

PORTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Joint Meeting with the
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
August 26, 2025 AT 7:00 PM

BOE Present: Laurel Steinhauser, Dave Murphy, Meg Scata, Kim Nagy-Maruschock, Sarah Spear, Stacey Benham

BOS Present: First Selectman Michael Pelton, John Dillon, Robert Hetrick, Jr., Tim Lavoy, Michael Hernandez, Rick Shar

Others Present: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Charles Britton

1. First Selectman Michael Pelton called the special joint meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Presentation of Strategic Capital Improvements Committee

Carl Johnson, Chair of the Strategic Capital Improvements Committee, provided an overview of the process that began in 2020 and expressed his gratitude to those who contributed to the work.

Dr. Britton then presented the report, outlining the prioritized improvements for each school building. He also shared the committee's recommendations and reviewed the proposed timeline.

3. Board Discussion on SCIC Plan

Questions were raised regarding whether the HVAC grant is still available and whether the bonding figure presented reflects the amounts before the state reimbursement rate. There were also comments noting that the reimbursement rate has not been made clear to the public.

J. Dillion explained that the committee recommended a "renovate-to- new" approach for Valley View and an alteration project at Gildersleeve, based on the state reimbursement rate.

First Selectman Pelton emphasized that this is the largest project the town has undertaken and stressed the importance of educating the public about the project.

M. Scata noted that there is a solid plan in place and expressed support for providing clear information and providing high-quality education in the most efficient way possible.

R. Hetrick questioned why the school would not be closed before construction begins. Dr. Britton responded by explaining the implications of closing the school early, including leaving a building vacant and the disruption caused by temporarily moving students. A question was also raised about the possibility of building a full-size gym at Valley View.

4. Public Comment

Don Gouin – inquired why, for the same number of graduating students in 1950, there were two schools, whereas now there are five schools despite a similar graduation size. Dr. Britton shared his perspective on past decisions made before his tenure, noting how those choices may have led to the establishment of five schools. C. Johnson added context, explaining that the original plan for fewer schools was voted down because the community was not comfortable consolidating to just two schools.

Dr. Britton thanked the committee for their hard work and expressed appreciation to the boards for their involvement. First Selectman Pelton also thanked everyone for their time and effort, noting that the new plan includes capital improvements that the original plan did not. C. Johnson requested support in communicating the plan to the public.

5. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

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