match the students. Dr. Carnemolla added that students also provide

input to being matched with their interests. The Superintendent also reviewed the partnership Avon High School has with UConn and the State University System (Early College Experience with Tunxis).

The Superintendent gave a quick overview of Focus Area IV – Systems which is about resources and using all the resources which include Facilities and Security, use of the American Rescue Plan funds and Information Technology deployment. Dr. Carnemolla concluded the presentation explaining what the next steps are which include continuing the work with the SLAM Initiative; work on the FY 23-24 budget proposal; monitoring the budget as we end Quarter 1 for FY 22-23 and providing additional school safety and security training in conjunction with Avon Police Department for all District staff. The Avon Blueprint for Excellence Strategic Plan Update is attached to the end of these minutes.

D. Updates

The Superintendent updated the Board on two conversations she had with the parents who spoke at the August Board meeting. Dr. Carnemolla and Mr. Medic met with the parent on ways to recognize the teacher as requested; she will also speak with the teacher to ensure that he is comfortable with the recognition. Regarding the parent that spoke both tonight and last month regarding cell phone use, Dr. Carnemolla reviewed the Board policy and regulations that were recently revised with the input of the Board’s attorney. The policy states that students will not use cell phones in school unless they are allowed by an adult (staff person) in the building during non-instructional times, however, it is allowed if used for instructional class time purposes, such as learning use of digital photography. After speaking with the Policy Committee Chair, Ms. Young, it was decided to let the recently revised policy stand and allow administrators to work through it. This was all explained to the parent with the concern.

XII. Consent Calendar

A. 22-23/10 Approval of Budget Transfers

Jeffrey S. Fleischman made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Calendar as presented, Lynn Katz seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

XII. Old Business

A. 21-22/65 Portrait of the Graduate

The Superintendent reminded the Board members that this was presented at a previous Board meeting last school year, however, it was not voted upon and NEASC requires a vote be taken by the Board to approve it. Mr. Medic added that Ms. Lawlor and Ms. Berliner, Department Chairs and NEASC Coordinators, presented this to Board members in the Spring. He went on to give a review of the history and overview of the work that was done in creating the document. Mr. Medic briefly spoke on the plans on rolling out and implementing the work. This level of work is not just for the purpose of NEASC but to ensure our students are reaching key skills and dispositions that the District believes graduates should attain during their time with Avon. A key component of the NEASC reaccreditation process is that the District has a Portrait of the Graduate and there is a plan to implement it at the high school. It will also be evaluated to see how certain learning mechanisms used in the lower grades align with the document; this will be presented to PK-8 families. A more visually appealing graphic is also being created to make this a vital document for the community especially for new families that enroll their children in Avon.

Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the Portrait of the Graduate as presented, Laura Young seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0

XIII. New Business

- A. 22-23/11 Policy 6146.12 – Advanced Courses and Challenging Curriculum, First Read
Dr. Carnemolla explained that these policies were reviewed at the recent Policy Committee and has reached out to Board members regarding any questions concerning the policies. The above policy is required by law and is a new statute passed on July 1, 2022 that requires Boards of Education to have such a policy related to advanced courses and challenging curriculum which was touched upon in tonight’s presentation regarding college level courses. This policy states that the college level courses are defined, there is a process for ensuring that students can take those courses and the District allow as many students as possible to enroll in upper level courses, which aligns with our goals. This is the model policy from the Board’s legal counsel with nothing changed as it is directly connected to legal statute. The Superintendent explained that while this policy is a first read, she asked that the Board forego, if possible, a second read as this is required by law since July 1st.

Laura Young made a motion to adopt Policy 6146.12 – Advanced Courses and Challenging Curriculum as presented, Lisa Seminara seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

- B. 22-23/12 Policy 6146.1 – Basis for Grading, First Read
The Superintendent stated that the changes in this policy were minimal and eliminated the references to information for the classes of 2018 and 2019 because they are no longer relevant. The substantive change are the references addressing enrollment and advanced courses/programs and challenging curriculum and aligns with the previous policy. The State statute also requires that the grading policy is defined in this way which the District policy was already in alignment so the changes are minor. Dr. Carnemolla added that she had double checked with the Board attorney and the policy is still the recommendation of the attorney as it is presented.

Laura Young made a motion to adopt Policy 6146.1 – Basis for Grading as presented, Lynn Katz seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

- C. 22-23/13 Policy 5125.1 – Student Privacy, First Read
Because of the complexity of this policy and since there is already a similar policy in place there is no issue as a district to taking the time to ensure everyone has adequately reviewed the policy. The Superintendent suggested to add this to the October agenda as a second read. No action was taken.

- D. 22-23/14 Policy 6162.51 – Survey of Students, for Deletion
The Superintendent asked that this also be discussed at the October meeting since Policy 5125.1 would take the place of this policy should it be adopted. No action was taken.

- E. 22-23/15 Policy 6161 – Selection of Education Materials
Dr. Carnemolla reminded Board members that this policy was first talked about at a CABE meeting last Spring. The Board attorney was asked to review this policy when the policy regarding exemptions was being reviewed. There was an addition of the exact sentence that was passed by legislation, and is legally necessary.

Laura Young made a motion to adopt Policy 6161 – Selection of Education Materials as presented, Jackie Blea seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

- F. 22-23/16 Bus Contract Extension and Amendment
Ms. Russo informed Board members that she has learned that current negotiations for contracts that are going out to full RFP are coming back very high and to even try to obtain a new bus contract with another bus company would be an 18-month process at minimum. It is Ms. Russo’s recommendation that the District stay with the current vendor, Specialty Transportation, which the District has a very good working relationship especially given the favorable contract extension. The contract will end in 2029 with an RFP going out in 2027-2028, Ms. Russo stated in response to a Board question. Dr. Carnemolla added that should legislation change requiring electric buses then the District is permitted to seek a new contract.

Deb Chute made a motion to extend the current bus contract and amendment as presented, Thej Singh seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

G. 22-23/17 Fee Schedule

Ms. Russo stated that there is virtually no change in the fee schedule presented and no changes were made to lunch or breakfast prices given that it is still in a free meal environment. Once it returns to a paid setting the Food Service program will be reviewed to ensure that it is if not profitable at least a break-even position. Ms. Russo also reviewed the preschool tuition schedule with Ms. Fox, Director of Special Education, and the technology plan with Ms. Ferry, Director of Technology, with no increases recommended. The only change made was to the custodial hourly rate to ensure that the District is not losing any money in facility rentals.

Lynn Katz made a motion to approve the Fee Schedule as presented, Liz Sommerkorn seconded.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

XIV. Communication from Public

There was no other communication from the public.

XV. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

On behalf of the Lions Club, Ms. Seminara thanked the school district for their participation in the Hometown Hero dinner and events. The musical presentations and thank you notes received were appreciated and on display at the fire department and will be moved to the police department at a later date. The Lions appreciated everything that was done.

Ms. Blea expressed her appreciation for tonight's presentation as she acknowledged the important work that is being done, especially for the students who may be struggling, and is excited to hear future updates.

Ms. Young informed everyone that Avon was named Avon High School as #6 in the state by Niche.

Ms. Thompson shared her enthusiasm for being on the Board especially given that she is a previous Avon student herself and is excited to be part of the process seeing how Avon has transitioned through the years.

Dr. Carnemolla extended a welcome to Ms. Thompson.

XVI. Adjournment

At 9:41 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, October 14, 2022

AMS/AHS

School Climate/ Connectedness

INTRODUCTIONS

- AMS
 - Violet Jakupco (Grade 8)
 - Mahek Saikia (Grade 8)
- AHS
 - Vikram Chetnani (Grade 11)
 - Cole Milardo (Grade 12)

AVON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 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.

FROM OUR “BLUEPRINT”

Focus Area 2: Personal Growth & Relationships

We will foster a safe learning community that empowers students to be self-directed, self-regulated, and resilient as they strive to advance their own personal and academic goals.

FRAMING THE WORK- OUR “WHY”

- Students will provide a brief overview of why they volunteered to participate in the climate training sessions.

FRAMING THE WORK- THE “WHY”

- Building positive climate through school connectedness
- Having a way to repair relationships (impact on climate) when something inevitably damages them.
- The focus is on relationships, connections, student to student support, teacher to student support

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Students and staff should work together to build and maintain a welcoming and safe school climate for all
- Having a positive school climate and building relationships is the key to having a successful school
 - higher attendance rate, improved student performance, etc.)
- Instead of focusing on correcting bad behavior, teachers should focus on building and repairing relationships. Teach “with”, not “to”, “for”, or “not”.
- Safe Schools = Successful Students* AND Collaborative Adults

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Safe (*Physically and Emotionally*) Schools =
Successful Students*
AND
Collaborative Adults

Our mission is to inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

- Starting a school climate club?
- Working together to focus on building relationships and an exceptional climate by using restorative practices
- Implementing and utilizing different strategies in classrooms
- Getting to know the students and staff members more to create a sense of community

Thank you

for your time and for the honor tonight!

