

**Portland Board of Education**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Minutes of Tuesday, August 6, 2024 @ 6:00 pm**  
Portland High School Media Center

Board Members Present:

Laurel Steinhauser  
Angela Hammond  
Tim Lavoy  
Kim Nagy-Maruschock  
Meg Scata  
Sarah Spear

Board Members Absent:

Dave Murphy

Administration Present:

Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools  
Stephanie Fragola, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs  
Sara McLaughlin, Director of Student Services

Student Representative:

None

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

Laurel Steinhauser, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**M. Scata moved to approve the agenda, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of July 9, 2024 Board of Education Meeting Minutes

**M. Scata moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by A. Hammond. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**5. Audience of Citizens**

Erin Benson, Grove St - expressed concern about the influx of Valley View resignations. Stated she would like to know the justification for the resignations, and what the Board's plan is around these resignations.

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight - none**

**7. Student Representative Report - none**

**8. Communications and Updates**

**A. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Britton looked at the historical data for resignations. During a school year approximately 10-15% of staff leave. He gave a sense of the number of resignations per year. We are in the ballpark of what we expect each year. He explained he conducts exit interviews for every certified staff that

leaves the district. He then provides the personnel committee with the feedback. He gave some details on the reasons staff left. Reasons included were career advancement, significant salary increase in another district, and step movements. He explained the salary needs vs what the community can afford. Two others left for family reasons and choosing a different career path.

Principal Walstrom addressed the Board to review what the plan is to replace staff that left. He thanked former Principal Bruenn for her part in a smooth transition. He has selected 24 applicants to interview from the pool of 70. Staff members from Valley View have volunteered to be involved in the interview process. He explained the class assignment letters that were sent out today.

L. Steinhauser thanked Mr. Walstrom for his work and his building of a cohesive team.

Dr. Britton reviewed correspondence received regarding bus route notification. He explained the process and the option Portland offers for alternative bus routes. Due to this, we give parents until 8/1 to submit requests. After that date is when M&J starts finalizing the list. To get the list out earlier we would either need to push back the deadline for parents to submit requests or not offer the opportunity for alternative bus routes. L. Steinhauser stated that the deadline used to be at the end of the current school year for next year and that parent feedback was it was not enough time to plan for families.

Updated legislative law information submitted.

Copies of the Mental Health and School Consolidation grant shared with the Board.

Reviewed correspondence received from the State Department of Education regarding the open choice reimbursement rate. The state reimbursement rate will be higher than projected. Portland will continue to maintain 5 percent. The Board asked for clarification on if the number is based on seats declared or filled. Also, what happens if we don't maintain 5 percent? Also, confirm that the percentage is 5% and not an additional 5%.

Would like to schedule a special meeting on 8/20 from 6pm-7:30 to have a goals workshop. First read on the first meeting in Sept. Will finalize the date later this week.

**B. Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs – S. Fragola**

Authorized spending report distributed and reviewed.

The meter issue will need to be done as an accrual. Temporary payroll is covering ESY.

**C. Director of Student Services – S. McLaughlin**

Monthly Student Services report submitted. Utilizing Indeed for hiring. Auditing paraprofessional needs. The next steps of the audit explained. Dr. Britton thanked Sara for her thorough report.

Kindergarten assessments reviewed.

**9. New Business (Discussion/Possible Action)**

**A. S. Sonstrom Leave of Absence Request**

S. Sonstrom is asking for an extended leave of absence beyond the 12 weeks.

**M. Scata moved to approve the extended leave of absence for S. Sonstrom, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**B. Paraeducator Need**

S. McLaughlin reported that we need to add a para due to a new 1:1 need. This has been vetted through the personnel committee. Dr. Britton explained the budgeting process for filling this need.

**M. Scata moved to accept the request for an additional paraeducator for a 1:1 position, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **10. Old Business (Discussion/Possible Action)**

### **A. Board of Education Self-Evaluation (*discussed under executive session*)**

## **11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum – L. Steinhauser – no report
- B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting on 8/14/24
- C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – working on negotiations
- D. Buildings and Grounds – next meeting on 8/19/24
- E. Liaison
  - 1. CREC – M. Scata – backpack giveaway day 8/14/24, and convocation on 8/23/24
  - 2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – no report
  - 3. Youth Services Advisory Board – T. Lavoy – next meeting on 8/20/24
  - 4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – S. Spear – no report
  - 5. Land and Building Usage Committee – D. Murphy – no report

## **12. Audience of Citizens - none**

## **13. Board of Education Member Comments**

Tim Lavoy – thanked Ryan for his comments; appreciates Dr. Britton’s hard work; need to start thinking about a plan b incase the school referendum fails.

Kim Nagy-Maruschock – thanked Ryan for explaining the process of hiring, she stated we need to do more at the level of people staying vs waiting until they exit.

Meg Scata – stated she understands what the community needs and wants; participated in the teacher of the year symposium; attended the CABE webinar on budgeting; CABE is hosting a professional development workshop.

Sarah Spear – stated her sentiments that she cares deeply about parent concerns; thanked Dr. Britton for his work on the reimbursement from the state.

Laurel Steinhauser – it’s on her radar to report the climate and culture results from the recent survey; expressed gratitude and appreciation for our teachers; spoke about teachers fundraising on their time off to start a robotics club.

## **14. Executive Session – for the purpose of Board of Education Self-Evaluation, and MOU for Contract Extension Agreement with Portland Federation of Paraprofessionals**

**M. Scata moved to enter executive session for the purpose of Board of Education Self-Evaluation, and invite the superintendent, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Entered Executive Session: 7:45 pm**

**Exited Executive Session: 9:30 pm**

## **15. Executive Session Action - none**

## **16. Adjournment**

**T. Lavoy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

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