

**Portland Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, March 15, 2022 @ 7:00 PM  
PHS Library Media Center**

*Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendees participated both in person and via Zoom.*

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

Sharon Peters, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

BOE Members Present: Sharon Peters, Laurel Steinhauser, Meg Scata, Lauren Christensen, Stacy Benham, Dave Murphy, Tim Lavoy.

Administration Present: Stephanie Fragola.

**T. Lavoy moved to recess for the purpose of attending the Public Hearing by the Board of Selectmen on the First Selectman's Submitted Budget for 2022-2023, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

S. Peters reconvened the meeting at 8:02 PM.

**M. Scata moved to resume the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**L. Christensen moved to approve the agenda for the March 15, 2022 Regular Meeting as presented, seconded by S. Benham. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of Board of Education Meeting Minutes  
1. March 1, 2022 Regular Meeting

**M. Scata moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by T. Lavoy.**

L. Christensen corrected 3/1/22 minutes: #4 L. Christensen corrected 2/22/22 minutes, strike S. Benham. #11.E.4 L. Christensen reported on Equity and Inclusion Coalition, strike S. Benham.

**M. Scata moved to approve the consent agenda as amended, seconded by T. Lavoy. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**5. Audience of Citizens - none**

**6. Portland Public Schools Spotlight - none**

**7. Student Representative Report - none**

**8. Communications and Updates**

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Britton gave his update via video recording while home recovering from surgery. Patti Toller has announced her intention to retire at the end of June. She will be greatly missed and Dr. Britton wishes her well. Eric Giudice, PHS Safety and Security Specialist, and Charlene Callahan, TESOL teacher who has been on leave during the 2021-2022 school year, have both submitted letters of resignation.

COVID-19 update: Since returning after February break, we have had 0 new cases of COVID-19 in our schools. The most recent two week COVID-19 update from Russ Melmed reports continued steep decline in cases in Portland and the entire Chatham Health District.

Dr. Britton congratulated all winter athletes on a great season. He is excited for "The Little Mermaid" this coming weekend. All three elementary schools have arranged field trips to bring their students to PMS to see "The Little Mermaid" during the school day this week.

Dr. Britton recorded a podcast last week to share with the district. When it is sent out, he will also link to the video explaining the BOE budget proposal that was used at the Budget Hearing. Members of the community are invited to reach out to Dr. Britton with any questions.

B. Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology

The February 23rd and March 11th professional development days were used to introduce teachers to the work of building a mastery based learning system. Portland Public Schools has a three phase plan which will be implemented over several years. Phase I is to build a better curriculum. Over the last two PD days Mr. Martin introduced the transition from the current curriculum based on mastering standards to a focus on learning targets. Phase two will be to build a better instructional culture around how to teach and learn in a system based on learning targets and proficiency scales. Phase three is to build a better reporting system, with the goal to make report cards more useful for students and families. The new reporting system will continue the shift away from traditional report cards, helping to solve issues around conflating academic performance with student behavioral dispositions. Conclusive

research in the field supports this approach, and the benefits of a mastery based learning system include a meaningful integration of our Vision of the Graduate, improved teaching to both behavioral needs and academic targets, and greater clarity and transparency around grades for students and families. Mr. Martin reiterated this is not a “tear down and rebuild” but rather is an improvement of our current system to move PPS forward. Mr. Martin will schedule a time to present this to the Board in more detail.

Spring assessment season is starting. 9th-11th grade students at PHS will take the PSAT and SATs on March 23rd. Smarter Balanced Assessments and Next Generation Science testing will begin in May for 3rd-8th grade students.

Portland High School has announced the addition of three new courses. First is a .5 credit Journalism elective to be taught by a PHS English teacher with prior experience working as a journalist for the Middletown Press. In addition, there will be a student run newspaper which will likely be published in the Rivereast and included in distribution to the whole town. The second new course is centered around the addition of a new PHS Writing Lab. PHS will offer 1 honors level credit for juniors and seniors who are strong writers and wish to be peer tutors and staff the Writing Lab during their Flex periods. Other students can access the lab on their own or at teacher direction to get assistance from the peer writing tutors. This will initially only be available to PHS students, but there is the possibility that it will be opened to PMS students in the future, or that there might be a second Writing Lab program created at the Middle School. The third class is a full year 1 credit Black and African American and Latino/Puerto Rican Studies honors elective open to juniors and seniors. The course will run as two separate semesters, the first half of the year focusing on the Black American experience and the second semester focusing on Latino studies.

## 9. New Business

### A. ED-099 Healthy Food Certification

**Motion:** To recommend to the full Board that the Portland School District approve the following considerations as outlined in the SDE Operational Memorandum February 15, 2022 requiring each local board of education or governing authority for all Connecticut public school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to take action annually to certify whether all food items sold to students separately from reimbursable meals will or will not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS).

**Consideration #1 Healthy Food Option:** Pursuant to C.G.S. 10-215f, the Portland Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempt from the Connecticut Nutritional Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times

and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

**Moved by L. Steinhauser, seconded by L. Christensen. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Consideration #2 Combined Food and Beverage Exemptions:** The Portland Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

**Moved by L. Steinhauser, seconded by M. Scata. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **10. Old Business - none**

## **11. Committee Reports**

- A. Curriculum - the meeting was postponed and will be rescheduled.
- B. Policy - the meeting was postponed until April due to weather.
- C. Personnel - L. Steinhauser reported contract negotiations with the Custodians have wrapped up and are nearly finished with the Administrative Assistants. The Personnel Committee hopes to be able to bring both contracts to the Board at the April meeting. Contract negotiations with the Nurses have begun.
- D. Buildings and Grounds - no report
- E. Liaisons -
  - 1. CREC - M. Scata reported the next meeting is 3/16/22 and will involve the introduction of the magnet school budgets.
  - 2. Selectmen - no report
  - 3. Committee on Solidarity - T. Lavoy and L. Steinhauser reported the Solidarity Committee has distributed results from their follow up survey to each town department included in the survey. They are planning events for their Solidarity month in June and working on collaborations with Youth Services, the Portland Library, and the PHS Chorus.

4. Equity and Inclusion Coalition - L. Christensen reported they met last week and primarily discussed outreach efforts to build their membership.
5. School Facilities Study Committee - M. Scata reported they met with Friar Architecture this week and began looking at several options for possible school configurations. Next meeting will involve costing out all options, taking into consideration building conditions and state funding sources. The Committee is looking to reach a conclusion on which option will give us the best “bang for our buck,” and will be looking to bring the best one or two feasible options to the Board of Ed and Board of Selectmen in June. Once there is confidence in a plan, the final step will be to add in the educational components and will involve consulting with teachers, parents, and community members to examine class sizes, how we use our school facilities as a community, and what we need to teach our students in the best way possible.
6. Youth Services Advisory Board - the next meeting is 3/22/22.

**12. Audience of Citizens** - none

**13. Board of Education Member Comments**

- D. Murphy will be traveling next week and will have to miss the budget workshop on 3/22.
- M. Scata attended the CAFE Day on the Hill and will share highlights about legislative issues CAFE is discussing and advocating for with the Board.
- L. Steinhauser requested an update on the incident involving a staff member using a racial slur in terms of the follow up support the district is providing both to the students who were directly impacted by the incident as well as for the larger PHS community. The feedback that was shared with the Board from the Solidarity Survey highlights community concern around school climate and culture as well as the ongoing work of the Equity and Inclusion Coalition.
- L. Steinhauser suggested that the Coalition may need to discuss how to communicate their ongoing work to the broader community, and that the Board should consider planning a BOE community forum to listen to concerns around school climate and culture.

**14. Executive Session** - none

**15. Executive Session Action** - none

**16. Adjourn**

**T. Lavoy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM, seconded by L. Christensen. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurel Steinhauser, BOE Secretary