Avon Blueprint For Excellence: Strategic Plan Update

September 27, 2022

Focus Area I

I: STUDENT LEARNING We will create multiple student learning pathways to challenge students to think critically and creatively, persist in solving challenging problems, work collaboratively, and communicate effectively.

A few highlights of what we did related to this last year...

- **Strengthened core phonemic awareness instruction in grades K-1, further supported in tiered intervention**
- **Expanded inventory of decodable texts to support reading development in grades K-2**
- **Revised reading and writing units in grades K-12**
 - Incorporated the workshop model
 - Increased opportunities for choice
 - Shifted instructional practices to be aligned with the Science of Reading (K-5)
 - Began work on integrating Language (grammar, punctuation) standards into units and identifying instructional resources
- **Assistant Principal Data Teams**
 - APs worked with CO staff on the development of district wide practices
 - Developed year long scope and sequence for data work
 - Evidence in instructional practices
 - Focus on universal student success
- **Expanded PSAT to all students in grade 9 (Completing a 3 year sequence of preparation for 11th grade SAT)**
- **Development of APS Portrait of the Graduate skills, dispositions, and rubrics**

District Student Performance Data from 2021-2022

- **Formative and Summative Assessments (Curriculum Based)**
 - Used by district teachers and administrators to measure growth and performance in ELA and math throughout the year within our district curriculum. Informs instruction and drives data driven decision making.
- **Universal Screenings Aimsweb**
 - Allows school districts to measure student growth and performance in ELA and math throughout the year via a nationally normed assessment. Assists in identifying students who are academically at-risk and provides assessments to monitor progress.

State Student Performance Data from 2021-2022

- **Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC)**
 - Required annually for students in Grades 3 through 8. Used to describe student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.
- **CT School Day SAT**
 - Required annually by the State for grade 11 students. Also allows SAT School Day allows schools the ability to offer juniors seniors the opportunity to take the SAT during their regular school day at their home school, expanding access to a globally recognized college admission test.
- **Next Generation Science Standards Assessment (NGSS)**
 - Required annually by the State for students in grades 5, 8, and 11. The NGSS are K-12 science standards arranged in a coherent manner across disciplines and grades to provide all students an internationally benchmarked science education.

aimswebPlus Data: Reading

Avon Public Schools Spring 2022 aimswebPlus Reading Benchmark Scores						
Grade	% Well Below Average	% Below Average	% Average	% Above Average	% Well Above Average	% Average to Well Above
K	11.0	13.0	53.0	14.0	9.0	76
1	11.0	16.2	47.6	11.9	13.3	72.8
2	5.4	6.2	34.7	25.2	28.5	88.4
3	5.4	5.4	36.7	23.5	29.0	89.2
4	2.5	3.5	33.7	21.1	39.2	94
5	2.0	2.4	25.8	23.0	46.8	95.6
6	2.2	3.9	28.3	22.6	43.0	93.9
7	2.6	2.6	31.8	18.4	44.6	94.8
8	0.4	5.6	25.4	20.3	48.3	94

aimswebPlus Data: Mathematics

Avon Public Schools Spring 2022 aimswebPlus Math Benchmark Scores						
Grade	% Well Below Average	% Below Average	% Average	% Above Average	% Well Above Average	% Average to Well Above
K	3.5	8.0	51.5	17.5	19.5	76
1	8.1	6.2	43.3	26.2	16.2	72.8
2	2.9	7.4	24.4	29.8	35.5	88.4
3	5.9	4.5	38.9	26.7	24.0	89.2
4	7.5	3.5	28.0	23.0	38.0	94
5	4.5	3.7	24.0	25.2	42.7	95.6
6	2.2	3.0	31.2	22.5	41.1	93.9
7	3.7	4.5	29.0	19.3	43.5	94.8
8	5.2	4.3	28.4	25.4	36.6	94

2021-2022 Avon State Testing Results: Smarter Balanced Assessment

English Language Arts/Literacy			
Gr	Number of Students Tested	Avon % Level 3 or Above	State % Level 3 or Above
3	221	68.9	46.7
4	198	66.7	49.2
5	248	76.3	51.9
6	234	69.5	47.9
7	269	74	49.7
8	232	78.5	49.2

Mathematics			
Gr	Number of Students Tested	Avon % Level 3 or Above	State % Level 3 or Above
3	221	62.6	47.4
4	198	64.1	45.3
5	248	62.7	38.8
6	234	60.2	37.1
7	269	62.1	37.9
8	232	67.2	34.3

2021-2022 Avon State Testing Results: CT School Day SAT & NGSS

CT School Day SAT, 2021-22			
Grade	Number of Students Tested	Avon % Level 3 or Above	State % Level 3 or Above
11 ELA	227	81.0	55.6
11 Math	227	66.5	34.8

NGSS % Level 3 or Higher			
Gr	Number of Students Tested	Avon % Level 3 or Above	State % Level 3 or Above
5	249	67.5	50.5
8	232	72.0	46.6
11	229	76.9	43.8

2021-2022 State Testing Results For Comparison: Smarter Balanced

English Language Arts/Literacy					Mathematics				
Grade	Avon	Canton	Farmington	Simsbury	Grade	Avon	Canton	Farmington	Simsbury
3	68.9	64.4	67.5	72.6	3	62.6	67	70	72.6
4	66.7	65.9	76.1	78.8	4	64.1	66	76.6	78.4
5	76.3	63	72.9	73.9	5	62.7	57	60.7	65.9
6	69.5	72.2	81.3	82.5	6	60.2	65	69.1	71.3
7	74	61.8	78.3	74.3	7	62.1	61	65.3	60.9
8	78.5	58.4	70.4	70	8	67.2	50	59.8	52

2021-2022 State Testing Results For: CT School Day SAT & NGSS

CT School Day SAT				
English Language Arts: % Level 3 or Above				
Grade	Avon	Canton	Farmington	Simsbury
11	81	78.2	81.6	84

CT School Day SAT				
Mathematics: % Level 3 or Above				
Grade	Avon	Canton	Farmington	Simsbury
11	66.5	54.6	60.3	66.2

NGSS % Level 3 or Higher				
Grade	Avon	Canton	Farmington	Simsbury
5	67.5	62.3	80.8	67.7
8	72.0	56.6	71.6	74.7
11	76.9	65.8	75.3	87.9

Key Takeaways From Performance Data

- Avon's Universal Screening Process and District Curriculum Assessments continue to show high levels of achievement and continuous growth
- Avon students continue to score well above the state average
- CT School Day SAT: 11th Graders place 14th out of 192 districts in ELA
- CT School Day SAT: 11th Graders place 8th out of 192 district in Math
- Scores maintained a high level of student achievement even amongst a pandemic and major programmatic changes in ELA delivery model K-12

What's Next?

- K-5 Math Vertical Team (Goal: To improve math instruction for all students and explore resources to support any programmatic changes.)
- Continue to enhance coaching cycles with K-6 curriculum specialists
- Explore programmatic changes for grammar & identification of an instructional resource K-12
- Purposefully include academic & content specific vocabulary, questioning, and student tasks that are aligned with state assessment
- Identify places where using ELA or math Smarter Balanced interim assessments can be used as formative or summative assessments of curriculum skills and content
- Leverage collaborative team and building time to make data informed decisions about instruction and flexible student supports

Focus Area II - Personal Growth & Relationships

We will foster a safe and equitable learning community that empowers all students to be self-directed, self-regulated, and resilient as they strive to advance their own personal and academic goals.

- Building Positive School Climate and School Connectedness training for administrators
- Trauma & Restorative Practice training for all administrators
- Cultural Competence training for administrators, a small group of staff from each school, and all new employees
- Trauma training for all staff PK-12
- Building Positive School Climate, School Connectedness, and Restorative Practices training for all school staff
- Building Positive School Climate, Anti-Bullying, and Restorative Practices Training for student volunteers from AMS & AHS

School Climate & Connectedness Data

Surveyed Students in Grades 3-12

- 1,218 students completed survey
- 75% of students at PGS & RBS
- 75% of students at TBS
- 80% of students at AMS
- 14% of students at AHS - response data still consistent

Focus Groups Conducted at AMS & AHS

- Over 100 students participated in small group or individual discussions
- Grades 7-12, cross-section of all students

School Climate & Connectedness Data - District

I feel I belong at my school:

- 96.1% Very Much/Somewhat
- 3.9% Very Little/Not at All

I have a teacher/other adult who will help me if I need it:

- 92.5% of students answered “Yes”

I feel safe at school:

- 96.3% Very Much/Somewhat
- 3.7% Very Little/Not at All

School Climate & Connectedness Data - District

I have friends at school who I can count on:

- 95.5% Very Much/Somewhat
- 5.4% Very Little/Not at All

I feel other students treat me kindly/with respect:

- 89.5% Very Much/Somewhat
- 10.5% Very Little/Not at All

I feel adults treat me kindly/with respect:

- 96.8% Very Much/Somewhat
- 3.2% Very Little/Not at All

School Climate & Connectedness Data - TBS/AMS/AHS

Questions that were only asked in grades 5-12

I feel comfortable sharing my thoughts and ideas at school:

