

**Portland Board of Education  
Policy Subcommittee  
Minutes of Tuesday, May 6, 2025 @ 5:45 pm  
Portland High School Media Center**

Committee Members Present:

Meg Scata  
Laurel Steinhauser  
Stacey Benham

Committee Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools  
Chuck Hershon, Portland Middle School Administrator  
Kate Lawson, Portland High School Administrator

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

M. Scata called the meeting to order at 5:48 pm

**2. Approve Minutes of March 18, 2025**

**L. Steinhauser moved to approve the minutes of March 18, 2025, seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**3. New Business**

**A. Discussion on Cell Phones**

Currently, personal cell phones are not allowed at Valley View, Gildersleeve, Brownstone, and the middle school. At the high school level, Principal Lawson, has taken a thoughtful approach by engaging both students and staff in discussions around appropriate device use. She presented her recommendations for updated personal device guidelines and expressed her belief that the school is ready to implement a no-phone policy. As part of this transition, a clear structure for addressing non-compliance will need to be developed. There was also a discussion about where students should store their phones during the day, with the preferred guideline being that devices remain powered down and out of sight. Notably, 66% of the high school's faculty support a no-phone policy.

There was discussion about implementing a short-term cell phone statement to outline expectations and rules until a formal policy can be developed. Ms. Lawson will draft the interim statement and present it to the Policy Committee at either the May or June meeting for review and feedback.

**B. Non-Lapsing Fund**

Dr. Britton explained that Fund 11 and Lunch Fund transfers are scheduled to be made at tonight's Board meeting. Following the transfers, there will be a discussion regarding replacement items that were not included in the original budget. The group also discussed the need to develop a formal policy for this account, as the district is entitled to maintain this fund. There was consensus that the CAFE model policy 3171.1 would serve as a strong foundation for drafting Portland's version. Additionally, the committee discussed including language to ensure

that the funds are not used for ongoing operational expenses, but rather reserved for unplanned costs that exceed budgeted amounts or for capital expenditures.

There was consensus to present the policy for a first reading at the second Board meeting in May, pending Dr. Britton's confirmation Stephanie that the draft is ready for review.

**C. Safety & Security Policy 3516, Regarding Bill HB 7066**

TABLED to next meeting

**D. Student Conduct Policy 5131 / 5131.1 / 5131.11 / 5131.5 / 5131.6 / 5131.9**

TABLED to next meeting

**4. Old Business**

**A. Alternative Education Programs Policy 6172**

Dr. Britton shared that S. McLaughlin had reviewed the policy and raised several concerns. The district's attorney is aware of her feedback and is in the process of updating the policy accordingly. TABLED to next meeting

**B. Transfer of Funds Between Categories Policy 3160**

Stephanie is working on this with the Town Finance Director. TABLED to next meeting

**5. Review and Discuss CAFE Policy Updates**

No discussion

**6. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tricia Dean  
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk