

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY GOVERNANCE RETREAT
VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 18, 2020, 4:00 PM
AGENDA**

VISION STATEMENT

An exceptional, continuously improving learning culture with high expectations, committed to all!

MISSION STATEMENT

Portage Public Schools will educate all students to achieve their potential.

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II. Revisions/Approval of Agenda

Recommended Motion:

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve the Agenda as printed (or as amended).

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IV. Discussion Items

1. Revisions to Policy 1.1

As discussed at the Policy Committee Meeting.

Add the word faster to existing language "approaching or exceeding the highest performing comparable communities." Everyone was comfortable maintaining the existing language at this time after discussion of: we are making gains if we are approaching or exceeding, not sure how faster links with approaching or exceeding, discussion of this end continues to raise awareness, current language is a stretch, this is a long-term goal by definition, current language stretches the District, isn't faster implied?

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2. Revisions to Policy 1.4

As discussed at the Policy Committee Meeting.

Proposed new language: "Students demonstrate good citizenship through ethical behavior and respect for individual differences and cultures other than their own." The Committee recommends adoption of new language replacing the current language, "Students are ethically aware and culturally sensitive to prepare them to be responsible citizens."

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3. Revisions to Policy 2.5 (Budget Amendment)

As discussed at the Policy Committee Meeting.

The Committee discussed adding the following language to Executive Limitations Policy 2.5 Financial Condition & Activities: "12. (, he or she shall not:) Operate without a continuous budget cycle by completing two budget revisions during the fiscal year (February & June) to update the board and the community on the financial condition of the District." Language codifies existing practice. Also discussed was whether there was a less burdensome way to accomplish the same thing.

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4. Revisions to Policy 2.10 (Monthly Financial Statement)

As discussed at the Policy Committee Meeting.

As agreed to by the Board, the new financial report format would be reviewed after six months. The Committee discussed the value of more information, whether it needed to be presented or just reviewed by Trustees and level of detail.

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5. Policies 2.4 & 2.5 – Potential Impact of COVID-19 on Fund Balance

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6. Owner Linkage Communications Plan

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IV. Discussion Items

7. School Board Candidate Guide



Guide for Prospective School Board Candidates

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PORTAGE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER?

On November 3, 2020, voters will elect four community members to serve on the Portage Public Schools Board of Education. All four incumbent board members (Kurt Droppers, Terri Novaria, Rusty Rathburn, and Bo Snyder) are seeking re-election.

In response to community interest in serving on the Board, the District has prepared this guide for prospective candidates which explains the roles, responsibilities, requirements of service on the Portage Public Schools' Board of Education.

Important!

If you are considering a run for the school board, board officers would like to meet with you to provide you with an overview of school board service and to answer your questions. Please contact Barb Atkinson, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, batkinson@portageps.org or (269) 323-5148 to schedule this meeting.

WHAT MAKES A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER EFFECTIVE?

Serving as a successful school board member begins with a genuine commitment for high quality education for all children. Individual school board members are effective when they exhibit:

- A thoughtful, sincere, deliberate approach to the position and the ability to make decisions that are best for all students.
- A constructive attitude toward teamwork so that the board operates as a whole. The individual school board member has no authority as an individual.
- The willingness to spend the time necessary to be well-informed on the issues coming before the board and model continuous learning by participating in professional development opportunities.
- The ability to express one's own opinion and participate in discussions openly and honestly while encouraging, respecting, and listening thoughtfully to the free expression of opinions by colleagues.
- The ability to be accountable to all residents and not surrender to special interest groups or to a portion of the community.
- The temperament to respond accordingly and appropriately to challenging events.
- The maturity to respect the confidentiality of privileged information and to take no private action that would compromise the board or administration.
- The willingness to abide by and support board operating procedures, policies, and have a unified voice after board action.
- The discipline to govern through policies and budgets by focusing on the "what we are providing" and not on the "how."

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The school board is responsible to the community to govern effectively and efficiently. The board establishes expectations for student achievement, quality operational performance, and monitoring actual performance against those expectations.