- 81.3% Very Much/Somewhat
- 18.6% Very Little/Not at All

I feel I can get help from a school counselor, social worker, or psychologist:

- 84.6% Very Much/Somewhat
- 15.3% Very Little/Not at All

School Climate & Connectedness Qualitative Data

Themes from Student Comments on Survey Grades 3-12 & AMS & AHS Grades 7-12 Focus Groups

- Teachers are seen as knowledgeable, approachable, and provide students with a sense of belonging.
- Most students report having close friendships with other students and positive relationships with peer groups
- Students expressed great pride in the quality of the education they receive and generally enjoy coming to school

School Climate & Connectedness Qualitative Data

Themes from Student Comments on Survey Grades 3-12 & AMS & AHS Grades 7-12 Focus Groups

- Some students of color & LGBTQ+ feel less connection to school than their counterparts
- Inappropriate language used indirectly and “casually” by students
- Students at AMS and AHS report a need to establish more formal and informal opportunities for connections between various groups of students to build a more inclusive community

Key Takeaways....

- **The vast majority of our students feel:**
 - A sense of belonging and safety (both physical and academic)
 - That peers treat them with kindness and respect
 - That there is an adult who would help them in a time of need
 - That peers treat them with kindness and respect
 - That school is an enjoyable place
- **There is still room for improvement:**
 - Students feeling comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas
 - Students receiving social/emotional support
 - Students treating one another with respect/kindness

What's Next?

- Working with District Leadership and CREC to design additional training for students related to building inclusive environments, impact of using inappropriate language
- Partnering with CREC's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist, Gloria Mengual, to implement additional professional development for staff in facilitating respectful dialogue that allows all students "safe space" for sharing thoughts/opinions
- Our Choice Family Engagement Plan is being updated for all schools, in conjunction with the Open Choice Office.

What's Next?

- We're proactively working to increase our AHS internship program offerings to include business located in Hartford; limiting barriers and increasing opportunities
- AHS & AMS student assemblies, FLEX, and advisory periods providing information to students on support services and community-building activities
- District guidance on LGBTQ+ student support is being developed

Focus Area III - Communication and Partnerships

We will continue to build internal and external partnerships in service to the district's mission and beliefs for student learning through clear communication and transparent processes.

Highlights....

- **The Achieve Internship Program at AHS:**
 - Revamped website and promotional materials
 - 2014-2022 - 214 community partnerships in various business sectors have been established.
 - Since July 1, 2022 - over 30 new or continuing partnerships including Chrysalis Center in Hartford, and Acheron Software Consultancy based in India have been confirmed.
- **46 courses at AHS that are partnerships with UConn and the State University System (Early College Experience, Tunxis)**
- **Redeveloped District website**

What's Next?

- Expand internship program to include additional industries and types of work experiences
- Provide more students the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses
- Research and pilot additional methods of communication (Dismissal Manager, District app, text messaging, for example)
- Revisit the ways in which we engage with families (formats of Open House and student conferences, for example)
- Explore ways to highlight achievements of students, staff, and the District as a whole

Focus Area IV - Systems

We will maximize efficiencies and optimize resources through the ongoing creation, refinement, and alignment of processes, procedures, and systems.

- **Facilities and Security**

- Summer projects completed
 - PGS parking lot repaved, AHS gym floor, AMS painting, AHS lock replacement, security upgrades
- Safety/Security “All Hazards Plans” reviewed & revised
- New “Standard Operating Procedures” for security implemented

- **American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) used to purchase:**

- BenQ Boards - deployed in smaller instructional spaces throughout the schools
- Wifi Access points - ordered and will be installed to enhance indoor/outdoor connectivity
- Camera Servers - increased storage capacity to accommodate additional cameras
- Variable Air Valves - ordered and will be installed at AHS
- Air Handling/RTU Replacement (Phase II) - auditorium completed
- Districtwide Carpet replacement - libraries at PGS, RBS & TBS completed

- **Information Technology deployment**

- AHS/AMS staff laptops
- 2nd & 5th grade Chromebooks
- WiFi access points
- Upgraded network management

What's Next?

- We will continue our work with the SLAM Initiative to complete the Enrollment & Space study
- District administration will work collaboratively with our staff to develop our FY 23-24 Budget proposal
- The budget will be closely monitored as we end Quarter 1 for FY 22-23 and spending will be reduced or adjusted as needed to address the trend of rising costs in supplies, shipping and services
- Additional school safety and security training for all District staff, in conjunction with Avon Police Department