

**Portland Board of Education**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Minutes of Tuesday, March 4, 2025 @ 7:00 pm**  
Portland High School Media Center

Board Members Present:

Laurel Steinhauser  
Stacey Benham  
Angela Hammond  
Dave Murphy  
Kim Nagy-Maruschock  
Meg Scata  
Sarah Spear

Board Members Absent:

None

Administration Present:

Dr. Charles D. Britton, Superintendent of Schools  
Stephanie Fragola, Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs

Student Representative:

Liam Rowe

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

Laurel Steinhauser, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**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 February 4, 2025 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip PHS DECA to Orlando FL, April 26-30, 2025

**K. Nagy-Maruschock moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**5. Audience of Citizens - none**

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – Multi-Lingual Students – Julie McGovern**

Ms. McGovern presented an overview of the Multi-Lingual Learners program, highlighting current MLS enrollment, the identification process, and key components of instruction. Students also shared their perspectives on what being bilingual means to them.

M. Scata inquired whether the Seal of Biliteracy has been applied to seniors who have earned it. Ms. McGovern is currently working on ensuring that high school students qualify for this recognition.

## **7. Student Representative Report**

Liam shared several highlights, including the Student Senate's successful hosting of its first Valentine's Week pep rally, with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class joining in on the fun. The National Honor Society participated in the Go Baby Go service project, and 21 high school students attended the DECA State Conference. Additionally, the field trips and outreach programs have been taking place, and the musical group recently traveled to New York to see The Great Gatsby. Students in Public Speaking visited Gildersleeve to participate in Read Across America by reading books to younger students. The district will be celebrating Youth Art Month with artwork showcases at PMS and PHS, culminating in an Open House on March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 4-8 p.m. Course selection for the 2025-2026 school year is currently underway. The NHS is also hosting a book drive for children's books. The Winter Music concert last Monday was a great success, and tickets are now on sale for Anything Goes, which will be performed on March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **8. Communication and Updates**

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

Dr. Britton reported that a letter of resignation had been received from paraprofessional B. Vogt. The enrollment report was submitted and remains stable. D. Murphy inquired about the slight decline in enrollment since the beginning of the school year. Dr. Britton confirmed that this decline is consistent with projections. S. McLaughlin clarified that magnet school students are not included in the enrollment report. However, if any magnet students are receiving special services through Student Services, those numbers will be reflected in her report.

Dr. Britton provided the Board with information on budget percentage increases statewide, noting that Portland falls within the middle of the average. He also submitted the Town budget for review. The capital request from the Board for the purchase of the student services van has been included, along with \$100k allocated toward capital improvements. There was a discussion regarding the need for additional HVAC upgrades and other capital projects in the future. Additionally, the Board discussed the town's budget for capital projects in the upcoming fiscal years.

Dr. Britton included a letter from an attorney at the CSDE regarding the interpretation of the letter received on 2/14 concerning DEI initiatives. He stated that, at this point, we will continue with our current practices as they have been.

### **B. Assistant to the Superintendent for Business and Financial Affairs – S. Fragola**

The Authorized Spending Report was submitted and reviewed, with a projected surplus of \$100,000 at this point. S. Fragola provided an update on the changes from last month that have contributed to bringing us ahead.

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

The Director of Student Services report was submitted and reviewed.

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

### **A. New High School Course Proposals**

#### **1. HS Introduction to Data Science**

All courses have been vetted by the Curriculum Committee. Dr. Britton provided an overview of the course, noting that there is an associated expense. It will be submitted as a Gildersleeve Grant request. This course is subject to enrollment numbers. S. Spear suggested including prerequisite information for the course.

**M. Scata moved to approve the course, Introduction to Data Science, as presented, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

## **2. HS Advanced Fitness**

Dr. Britton provided an overview of the course, noting that there is no associated expense. This course could be of interest to students who do not already actively participate in extracurricular sports.

**M. Scata moved to approve the course, Advanced Fitness, as presented, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

## **3. HS AP 2-D Art and Design**

Dr. Britton provided an overview of the course, noting that it is an advanced placement course.

**M. Scata moved to approve the course, AP 2-D Art and Design, as presented, seconded by K. Nagy-Maruschock. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

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

### **1. Policy 4000.1/5145.44 Title IX**

The Policy Committee has requested that the Board consider waiving the second reading of the policy, as this change is necessary to remain in compliance with federal law. M. Scata reviewed the changes, noting that the policy is reverting to the 2020 version.

**M. Scata moved to waive the second reading and approve Policy 4000.1/5145.44 as presented, seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

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

## **11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum – K. Nagy-Maruschock– next meeting is 4/23
- B. Policy – M. Scata – next meeting is 3/18 at 5:45 in person and zoom.
- C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – at the last meeting, the Secretary’s contract was reviewed, and approval is anticipated at the next Board meeting. Negotiations for the Nurses’ contract are currently in progress. Additionally, a general discussion began regarding the future role of the Director of CIT.
- D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata –no report
- E. Liaison
  - 1. CREC – M. Scata – at the last meeting, the program for restorative discipline at the Magnet schools was reviewed.
  - 2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – the water pipe crack has been fixed, and discussions regarding the boat launch are progressing.
  - 3. Youth Services Advisory Board – M. Scata – discussion included the egg hunt with Park & Recreation, preparation for the summer reading program kickoff, the creation of a drop-in program for preschoolers, and revisiting the Juvenile Review Board option. The next meeting is scheduled for 3/18.
  - 4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – S. Spear – next meeting is 3/27
  - 5. Strategic Capital Improvements Committee – L. Steinhauser – the committee is meeting weekly and recently discussed the capital improvement list at the high school. The process will continue with the other schools as well. Mike Sorano provided updated numbers and costs for the configuration of two schools. No consensus was reached regarding which school should be closed and combined. Dr. Britton also noted that there is an article in the RiverEast that is worth reading.

**12. Audience of Citizens - none**

**13. Board of Education Member Comments**

Stacey Benham - expressed excitement about the new course offerings.

Angela Hammond – thanked Liam for his update and appreciated the spotlight presentation.

Dave Murphy – spoke about the Strategic Capital Committee, expressing hope that people are recognizing the available options, noting that there are no easy solutions, and emphasizing the importance of collaboration within the committee.

Kim Nagy-Maruschock – commended the spotlight students on their presentation.

Liam Rowe, student rep – expressed that the spotlight presentation was excellent

Meg Scata – spoke about the bills currently being proposed and encouraged Board members to advocate for the ones they support. Additionally, the National Student School Board Association is hosting a conference to train students on how to effectively use their voices with the school Board, empowering them to be more proactive in shaping what happens in their schools.

Sarah Spear – thanked the spotlight students for their presentation and expressed enjoyment at the Read Across America event at Valley View. She also mentioned that CABE’s Day on the Hill is coming up.

Laurel Steinhauser – she expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to read for Read Across America and mentioned attending the Voice of Portland event this past weekend. She shared an email from the School and State Finance Project Department, which called for the creation of a District Repair and Improvement Project Committee and provided a review of what the project entails. If this moves forward, advocacy will be needed. She received consensus from the Board to draft a letter in support of this initiative.

**14. Executive Session – none**

**15. Executive Session Action - none**

**16. Adjournment**

**M. Scata moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm, seconded by S. Spear.  
Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Tricia Dean  
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk