

**Portland Board of Education
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 2, 2024 @ 7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Dr. Britton, Superintendent, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

BOE Members Present: Laurel Steinhauser, Tim Lavoy, Meg Scata, Kim Nagy-Maruschock, Sarah Spear; via zoom Dave Murphy, Stacy Benham

Members Absent: none

Administration Present: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Director of Student Services Dawn Davis

Student Representative: Caitlin Walsh

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Agenda

T. Lavoy moved to approve the agenda, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Approval of December 5, 2023 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

B. Approval of December 20, 2023 Board of Education Retreat Meeting Minutes

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

5. Audience of Citizens – Debbie Law, Bell Court – spoke in favor of foreign language K-12 and advocates for more sleep for children. Congratulated Board on winning award from CAFE.

Requested a handout or a post on the website on how Portland schools are performing, as well as how they are performing compared to neighboring districts. Requested to be quoted that her major concern is the children.

6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – Transition Academy – Director of Student Services Dawn Davis introduced Ted Pinto the lead special ed teacher at Portland Pathways Transition Program. The program offers high school post grads the next step in life. Mr. Pinto highlighted the learning and work opportunities the students do over the course of a day. Parents spoke in favor of the program and the difference it made in their child's lives.

D. Davis stated there will be more information to follow on a new location, as Brownstone will no longer be an approved location at the end of the year. The high school or an alternate separate location would be approved.

7. **Student Representative Report** – Caitlin Walsh reported winter spirit days took place before break, to include a pep rally. Staff vs unified sports game was played. Classes and clubs are holding fundraising events. Black and Latinos study class taking a field trip this week.

8. **Communications and Updates**

A. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Britton reported that he received resignations from Chandra Lawrence, Family & Consumer Sciences teacher; Paul Hanusch, Special Education teacher; and Danielle Ganci, paraprofessional. Retirement received from Amanda Peck, paraprofessional. Enrollment report submitted. CAFE highlight distributed which lays out the challenges faced across the state with ESSER funding, budgets and other top focus points facing school districts. New weight room is complete at the high school. The funding was from the Gildersleeve Trust. Just need to replace the doors. The Distribution of the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2023-2024 Budget will be given to Board members at the end of this evening's meeting. They will then discuss it at the January 9, 2024 budget meeting.

B. Director of Student Services Report – Dawn Davis submitted her report. Numbers are around the same mark as last November. Outplacements are up slightly at 21. Speech pathologist hired through contracted services will start soon. Discussed Harbor Program staffing and Special Ed staffing. Multi language learners will start testing soon. Parent Advisory Board meeting on January 17, 2024 at the secondary school. D. Davis announced that she will be retiring in June 2024.

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

A. Class of 2024 Graduation Date – Principal Lawson proposed a graduation date for June 13, 2024. Dr. Britton also supported this date.

T. Lavoy moved to set the graduation date for June 13, 2024, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

B. Board of Education Subcommittee Assignments – L. Steinhauser did not received any change requests. T. Lavoy asked to move to Youth Services Advisory Board Liaison and be removed from Solidarity. No other request changes made.

C. Board of Education Policies (*1st reading*)

1. Policy 5112 – Ages of Attendance – Dr. Britton stated both policies have been reviewed by the Policy subcommittee. He explained the age requirement and the process to ask for a consideration waiver, which requires an assessment. Dr. Britton anticipates class sizes to be lower in kindergarten for 2024-2025, due to the age impact. Communications will go out soon notifying parents if they would like to request a waiver it must submitted and completed by May 1st. D. Davis explained that the screening process will be the same one implemented for the pre-k program.

2. Policy 1330 – Building Usage Request Forms 1-4 only – Dr. Britton stated the policy fees haven't been updated since 2017. Costs have risen and there was a recognition that fees need to be raised. The forms have also been updated to be more user friendly. Board action needed to amend the amounts to rent facilities. D. Murphy asked if Stephanie can see how much revenue was generated last year for facilities rentals.

D. M. Gelineau, Teacher, Leave of Absence Request

M. Scata moved to approve the extended leave of absence request, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

E. Approval of Middlesex Hospital Vocal Cords Building Usage Application

T. Lavoy moved to approve the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Cords Building Usage Application request, seconded by M. Scata. Discussion. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

F. Superintendent of Schools Mid-Year Review (*discussed in Executive Session*)

10. Old Business (Discussion/Possible Action)

A. 2024-2025 School District Calendar (*2nd reading*)

S. Spear asked if there was consideration for early dismissal instead of delayed opening for professional development days. She wondered if it would be less stressful on parents. M. Scata asked about moving parent conferences to first week in December due to the amount of days off in November. Discussion that conferences align with the end of first trimester, and December has quite a few days off as well.

M. Scata moved to approve the 2024-2025 school district calendar as presented, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

11. Committee Reports

A. Curriculum – L. Steinhauser – meeting after the next BOE meeting.

B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting 1/10/24

C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – discussed nonunion contracts at last meeting.

D. Buildings and Grounds – K. Nagy-Maruschock – discussed the track, weight room, communication grant, tennis courts crack repairs, long range capital plan, and chrome books.

E. Liaison

1. CREC – M. Scata – next meeting 1/17/24

2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – town got selected for a solar panel grant at the transfer station.

3. Committee on Solidarity – T. Lavoy – next meeting 1/9/24

4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – T. Lavoy/S. Spear – met in December and reviewed district equity statement and conditions for having civil discourse. Meeting every other month.

12. Audience of Citizens – Debbie Law, Bell Court – Feels there are injustices for financially insecure families. Feels that children starting kindergarten at a later age are at an advantage.

13. Board of Education Member Comments

S. Spear – thanked Charles for podcast. Enjoyed transition academy presentation. Asked if survey is closed. Dr. Britton stated he thought the survey was closed. Dr. Britton will ask First Selectman Curley.

K. Nagy-Maruschock – Great to hear transition academy presentation. Congrats to Dawn on retirement.

T. Lavoy – Tri M concert last month in Middletown, four schools participated. Portland participated and it was wonderful.

S. Benham – Wished the Board Happy New Year and appreciative of transition academy presentation. Congrats to Dawn on retirement.

D. Murphy - Congrats to Dawn on retirement

M. Scata – appreciated transition academy presentation. Grateful for the schools we have, as well as the Board. CABA Legislative Breakfast coming up.

L. Steinhauser – CABA legislative breakfast will be Jan 25th at 9 in Westbrook. CABA webinar on rolling advocacy will be on 1/24/24.

14. Executive Session – for the purpose of Superintendent of Schools Mid-Year Review

M. Scata moved to enter into executive session for the purpose of Superintendent of Schools Mid-Year Review, and invite Dr. Britton, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

Entered Executive Session: 8:33 p.m.

Exited Executive Session: 9:59 p.m.

15. Executive Session Action - none

16. Adjournment

M. Scata moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 pm, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

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