

**Portland Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, September 5, 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, Tim Lavoy, Kim Nagy-Maruschock, Stacy Benham, Dave Murphy, Sarah Spear, Meg Scata

Members Absent: none

Administration Present: Superintendent Dr. Charles Britton, Director of Student Services Dawn Davis, High School Principal Kate Lawson, and Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Eric Martin

Student Representative: Dorothy Riley

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

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

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of August 8, 2023 Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes

B. Approval of August 21, 2023 Board of Education Retreat Meeting Minutes

C. Accept Donation from Grynn & Barrett Enterprises to Gildersleeve Elementary School, \$372.84

D. Approval of Out-of-State Field Trip PHS Cross Country to Thetford, VT, October 6-7, 2023

**M. Scata moved to approve the consent agenda as amended (4.B to correct start time of the meeting to 8:30am), seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED**

**5. Audience of Citizens - none**

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight – Educator of the Year, Sam Tucker, PHS/PMS Recognition**

Dr. Britton explained that Sam is at the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords practice every Tuesday so was unable to attend in person. After attaining Portland Teacher of the Year, he will now go forward to compete in the Teacher of the Year for the state.

**7. Student Representative Report – Dorothy Riley reported Freshmen got settled in and reach out to upper classmen as necessary. Spirit week is this week. Friday will be a pep rally. Dorothy will serve as this year's school senate president.**

## 8. Communications and Updates

- A. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Britton reported a great start to the school year. Positive feedback on Convocation. PowerSchool up and running and will be the focus to train staff and refine information in the software. New staff member listing for 2023-2024 submitted. The video they played announcing the staff members at Convocation was viewed. Dr. Britton received resignations from science teacher Kevin Cunningham, math teacher Richard Thomas and paraprofessionals Margaret Buzak and Mary Murray. Paraprofessional Brenda Guibord resigned as para to work as an IT technician for the Portland IT department. Currently we are fully staffed with teachers, paras, cafeteria, offices, bus drivers, and coaches. Enrollment report submitted. Dr. Britton cautioned that there are some fluctuations in the numbers due to incomplete registrations. October enrollment should be more accurate. D. Murphy asked to have a year over year comparison for next enrollment report, as well as indicate Open Choice numbers. Currently labor strike for bussing in other towns, this is not affecting Portland, nor is it anticipated to affect us. Correspondence received from Louis Pear, Chairman of School Facility Committee, submitted. Dr. Britton reviewed the voting numbers referenced in the letter. The Board of Selectmen passed a resolution to form a municipal facilities study committee. Attended Great Blue vendor research meeting to investigate ways to globally get feedback from members of the community in regards to facilities. Valley View, Gildersleeve and Brownstone were dismissed early today due to the heat index. They will also be early dismissal tomorrow and most likely also Thursday. These decisions were not made lightly and in the best interest of the students.
- B. Director of Student Services – D. Davis – Report submitted. Census numbers reviewed for outplaced, special programs, magnet schools, 504 students and EL students. Pre-K numbers are rising, 31 students in special ed program. Pre-K total enrollment is 37, of which 31 have IEP's. Kindergarten numbers are low at this time. Dawn reviewed positions vacated and the reasoning for most. The pool is not very deep, but we were able to hire experienced, as well as newly certified candidates. Transition program up and running. Discussed transportation with new van. W endorsement is required for all drivers.

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

- A. Board of Education Policy (1<sup>st</sup> reading)
1. 6163.1 Selection of School Library Material – Vetted by policy committee. Dr. Britton stated that we receive a quarterly update of new state statutes and legislation that need to be updated, implemented, or suggested to implement. Engaged the media specialist for input. Edited the CAFE model policy.
- B. High School AP Stats Research Study
- E. Martin reviewed the research study on the implementation of a program called Achieve in an AP statistics class at the high school. The proposal has been vetted by the curriculum committee. By participating in this study, we would agree to allow Macmillian Learning's Principal Investigator to use Achieve usage and support data, and record data provided by teachers matched with the survey responses for this study. Data will only be collected from students with active parental/guardian consent. Eric reviewed the risks and benefits of being in the study. Both Eric and Principal Lawson agree that this would better prepare students for AP exams. They did not have any objections or concerns. Principal Lawson stated part of her

recommendation is the example it sets for our students in getting an understanding of what research is about. IT has also vetted the internal controls.

**S. Benham moved to recommend to the Portland Board of Education the approval of the Research Study of the Implementation of Achieve at Portland High School, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

C. Allocation of ESSER Funds – Dr. Britton asked the Board to consider approving the use of the remaining ESSER funds to pay for certified teaching positions at Gildersleeve Elementary School. He explained why this is necessary in light of the reduction of our SIG grant by \$200,000. Due to the reduction in funding, one grant funded position has been eliminated. Three more positions are paid through this grant and would be difficult to eliminate due to need. \$47,000 remaining in ESSER, that we would like to use to cover the remainder of the three positions. The matter was reviewed and discussed in the personnel committee. Dr. Britton reviewed each position.

**T. Lavoy moved to recommend to the Portland Board of Education the authorization of remaining ESSER funding to support certified faculty positions designed to help students recover learning loss resulting from the pandemic at Gildersleeve Elementary School during the 2023-24 school year, seconded by S. Spear. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

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

**11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum – L. Steinhauser – no report
- B. Policy – M. Scata – 9/13/23 next meeting. Asked to change meeting date.
- C. Personnel – L. Steinhauser – no report
- D. Buildings and Grounds – M. Scata – no report
- E. Liaison
  - 1. CREC – M. Scata – 9/20/23 next meeting
  - 2. Selectmen – D. Murphy – facilities discussion, update on water
  - 3. Committee on Solidarity – T. Lavoy – forwarded email regarding event on 9/18/23 on 'Uncomfortable Conversation with a Black Man'
  - 4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition – T. Lavoy/S. Spear – 10/16/23 next meeting

**12. Audience of Citizens** – Diane Lopez, Old Carriage Rd – her son recently graduated and is now attending the Transition Academy. She stated the teacher, Ted Pinto, is wonderful and Portland is lucky to have him. The location in the basement of BIS is a concern. There are no windows for air circulation and the internet connection isn't good. She stated the upside is that it's downtown which is key to training. Transportation has been a problem. They arrive to the school very late and don't get very much instruction time. Also transportation to the work study has not been efficient. She stated her hopes is that the location and transportation situation is temporary.

**13. Board of Education Member Comments**

D. Murphy – referenced Lou Pear's letter. Dave's opinion is he feels they can explore both options and see where data takes us.

S. Spear – Congrats to Sam Tucker. Happy the municipal study committee is going forward. Appreciation to Diane for sharing her thoughts during audience of citizens.

S. Benham – excited about Transition Academy

L. Steinhauser – BOS has asked the BOE to appoint board member to fill role on municipal study committee. Let her know if you are interested. Every year at CABE convention they acknowledge Leadership and Board Distinction award. Acknowledges Boards that meet a certain number of criteria. She feels our Board currently does most of the criteria. If there is interest, she would like to work with Dr. Britton and get approval at the next meeting to submit an application to CABE. Deadline is 10/6/23.

**14. Executive Session – none**

**15. Executive Session Action – none**

**16. Adjournment**

**T. Lavoy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tricia Dean, Clerk