

**Portland Board of Education**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Minutes of Tuesday, September 17, 2024 @ 7:00 pm**  
Portland High School Media Center

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools  
Sara McLaughlin, Director of Student Services  
Kate Lawson, Principal Portland High School  
Tracey Graf, Principal Gildersleeve Elementary School  
Michael Searson, Principal Brownstone Intermediate School

Student Representative:

Caitlin Walsh  
Liam Rowe

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

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

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**M. Scata moved to approve the agenda, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of September 3, 2024 Board of Education Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip PHS Cross Country to Thetford Academy, Thetford VT, October 4-5, 2024
- C. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip PHS DECA to MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford NJ, October 22, 2024

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

**5. Audience of Citizens - none**

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight - Building Thinking Classrooms, PHS Math Department**  
Principal Lawson introduced Mr. Brechlin and Ms. Larson, who presented on how they are implementing a new and innovative way to engage kids in math. The concept is to have students

work in small groups together to solve problems. A video presentation was shown which highlighted components of the program and student feedback.

The students are given a problem when they arrive at class and are set in groups of three to four. After working together to solve the equation, they then come together with the teacher to debrief. The method on how to engage timid students was explained.

## **7. Student Representative Report**

Caitlin reported that the band is traveling to the Big E tomorrow. The high school musical has been selected. They will be combining with the middle school for the performance for the first time. The fall sports season is off to a great start. School clubs have started to meet. Caitlin informed the Board on the next hiking club hike date and invited the Board members to attend.

Liam reported that the student senate held its first pep rally. Student senate is also working on the semi-formal homecoming dance scheduled for 10/19. High school open house is 9/26 from 6p-8p. There will be a mum and candle fundraiser during the open house.

## **8. Communications and Updates**

### **A. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Britton distributed the Land and Building Use Committee report for the Board to review. D. Murphy gave a brief update on the report.

Equalized Cost Sharing grant information distributed. This year we received \$3.5 million. Equalized funding by 2030 briefly explained. M. Scata stated that the equalized funding will be a topic covered in the school finance webinar through CABE.

Dr. Britton received from FRIAR architecture the projected cash flow report, the report was distributed to members. Dr. Britton reviewed the report. He is working with a graphic artist to put together an informational packet to go out to the public along with an FAQ. The information will be on our website. This information will be factual only. The additional 5% percent was discussed. Dr. Britton stated that they are being conservative and are more comfortable using the 51%. He stated that there would be an asterisk next to the percentage indicating some other possible savings. We don't want to overpromise. Discussion on disseminating the information to the community and having the information clearly laid out in the document.

Dr. Britton reviewed the 'Report of Findings of the Task Force to Study Special Education Services and Funding'. He feels the report did an excellent job of identifying problems.

A resignation was received from the administrative assistant in the counseling office, Lynda Henry. We will be filling the position internally until there is a more definitive plan about what happens in November.

### **B. Director of Student Services – S. McLaughlin**

Director of Student Services report was reviewed.

Ms. McLaughlin stated that the TESOL teacher, Ms. McGovern has been phenomenal for the district. The department has also been more creative in using her services. They will continue to monitor the rise in multilingual learners.

Ms. McLaughlin explained how for IEP's they used to use Frontline. The state has moved to a mandatory statewide system, CTSEDS. This system has solved the issue of different districts previously using different platforms that didn't talk to one another. The information entered also wasn't standardized. The system CTSEDS easily allows districts to view data across districts and is all in the same format for reporting.

Ms. McLaughlin directed the Board on how to access the Columbia Protocol for Suicide Prevention, which can be found online.

The fuel for the student services van was addressed. We will not pay more for gas than what we budgeted for the bus. We also do not pay taxes on the van. The per diem driver was discussed.

**9. New Business (Discussion/Possible Action)**  
**A. K. Constantino Leave of Absence Request**

**M. Scata moved to approve the leave of absence request for K. Constantino from November 2024 through April 2025, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**B. K. Stevens Leave of Absence Request**

**M. Scata moved to approve the leave of absence request for K. Stevens from December 2024 through June 30, 2025, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**C. T.A.C.O. Plans – Valley View, Gildersleeve, Brownstone**

Dr. Britton stated that the leadership team meets and develops goals for the year. Last year they shifted to a site-based approach. They used the CSDE-approved plan called T.A.C.O (talent, academics, culture and climate, operations). One improvement noted for next year is for the Board members to meet with principals to be able to give input. After all plans have been reviewed for each school, they will go to the Board for approval.

Principal Searson reviewed the Brownstone T.A.C.O. Plan

Mr. Searson stated that some goals are a continuation of things they worked on last year, and some are new goals. He summarized each of the four focuses. He stated that RTI means response to intervention.

The academic goal was reviewed. The school has the opportunity to utilize its schedule to address kids that fall under tiers 2 and 3.

WestED consultant explained. The consultant directs how to create seamless change, and also addresses climate and culture. We were invited to participate with them, there is no cost to the district.

S. Spear asked that a goal for engaging families be included. Mr. Searson stated the family piece is always embedded into everything they do, but he will incorporate this into the plan for the next round. The new teacher evaluation plan was also suggested to be incorporated into the operational goals. Mr. Searson stated that this is embedded into the talent section, but he also can include it in academics as well.

The attendance plan was reviewed. The social worker is currently the staff member who reaches out to families. They call significantly before the mark of chronic absence occurs.

The multiple meetings for the action plans were discussed. The meetings will be very specific and will always include an action plan.

M. Scata noted that with the new school climate policy, there will be funding for professional development.

Principal Graf reviewed the Gildersleeve T.A.C.O. Plan

There is not a cost for any of the programming to be implemented, aside from the Into Reading pilot. Once the pilot ends, if we decide to buy into the program there will be a cost. Ms. Graf stated that the components of the plan are shared with parents through open house, weekly newsletters, and Parent Square.

The Safe School committee will be merged with Climate committee.

Absenteeism discussed. All three schools have a different approach. Dr. Britton stated that the

district is working on standardizing procedures. Eric will present on this at a Board meeting and will give more insight on the process. Dr. Britton noted that how students are motivated at different grades levels on attendance will look different.

Ms. Graf stated that she went to an Open Choice family engagement event. This year they have made the initial contact with all the open choice families to make sure they are aware of the school events. ParentSquare will also help with communicating this information.

Valley View T.A.C.O Plan will be reviewed at the next meeting.

#### **D. Board of Education Policy (1<sup>st</sup> reading)**

##### **1. Policy 5131.914 School Climate**

Dr. Britton stated this policy is not required to be implemented until July 2025. He worked with the leadership team over the summer. There is not a climate and culture specialist stipend at this time. After the pilot, we will see the needs for the teacher's involvement and stipends. The dissemination of the policy results were discussed. Dr. Britton will receive feedback from staff, which he in turn will communicate to the Board. In October, Mr. Martin will review the quantitative survey. He doesn't feel the quantitative survey results need to be included in the policy. The community will be informed on results through our newsletters.

This is a newly mandated policy. The state has given districts a few years for implementation. The policy committee has done work over the last year on this. The policy committee feels comfortable recommending to the full board what they have crafted. The policy updates the legal mandated language. Not taking action tonight, this is a first read. After input from the Board, it would be ready for approval at the second reading.

#### **E. Appointment to Curriculum Committee**

L. Steinhauser appointed Angela Hammond to the Curriculum Committee

#### **F. Memorandum of Agreement for Portland Board of Education and Municipal Employees Union Independent Local 506 Collective Bargaining Unit for Transportation Coordinator Stipend (discussed in executive session)**

#### **G. Memorandum of Agreement for Portland Public School District and CEA-Portland Collective Bargaining Unit for Stipends (discussed in executive session)**

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

### **11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum – K. Nagy-Maruschock– met last week. Ms. Hoffman and Ms. McGary gave a presentation on the pilot study of the Ruler curriculum. This will go to the policy committee next.
- B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting 10/9/24. Minutes of the meetings are on the website. Discussed cell phone policy.
- C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – reached a tentative agreement with teachers.
- D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata – no meeting scheduled. Suggested to schedule a meeting to discuss roofs.
- E. Liaison
  1. CREC – M. Scata – next meeting 9/18/24 @ 11
  2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – discussion on purchasing rules. 10/4/24 absentee ballots are available.
  3. Youth Services Advisory Board – M. Scata –next meeting on 9/24/24 @4
  4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – S. Spear – next meeting 9/26/24

5. Land and Building Usage Committee – D. Murphy – no additional report

**12. Audience of Citizens - none**

**13. Board of Education Member Comments**

Kim Nagy-Maruschock – great presentations on the T.A.C.O. plan. The family engagement piece is a great initiative.

Meg Scata – thanked the principals and the math department for their presentations. Hispanic month has begun. She attended a webinar on data by the state which was very thorough.

Sarah Spear – thanked the math department for their presentation. Received letters regarding the transition time for consolidation. Would be helpful to incorporate this information in the FAQ's.

Angela Hammond – thanked principals for reviewing T.A.C.O. plans. She felt the lack of data in regards to absenteeism in the T.A.C.O. goals is slightly concerning. She is glad that Mr. Martin will be reporting on this in October. Looking forward to the open house. Requested the notes from the student rep's reports. She is looking forward to reading the special education report. Look forward to reading the climate policy.

**14. Executive Session – for the purpose of MOA for Municipal Employees Union Independent Local 506 Transportation Coordinator Stipend, and MOA for CEA-Portland Stipend**

**M. Scata moved to enter into executive session for the purpose of MOA for Municipal Employees Union Independent Local 506 Transportation Coordinator Stipend, and MOA for CEA-Portland Stipend, and invite the superintendent, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Entered Executive Session: 9:02 pm**

**Exited Executive Session: 9:12 pm**

**15. Executive Session Action**

**M. Scata moved to approve the MOA for Municipal Employees Union Independent Local 506 Transportation Coordinator Stipend, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**M. Scata moved to approve the MOA for CEA-Portland Stipend, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**16. Adjournment**

**T. Lavoy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm, seconded by D. Murphy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Tricia Dean

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk