

PORTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
**Special Joint Meeting with the**  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
**April 23, 2024 AT 6:30 PM**

BOE Present: Laurel Steinhauser, Tim Lavoy, Meg Scata, David Murphy, Kim Nagy-Maruschock,  
Sarah Spear, Angela Hammond

BOE Absent: None

BOS Present: First Selectman Ryan Curley, John Dillon, Shaun Manning, Robert Hetrick, James Tripp, Michael Pelton;  
via remote Michael Hernandez, then in person at 7:02pm

BOS Absent: None

Others Present: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Charles Britton  
Mike Sorano and Bryce Sens from FRIAR Architecture  
Gildersleeve Principal Ryan Walstrom  
PMS Principal Chuck Hershon

1. First Selectman Ryan Curley called the special joint meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. Update on School Facilities Plan

Dr. Britton stated the school facilities plan that is being presented tonight will be available on the Board of Education website.

Forums will be scheduled on April 25, April 29 and May 1, details are available on the Board of Education website. There will be the opportunity for public discussion at these forums.

Dr. Britton read a statement on Civil Discourse.

Historical background from 1990 to 2004 was reviewed. In 2000-2005 Portland invested in a new Portland Middle School and renovation of Portland High School. In 2015 there were 5 buildings: Valley View (Prek-1), Gildersleeve (2-4), Brownstone (5-6), PMS (7-8) and PHS (9-12). There have been no major capital investments made in the elementary schools since 1991.

As a function of time and wear and tear, the buildings are showing their age. The facilities/maintenance department has been doing a phenomenal job of maintaining the schools to the best of their ability, but the age of the buildings and lack of capital investments have made it difficult.

In 2019 Sitalines LLC conducted a facility analysis. In 2020 they presented their report to the BOS/BOE. A facilities Study Committee was formed in Aug. 2021 through May 2023. They developed a report relating to the current and future school facilities need. The list of priorities the committee established was reviewed.

Community feedback was generated by way of survey from GreatBlue. 56.9% of respondents indicated a consolidated Prek-5 elementary school and moving 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school was preferred.

Mike Sorano from FRIAR reviewed the Ed Specification plan. He reviewed the square footage per student requirements for maximum reimbursements. The plan takes the design, material list, and construction phasing to develop a budget.

Bryce Sens from FRIAR explained the renovate as new process at Valley View. Proposed floor plan reviewed.

Principal Walstrom reviewed how the PreK-5 school would operate. He benchmarked similar schools to view the logistics, gather schedule information, and examine operations. He spoke to the school's culture, climate and identity. Mr. Walstrom showed an example of potential lunch, recess, and WIN schedules. Benefits of consolidation listed.

Principal Hershon conceptualized how a grade 6-8 PMS school would operate. He reviewed the physical fit. Mr. Hershon reviewed the middle school program of studies. He gave an example of a master schedule. Benefits of a 6-8 middle school reviewed.

Dr. Britton explained how much this will cost. He reviewed an estimated cost breakdown to include project cost, ineligible costs, state reimbursement, and local responsibility.

Bonding forecast calculation reviewed. Offsetting savings reviewed on what would be reduced out of the current operating budget.

Dr. Britton reviewed what it would take to keep the existing schools running if a consolidation was not to happen. He gave a side-by-side comparison of consolidating to PreK-5 school vs maintaining three elementary schools. Dr. Britton also gave the scenario of doing nothing.

Secondary school capital improvement needs reviewed. HVAC state reimbursement discussed.

Discussion on timeline if Portland decides consolidation is the best option.

Shaun Manning: suggested another joint meeting so the Boards can digest the information and then ask questions to FRIAR and Dr. Britton.

Michael Hernandez: asked if only decommissioning Gildersleeve option was off the table. Mr. Curley stated he thinks the reason not to choose that option was because this means we would have to renovate Brownstone and Valley View as well, which would put the price out of reach for most.

Dr. Britton stated if we don't meet the June 30, 2024 timeline, then he has another year to write the grant and submit by June 30, 2025. This would push the timeline forward for everything another year.

**Consensus to hold another joint meeting to discuss the plan presented further.** Public comments will be available at this joint meeting.

Dave Murphy reiterated that there will be three community forums to discuss the presentation.

Mr. Curley stated there is a committee currently working on the options if Gildersleeve were to be decommissioned. The committee meets twice a month on Mondays, in person and online.

3. Adjourn

**S. Manning moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved.  
MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Dean

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk