

**Portland Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023 @ 7:00 pm**

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

Laurel Steinhauser, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

BOE Members Present: Laurel Steinhauser, Tim Lavoy, Sarah Spear, Meg Scata, David Murphy and Stacy Benham

Members Absent: Kim Nagy-Maruschock

Administration Present: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs Stephanie Fragola, Gildersleeve Principal Ryan Walstrom, and via zoom Dawn Davis

Student Representative: Liam Rowe, Caitlin Walsh

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

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

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of October 17, 2023 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes  
Correct item #11 A and B – A. Curriculum should read ‘discussed Eric’s data presentation’, B. Policy should read ‘meeting addressed policy first reads’.

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

**5. Audience of Citizens – none**

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – Recognizing Gildersleeve as a School of Distinction**  
Ryan Walstrom reported that five years ago, due to smarter balanced scores, Gildersleeve was identified as a school in need of improvement. Since that indicator, staff has been working hard to reverse that identification. Mr. Walstrom presented a power point on the steps taken to achieve where they are today. Staff shared their contributions to how they achieved the distinction.

**7. Student Representative Report – Caitlin reported that fall sports have come to a close, girls and boys soccer have advanced, football is doing well, Dec 6<sup>th</sup> is the NHS induction, the Veteran’s day program went well, food drive going on now and food collected will go to the food bank. Liam reported the student senate ball will be 12/2, a new club has started – Model UN, and musical rehearsals are starting.**

## 8. Communications and Updates

A. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Britton reported that he attended the science of reading master class today. On Professional Development day, 11/6, K-3 worked on the pilot for Into Reading, which will be launched Jan 2024. Teacher of the Year ceremony will take place tomorrow night, Sam Tucker will be honored. Friday is the CABE Convention in Mystic. Enrollment report submitted. New Board member leadership conference is in December. This would be suited for any Board member who has been on the Board for less than two years. Submitted correspondence from the data specialist at the state for Board review. Shared the CT State BOE five year plan. Asked the Board to review Policy 1312 – Public Complaints regarding some parent objections to text. Shared the process with the Board of addressing complaints and the vetting process. Dr. Britton shared the second draft of the Ed Spec Plans with the Board. At the next Board meeting the group will schedule the Board retreat in December. Survey post card targeted to hit households the Monday after Thanksgiving.

B. Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs – Stephanie Fragola Authorized spending report submitted. Open Choice, speech and language, and outplacements contribute to approximately a \$350,000 deficit as of right now. This is at the 73% reimbursement rate.

C. Director of Student Services – Dawn Davis - Report submitted. Dawn reported that the numbers are stable; 281 IEP's, 20 outplaced students, 67 students in specialized programs, 4 magnet students needing services, 504 plans have been steady, 57 EL students. 23% prevalence rate. Contracting with an agency for speech and language services. Long term substitute for Life Skills will stay with us until we find the right candidate. Transition program transportation – sharing a driver with the senior center. Paraprofessional update.

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

A. 2024 Board of Education Meeting Dates – M. Scata asked to add a second meeting date in April and November. Consensus on the Board that they can add a Special meeting if needed.

**M. Scata moved to approve the 2024 Board of Education meeting dates as presented, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

B. E. Millerd Lewis, Teacher, Leave of Absence Request

**M. Scata moved to approve the leave of absence request for E. Millerd Lewis, seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

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

A. Board of Education Policies (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

1. Policy 7230.2 – Indoor Air Quality – changes made reflects CABE language updates

**T. Lavoy moved to approve Policy 7230.2 Indoor Air Quality as presented, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

2. Policy 5145.53 – Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth – changes made reflects CABE language updates.

**M. Scata moved to approve Policy 5145.53 Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth as presented, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Policy 6159 – Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program – reflects changes to state law.

**M. Scata moved to approve Policy 6159 Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program as presented, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

## **11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum – L. Steinhauser – next meeting 11/15/23
- B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting 12/15/23
- C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – no report
- D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata – no report
- E. Liaison
  - 1. CREC – M. Scata – next meeting 11/15/23
  - 2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – Discussed 2024 calendar. Track will be line painted soon.
  - 3. Committee on Solidarity – T. Lavoy – no report
  - 4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – T. Lavoy/S. Spear – no report

## **12. Audience of Citizens –**

Erin Benson, Grove St – spoke regarding the transgender policy and what this means for the student's at Valley View and inquired about how to find out who selects the reading materials. L. Steinhauser advised her to reach out to Valley View Principal to discuss, as the Board, per its bylaws, is not allowed to respond to comments.  
Erin Livensparger, Middle Haddam Rd – thanked the Board for having a policy to protect transgender students.

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

D. Murphy – inquired if Dr. Britton knew what the status of the town facilities committee was. Dr. Britton suggested that Dave contact Ryan Curley to find out where they are in the committee selection process.  
S. Spear – Honored to be elected to continue serving on the Board. Attending the CABE convention on Friday. Spotlight presentation was great. Thanked the commenters for speaking during audience of citizens.  
S. Benham – appreciated tonight's spotlight. Concerned about the grant funding expiring after next year.  
T. Lavoy – Concerned with how to maintain the achievements at Gildersleeve without the grant funding. Troubled with the budget status.  
M. Scata – Veteran's day program was inspiring at the high school. Wellness committee met. PD day for teachers in March will focus on team building activities.  
L. Steinhauser – Echoed the sentiments of tonight's spotlight.

## **14. Executive Session – none**

## **15. Executive Session Action**

**16. Adjournment**

**M. Scata moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:11pm, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

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