Governance is framed by the purpose for which the school district was created and is therefore concerned with activities at the highest-level including goal setting, policy development, and monitoring progress toward alignment with governance objectives.

Vision

The board, with community input, envisions the educational future of the community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for the district. An effective board:

- Develops a well-crafted district vision statement, goals, and outcomes that enable the board to monitor district performance and evaluate success.
- Ensures that the district vision, goals, and outcomes are articulated in written board policy, reflected in every part of the organization, and mirrored in the budget planning and implementation efforts.

Structure

To achieve its vision, the board establishes a structure and hires a superintendent to accomplish that vision. An effective board:

- Selects and employs one person – the superintendent – as the district’s chief executive officer to lead and to manage the district and holds the superintendent accountable for district performance and compliance with board policy.
- Understands that day-to-day operations of the district will be conducted by staff.

Accountability

The board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the district as a whole. An effective board:

- Has a duty to itself and the community to determine whether the authority delegated to the superintendent is being used as intended.
- Recognizes the distinction between “monitoring data” (data used by the board to address accountability) and “operational data” (data used by the staff for operations).

Advocacy

The board advances its vision by focusing on student achievement, partnering with the community, and being pro-active in addressing issues that affect education on local, state, and national levels.

- Focuses on community-wide concerns and values that best support student achievement rather than being overly influenced by special interests.
- Utilizes a system of public relations that allows it to formalize the flow of information into and out of the district.

Conduct and Ethics

The board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner. An effective board:

- Sets an example of respectful and civil leadership.
- Follows its established policies, including the chain-of-command, by directing people with concerns to the appropriate staff.
- Spends time on board work rather than staff work.
- Provides for orientation and governance training of prospective and new board members

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER COMMITMENTS

Meetings

Unless allowable by the Michigan Open Meetings Act, all school board meetings must be open to the public so that the public has the opportunity to see and to hear all discussion and votes.

Membership on the school board requires attendance at a variety of meetings held every month, including regular meetings, work study meetings, and special meetings.

Committees

Individual school board members are assigned to serve on board and district committees. Board committee assignments are made in January of each calendar year.

- School board committees include Audit, Facilities, and Policy.

Time Commitment

The actual time commitment required varies depending on the board member and the number of issues the school board is addressing at any given time as well as attendance at advocacy, community, and professional development events.

Compensation

Most Michigan School Boards offers a stipend for school board service. Portage Public Schools offers a stipend of \$25 per meeting.

Important!

To learn more, visit the Portage Public Schools website home page at <https://portageps.org/>, click on Board of Education link. There you will find:

- **Board member contact information**
- **Board meeting information – meeting schedule, agendas, and meeting minutes**
- **Policies and bylaws**
- **Monitoring reports**
- **Transparency reporting**

Board Membership

The school board is made up of seven citizens elected at large by voters in the district. Members are elected to overlapping terms, with elections being held every two years. Members may run for re-election to successive terms. Voting takes place at the general election in November in even-numbered years, and terms begin on the first Monday in January thereafter. The terms of the four current school board seats are expiring on December 31, 2020. The election for these seats will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Every year at its first meeting in January, the school board holds an organization meeting to elect officers and to settle other annual routine business. The Superintendent is an ex-officio member of the board and is responsible to the board for providing leadership to the school district and carrying out board policies.

CANDIDATE FILING DEADLINE FOR THE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION

The terms of the four current school board seats are expiring on December 31, 2020. The election for these seats will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

The filing deadline for school board candidates is 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21, 2020. School board candidates for Portage Public Schools must file with the Portage City Clerk by filing an Affidavit of Identity and petition forms (or \$100 non-refundable filing fee in lieu of petitions). Petition forms and Affidavit of Identify forms are available from the Portage City Clerk, the Kalamazoo County Clerk, or online at www.michigan.gov/elections. Please contact the Portage City Clerk, Erica Eklov at 269-349-4511, with questions regarding candidacy eligibility, filing requirements, etc.