

**Portland Board of Education
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 4, 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, Meg Scata, Tim Lavoy, Stacy Benham, Kim Nagy-Maruschock, Dave Murphy, Sarah Spear

Members Absent: none

Administration Present: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Stephanie Fragola Business and Financial Affairs, Eric Martin Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology, Brownstone Principal Mike Searson, Gildersleeve Principal Ryan Walstrom

Student Representative: Leah Masal, Dorothy Riley

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Approval of March 21, 2023 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

B. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip PHS Band/Chorus to Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, FL April 11, 2024-April 15, 2024

C. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip PHS Life Skills to Zoo in Forest Park, Springfield, MA May 12, 2023

M. Scata moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by S. Benham. Discussion with concern to the cost of the Band trip that may make it cost prohibitive to some students.
Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

5. Audience of Citizens – Debbie Law, Bell Court – supports having foreign language available in K-12. Feels we need to make significant changes to not having processed food. Stated the importance of sleep for children and we should look at starting the school day later. Stated her belief in teaching self-control in children.

6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – Brownstone Intermediate School Morning News, Meredith Gelineau– Principal Searson spoke to the success of this program. Meredith introduced the 6th grade team participating in the morning news. Students explained the program where they announce birthdays, tell a joke and quote of the day, perform the pledge and relay school news. They reviewed the process of producing, editing, and execution. Sixteen students participate and

they apply at the beginning of the year.

7. **Student Representative Report** – L. Masal reported that the Black Latino study class spoke to First Selectman Ryan Curley and Laurel Steinhauser on unity. Dorothy Riley reported spirit week is this week ending with a pep rally. Dorothy explained the process of passing the kilt.

8. **Communications and Updates**

- A. Superintendent's Report – Enrollment report submitted. Dr. Britton reported last week was the special town meeting on the appropriation for the track, which passed. He assured everyone that the soccer season will not be negatively impacted by the construction. He will work with Principal Lawson to ensure there is no impact to the start of the school year. Work should commence this summer. Laurel thanked Frank Cardona for being at the meeting last week and offering his insight on the track project. Budget hearings were also held last week. Dr. Britton addressed concerns on ESSER funds and a fiscal cliff. School budget was reduced an additional \$34K at this hearing for a total cut of \$111,000, which represents a 3.49% increase. Received \$15k from CTSEDS grant. Dr. Britton and Ms. Davis are working on allocation of this grant funding. Tomorrow is paraprofessional appreciation day. Last night the Facility Study Committee met, Dr. Britton will be working on writing a report and will share with the committee on May 9, 2023. Dylan Bernard shared with Dr. Britton his research to bring the BOE meetings back to the PHS library, with also having zoom capabilities. A consensus on the Board for preference on the location to be held at PHS library. Dr. Britton relayed interest in having the board consider a possible change to the meeting day and time for future meetings.
- B. Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs – S. Fragola – Financial report submitted and reviewed. FICA medicare, unemployment and kindergarten line items explained. Clarification on state excess cost.
- C. Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Report – E. Martin – report submitted and reviewed. Thanked Holly Russo for working behind the scenes for a smooth transition to PowerSchool. Corey Toussaint created a how-to-video for the registration process for families. Looking into wider array of translation services for families. Recent two day workshop reviewed. Attended a conference "innovating against the tides". Discussion on annual family survey and the desire for the Board to get the results of the survey. Guidebook to responding to hate and bias discussed.

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

- A. Policy 6142.101 School Wellness Policy (*1st Reading*)

This policy is a full replace on the current policy. It has been reviewed and approved by appropriate staff. Nutritional standards and how it impacts food in cafeterias discussed. Sixty minutes of moving a day discussed. Wellness Committee discussed. Once policy passes, there will be quarterly meetings of the committee and details will be flushed out. Second read at next meeting.

B. 2023-2024 School Calendar CEA Request regarding April Vacation

The teachers union asked for the move in vacation. We benchmarked other districts, to include LEARN, and all districts benchmarked have April vacation the week of the 8th. We would like to keep in line with other surrounding communities. Ran by the leadership team and they were in support of changing. Athletic calendar discussed.

Tabled to next meeting.

C. HB 5003: AAC Education Funding in CT

Dr. Britton explained that if this bill passes, Portland would gain approximately \$700K in additional funding. If the board agrees with the letter of support, members can sign and Dr. Britton will send to appropriate decision making leaders.

M. Scata moved to send the letter to the respective representatives to encourage them to pass House Bill 5003 promoting a change to the formula, seconded by S. Spear.

Discussion. T. Lavoy expressed his feeling of not supporting something that he doesn't fully comprehend. The letter will be amended to say 'the majority of the board'. **6 in favor with one abstention by T. Lavoy. MOTION CARRIED.**

D. Discussion on Joining Commissioners Network

Ryan and Eric presented an overview of the Commissioners network. Presented was history that the school was designated a level 4 focus school in 2018-2019. Portland received school improvement grant funding in 2021-22. Following, there was accountability growth from 2018-19 to 2021-22 from 68.2 to 81.9, with high needs students reaching their growth targets from 46.9% to 83.7%. The opportunity to join the commissioner's network and steps involved reviewed. Potential benefits to include obtaining talent, professional development opportunities, resources available, strengthening improvement planning, teacher leadership and family partnerships. This is a mutual benefit for the district and the state. Funds are available for the planning year. Potential of Gildersleeve being repurposed discussed. There would need to be a structured appeal following any repurposing. The intent of this overview is to make the Board aware of the initiative. If we are accepted into the network, and after the year of planning it would then come back to the Board for a vote. Consensus on Board to move forward.

10. Old Business (Discussion/Possible Action) - none

11. Committee Reports

- A. Curriculum – commissioner's network discussed at last meeting.
- B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting 4/12/23, working through any policy updates
- C. Personnel – S. Spear - meeting 4/6/23
- D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata – meeting 4/27/23
- E. Liaison
 - 1. CREC – M. Scata – meeting 4/19/23 and annual meeting in May
 - 2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – track hearings and budget workshops discussed
 - 3. Committee on Solidarity – T. Lavoy – next meeting 4/11/23, working on Juneteenth
 - 4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – T. Lavoy– next meeting 5/8/23

5. School Facilities Study Committee – M. Scata – Dr. Britton writing a report that will come before the Board around June. Committee to digest a few options. They are charged with parceling all the data to come up with a best plan.

6. Youth Services Advisory Board – no report

12. Audience of Citizens – Debbie Law, Bell court – Stated 60 minutes of activity is important, shared that the book, Courageous Conversation, is a good resource for diversity and inclusion, referenced the spotlight, Morning News, should be inclusive of all students, even those struggling with behavior issues.

13. Board of Education Member Comments

D Murphy – stated the corporate world is going towards stand up desks and inquired about the possibility of implementing them in schools.

T Lavoy - thanked Charles for looking into the policy portal issue with CABE

M Scata – wished par professionals a happy paraprofessional day

L Steinhauser – shared what happened at the last Board of Selectmen budget deliberation meeting, where one selectman stated that his proposal to cut \$315,000 from the Board of Education budget was after consultation with a BOE member. She doesn't believe that anyone on their Board would be advocating for that type of cut and it may have been a misrepresentation or a misunderstanding. This Board has a history of engaging in healthy discussion and usually with a consensus to move forward in unity. She is thankful to the board for being incredibly functional and having the ability to put politics aside, which allows us to do really good things. T Lavoy asked for clarification at which meeting this was stated and it was confirmed it was the 3/29/23 budget deliberation meeting.

14. Executive Session – none

15. Executive Session Action - none

16. Adjournment

M. Scata moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m., seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tricia Dean, Clerk