

**PORTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Policy Subcommittee**  
**March 13, 2024**

**The meeting was held via Google Meet.**

Attending: Committee Members: Meg Scata, Laurel Steinhauser, Tim Lavoy, Dawn Davis, Charles Britton

Faculty in Attendance: Kate Lawson, Eric Martin, Frank Cardona, Chuck Hershon, Megan Bailey, Kate Bohannon, and Jaime DeRose

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm by M. Scata

**Agenda**

The agenda has been amended due to time constraints resulting in a discussion of Cellular Phones/Electronic Devices in our 7-12 grades. Policy 5131.81 is a new policy, and the Policy Committee seeks to hear from administrators, social workers, and guidance counselors in determining the contents of the policy. .

The following agenda items will be added to the next meeting agenda. TBD

Discuss Changes to Graduation Requirements – Policy 6146

Discuss Pay to Play

Review and Discuss CAFE Policy Updates

**Cell Phone/Electronic Devices- Policy 5131.81**

Discussion including current practices in the Middle and High School during school hours. The discussion shed light on use by students, abuses of and resulting bullying, texting to other classmates, parents/ family members during class, photographs, gaming, and inappropriate materials. Most of the students are respectful of a smaller percentage who use and abuse these devices. After school, weekends and holidays are not in the purview of the schools.

Unfortunately, some activities have spilled into school hours causing fights and altercations which does interrupt the learning process. There are disciplinary measures in place and are used on a case-by-case basis.

Without a district Board policy for cell phone use, there is inconsistency in treatment of use of cell phones at inappropriate times. Student Handbooks contain information about cell phone use. It is as much the responsibility of parents and guardians as our students to follow the rules.

Students are expected to power down and keep their devices in backpacks, purses, or pockets phones and most do. Phones can be collected for the duration of a class especially during testing. All classrooms have a pocket hanger (as used for shoes).

It was noted that age-appropriate use should be considered in any policy. The use of cell phones by high school students who are young adults moving into the world of jobs, and other

responsibilities is an example of age-appropriate use while middle school students may require a different approach due to their developing skills and brains.

There are uses for cell phones in collaborative work and we should allow for instructional use in classes with approval of the instructor. Our curriculum for digital citizenship is robust as is the acceptable use policy.

It was clear that this policy should not be punitive and should not include “policing efforts’ by teachers, staff, or administrators. Our policy should reflect the Pre-k 12 student body and the Transition Program for students through age 22.

Adjourned at 1:53 pm

Respectfully submitted  
Meg Scata