



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, April 25, 2023, 7:00 pm

Avon High School, Library

Avon High School
510 West Avon Road
Avon, CT 06001

MINUTES

Attendance

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

Board Members Absent: None

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

I. **Call to Order**

Ms. Debra Chute, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

A. **Roll Call**

Ms. Chute conducted a roll call of Board members and Administrators

II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

III. **Mission Statement**

IV. **Recognition - Bridges Program**

Dr. Carnemolla was excited for the Bridges program presentation tonight, so the Board and public could see what happens at Avon Schools through the lens of the students. Dr. Carnemolla thanked all the parents and students for coming and said “makes me happy and proud” that the high school students/mentors of the Bridges program wanted to speak and present tonight.

Mr. Tasonn Haynes and 2 of the students from the program presented to the Board a review of the 7 week program. Then all the high school students that were present got up and said a few words on what the program meant to them and what they got out of it.

Dr. Carnemolla went on to thank 2 instrumental faculty members, Rose-Marie Mouning and Mary Labowsky for being instrumental in bringing the Bridges program to life, and getting it off the ground. She also thanked the administrators and staff involved in making Bridges run seamlessly between the schools.

AHS Mentors Recognized: Harmony Blackwood, Gabby Blaise, Gerald Blaise, Josh Baldeo, Diamond-Marie Collier, Shadika Donalds, Juan Dorado, Arianna Dunn, Ianna Dunn, Andrew Grant, Derek Graves, Roel

Johnson, Arrissa Jones, Angela Kabaki, Gabe Maldonado, Arrianna Marshall, Zaeda Reid, Jahki Ritchens, Devin Rodriguez, Aliyana White, Ameir Williams, Aniya Williams-Bey.

AHS Music Students

Mr. Andrew Brochu and Mr. Rafik Ismail, music teachers at the high school then took the floor to recognize and explain the process the students went through to be accepted into the various levels of the National Association for Music Education Festivals

Connecticut Music Educators Assoc. Northern Region Musicians *-(students from our Region of CT)*

Band: Natalie Melnik, Hashmit Verman,

Choir - Aradhana Chetnani, Shriya Dharan, Holly Freeman, Vera Srinivasan, Amalia Alexander, Lillian Peng

Connecticut Music Educators Assoc. All State Musicians *(Students from our whole state)*

Band: Victor Tirado

Choir: Shaun Ostheimer

Orchestra: Jingrui Hu, Liya Tang, Danielle Chung

National Assoc. for Music Education - All *Eastern and All National Orchestras *(* All Eastern consists of Eastern United States)*

Orchestra: Daniel Choi and Michael Chen

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Board of Education Special Workshop Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2023

Ms. Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the BOE Workshop minutes of March 21, 2023, Ms. Lynn Katz seconded.

Motion passed 9-0-0

B. Board of Education Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2023

Ms. Liz Sommerkorn made a motion to approve the BOE Regular Monthly Minutes of March 21, 2023, Ms. Thej Singh seconded.

Motion Passed 9-0-0

VI. Communication from Public

Ms. Erin Dawson of Avon spoke of the wonderful event at PGS, where Alvin Carter, Jr., a renowned jazz performer and percussionist came and performed for the kids. The students were captivated and engaged with the sounds of the instruments. She wanted to thank Amy Borio and the PGS PTO for bringing this performer to PGS.

VII. Items of Information and Proposals

A. Student Representative Report – Charlotte Parry and Lillian Peng, AHS Student Representatives. Ms. Parry started with the update;

AHS: Students just got back from a Holocaust Memorial trip visiting Germany, Poland and the Czech republic- was said to be a very memorable and amazing experience.

Advanced Placement Art students had work displayed at the Avon Free Public Library

Footloose will have performances in late April

AMS: Band Concert coming up on May 11th

Talent show is May 12th

Singing Ensemble Arioso will be singing at a Yard Goats game in May

TBS: Parents and Children started a book club and sports night

Grade 6 went to the Boston Museum of Science

Peter Pan is coming soon

Ms. Peng continued:

RBS: Book Fair just wrapped up

SBAC Testing the next few weeks

PGS: SBAC Testing

May 3 - Walk/Bike/Roll to school day to bring awareness to carbon emissions

Mr. Carter- Jazz Musician had a great visit to PGS

B. Financial Report – Susan Russo, Business Manager

Ms. Russo started by discussing salaries and the savings and deficits due to new hires, FMLA leaves, and vacancies, with both certified and non-certified staff. Budget transfers were facilitated to offset the deficits on the salary level.

In other expenses, natural gas, disposal and water had rising costs that were budgeted, but the increases still exceeded the estimates. Following the energy conservation policy by the District has helped immensely. Special Education is at 1.3M unencumbered. There were also some transportation needs/expenses for Special Education this month, but a budget transfer was able to rectify those costs.

Ms. Russo stated that we are at 3.4M unencumbered, which is 5.36%, which is up from 4.87% from last year.

VIII. Committees & Liaison Reports

A. Committee Reports

- Curriculum & Professional Practices – Ms. Jackie Blea, Chair

Met on April 18th with a great discussion on curriculum and a course change for which the committee is moving up to the Board this evening. Next meeting is May 30th at 5:30 p.m.

- Finance – Ms. Lynn Katz, Chair

Met on April 18th to discuss the financial report and this year's audit. Next meeting will be May 9th at 6:00.

- Negotiations – Ms. Deb Chute, Chair - Ms. Chute mentioned the next date for Administrative Assistant Association Negotiations will be May 1st.

- Policy – Ms. Laura Young, Chair - Ms. Young stated that the Policy Committee did not meet this month, next meeting is on May 2nd at 6:00 p.m.

B. Liaison Report

- Capital Region Education Council – Jackie Blea, Board Representative

Ms. Blea reported that there was a Teacher Residency program that was discussed as well as Education Funding. Their annual meeting is coming up and invite all who can to attend. Ms. Blea also mentioned how moved she was by the presentation by the Bridges program and that she wants to go back to CREC and replicate the Bridges program at other CREC schools.

IX. Chair's Report –Ms. Debra Chute, Board Chair

A. Board Chair Update

Ms. Chute commented on how proud she is of all that was presented tonight. She wants to thank all the administrators of the buildings that help with all these programs to keep kids engaged. Ms. Chute had the honor of attending the Abby Weiner Memorial at the Avon High School Library and found it to be incredibly touching. Guest speakers that were survivors were so moving and the portrait of Abby Weiner came out beautifully.

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

A. Hiring Report - Mr. Medic went over the hiring report. They hired some long term subs for a few staff out on leave as well as hiring several non-certified staff this month. Mr. Medic gave a special thank you to Kim Powell who is retiring this month, for 11 years of service to the Avon School District.

B. Enrollment Report - Dr. Carnemolla stated we have had a large registration of Kindergarten students for next year, which will need to be looked at for class sizes going forward as it is larger than usual. We are up 13 students from last year at this time.

C. Strategic Plan Update- Dr. Carnemolla started by saying the Bridges Program is a part of Avon's Strategic Plan. By giving the feeling of connectedness and belonging to those students that don't come from the town of Avon, the Bridges Program helps to unify the district.

D. Updates

Dr. Carnemolla also attended the Holocaust Memorial Ceremony, along with several Board members, BeBeann Oh did an amazing job on the portrait of Abby Weiner and Mr. Stu Abrams did a fabulous job putting the ceremony together. Senator Seminara was in attendance to give a Citation to Mr. Abrams. Dr. Carnemolla went on to say that April is Holocaust Awareness Month and there are plans in place to facilitate educational activities for the students to learn about this era in history. Dr. Carnemolla went on to say that it is great to have a day or a month to honor people, it is her opinion that every day we should be teaching the kids to accept and respect ALL cultures, ALL year.

Finally, Dr. Carnemolla wanted to thank the chaperones, Stu, Harriet, Jim and Tim (and a few of their spouses) for the Europe trip, as it isn't easy chaperoning children that aren't your own, but they stepped up and did a fabulous job keeping Avon students safe in another country, which takes a different level of dedication and responsibility.

Ms. Chute wanted to thank the generous PTO's, and point out the generous donation to the Abby Weiner Memorial collection, which was a donation of over 300 books to the library for which we are so grateful for.

XI. Consent Calendar -

22-23/63 - Approval of \$2,000 donation from TBS PTO to TBS for 6th grade field trip to Boston

22-23/64 - Approval of \$727.97 donation from TBS PTO to TBS for pencil boxes for incoming 4th (rising 5th) graders.

22-23/65 - Approval of 250 bottles of hand sanitizer to PGS, approximate value of \$1,250 by Kohl's Department Store.

22-23/66 - Approval of book donations to the Abby Weiner Holocaust Book Collection, valued at \$8,718.29.

22-23/67 - Budget Transfers

Mr. Jeffrey Fleischman motioned to approve the Consent Calendar as it is presented, Nicole Russo Seconded.

Motion passed 9-0-0

XII. Old Business

XIII. New Business

A. **22-23/68** Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, **Ms. Deb Chute motioned to approve** that the Avon Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Ms. Laura Young seconded

Motion Passed 9-0-0

- B. **22-23/69 Ms. Deb Chute motioned to approve** that The Avon Board of Education will allow the sale of students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in section 10-221q of the C.G.S. provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the school day or on the weekend, 2) the sale is at the location of an event, and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

Ms. Lynn Katz seconded.

Motion passed 9-0-0

- C. **22-23/70** 2022 Audit Report was our federal and state audit, there were no comments or feedback to change our financials for the year 21-22. Ms. Russo wants to thank Mr. Tom DiStasio for the collaboration with her staff to get out the audit.
- D. **22-23/71** Course Change Proposal for Spanish 5 and 5H-
Mr. Jess Giannini began by saying the course change proposal would condense units 3 and 4, since the content and focus areas are similar in those two units, and a new unit would be added with a focus on Central and Latin American Heros.
Jackie Blea made a motion to approve the course change proposal to Spanish 5 and Spanish 5H,
Ms. Sarah Thompson seconded
Motion passed 9-0-0
- E. **22-23/72** Social Studies Curriculum Revision of Stage 1
Mr. Giannini reviewed the stages of curriculum revisions, specifically what stage 1 is and what part the BOE plays in the approval of the stages. The BOE approves stage 1, this is home to the standards and the daily work that is done in the classroom. Stage 1 does not change until the Board approves it. The Grades 7-12 Social Studies Curriculum, at stage 1, is looking to be approved tonight, as it was last approved in 2016. Some of the changes were moving to more content focus versus skill focused, also some Legislative requirements from the state have driven some of the changes/revisions as well. There were new units of study and electives added to the curriculum also.
Chair Deb Chute reiterated that it is a large undertaking and is appreciative of all the work that has gone into it.
Deb Chute motioned to approve Stage 1 Social Studies Standards revision for grades 7-12,
Sarah Thompson seconded
Motion Passed 8-0-0

- F. **22-23/73** 2023-2024 Avon Board of Education Proposed Meeting Dates
Mr. Jeff Fleishman motioned to approve the 2023-2024 Proposed Avon Board of Education Meeting Dates, Lynn Katz seconded
Motion passed 8-0-0

XIV. Communication from Public

There was no communication from the public

XV. Communication from Avon Board of Education Members

There was no communication from the Board of Education Members

XVI. Executive Session- The Board went into Executive session, with Dr. Carnemolla, to discuss Non-Union Contracts at 8:25 p.m.

XVII. Return from Executive Session: 8:58 p.m.

Adjournment

At 8:59 The Avon Board of Education Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote of 9-0-0

Minutes prepared by Christine Sardinkas, Board Recording Clerk

Minute respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Fleischman, Avon Board Secretary

Jeffrey S. Fleischman May 5, 2023

NOTE: If there is any person interested in an item that does not appear on the agenda, please arrange to speak with the Chair or the Superintendent of Schools before the meeting to discuss the matter. If the item is appropriate to the meeting, it may be discussed under New Business or Old Business. If the item requires extensive discussion or additional information, it may be placed on a future agenda.