Portland Board of Education
Personnel Subcommittee
Minutes of Tuesday, September 30, 2025 @ 1:00 pm

Committee Members Present:
Laurel Steinhauser
Dave Murphy
Sarah Spear

Committee Members Absent:
None

Administration Present:
Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools
Sara McLaughlin, Director of Student Services
Bob Shea, Director of Building & Grounds

Others Present:
Stephanie Fragola, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs
Lisa O'Neill, Senior Regional Manager, ESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

L. Steinhauser called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm

2. ESS

a. Presentation on Fill Rates and Minimum Wage Impact

L. O'Neill presented an overview of the partnership between Portland Public Schools and ESS as of September 30, 2025. Highlights included fill rates, the transition to the Red Rover absence management platform, ESS incentives to increase and retain the substitute pool, and the new minimum wage requirement. The new daily rates are $114.35 for teacher substitutes and $105.88 for paraprofessional substitutes. The ESS contract is scheduled for renewal on 7/1/2026.

Dr. Britton and S. Fragola reviewed the current cost impacts but did not have projected budget impacts available. S. Spear requested that an estimate of the likely budget impact be provided at a future meeting. Discussion followed regarding other substitute agencies and the potential savings, if any, of managing substitutes internally. It was determined that bringing the function in-house would not result in cost savings.

Consensus to move the new wage rate to the full board

3. 30-hour Floater Custodian Position

B. Shea reviewed the position requirements, noting that 10 hours per week are allocated to the kitchen, with the remainder serving as a district floater position. The request is to increase the position from a 25-hour role to a 30-hour union position, with pay aligned to current custodians. This change could save approximately $18,000 in overtime. He noted that increased school use outside of normal hours due to activities and winter chores has contributed to the need. An internal paraprofessional applicant is currently interested in the position. B. Shea also explained the process for assigning extra hours to minimize overtime use. He confirmed that this change will not impact upcoming negotiations.

S. Fragola reviewed the overall financial impact. Dr. Britton noted that the Building & Grounds committee was in agreement with this request.

Consensus to move forward to the full board

4. 2 FTE Paraprofessionals

S. McLaughlin reviewed two new grants: the SEED grant ($73,000) and the Mental Health grant. She explained that one paraprofessional position is for the Owlett program and the other is to support a student's needs in the district, outlining the specific requirements for each. L. Steinhauser inquired about spending through the Mental Health grant, which is structured as a potential two-year grant (initial year with an option to apply for the second). These represent new needs and are fully grant-funded. While the paraprofessional positions are not new, the funding source is.

Consensus to move forward to the full board

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 pm