

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL RM #1136, 8135 S. WESTNEDGE, PORTAGE, MI 49002
AUGUST 18, 2025, 6:30 PM
AGENDA**

VISION STATEMENT

We are inspired to be an exceptional community grounded in fostering strengths, growth, and lifelong learning. Every student. Every future.

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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III. Reports

1. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Bond Project Update

 - b. Update on Summer Programs

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VI. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. July 21, 2025 Special Meeting, Regular Business Meeting, & Closed Session
 - b. August 7, 2025 Special Meeting

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL & REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS
JULY 21, 2025**

SPECIAL MEETING

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, July 21, 2025, was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by President Van Antwerp. The meeting was held in Conference Room #1 of the Administration Building.

Board Trustees Present: Emily Crawford, Kimberly Larson (arrived at 4:10 p.m.), Terri Novaria, Mary Lou Rohwer, Bo Snyder, Mark Stevenson, Randy Van Antwerp

Board Trustees Absent: None

Executive Leadership Present: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent

Others Present: Gary Goscenski of Perspectives Consulting

REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve the agenda as printed.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

There were no comments or communications.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Gary Goscenski of Perspectives Consulting facilitated the discussion portion of the agenda on the topics of: Superintendent 90-day entry plan; policy governance discussion relative to board/superintendent linkage, monitoring, owners and customers, and board/superintendent communication.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

The Regular Business Meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, July 21, 2025, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Van Antwerp. The meeting was held in Room #1136 of Portage Central High School. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board Trustees Present: Emily Crawford, Kimberly Larson, Terri Novaria, Mary Lou Rohwer, Bo Snyder, Mark Stevenson, Randy Van Antwerp

Board Trustees Absent: None

REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, that the Board of Education approve the agenda as printed.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Bond Project Update

Superintendent Johnny Edwards provided an update on elementary bond work.

The demolition of Woodland Elementary is complete. The site is being cleaned up.

In order for staff at the new Haverhill and Central Elementary to be prepared for the start of school, they will return on August 12, 2025 for a full day of professional development and unboxing of materials from the old buildings.

For the new Central Elementary, the new parking lot is going in. Inside, work consists of cleaning and punch list items.

For the new Haverhill Elementary, parking lot work is happening. All doors are now in place so the building is enclosed. Inside, work consists of cleaning and furniture placement.

Superintendent Edwards responded to questions from Trustees.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Van Antwerp opened the floor to public comment, and hearing none, opened the floor to Trustee comments.

Mr. Snyder gave a shout out to all involved in the middle school Summer Experience Share Fair held last week.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Van Antwerp presented the following Consent Agenda item for approval by the Board of Education: minutes from the June 30, 2025 Regular Business Meeting.

There being no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Affirmation of School Calendar through September 2025

Per Mr. Brad Galin, Director of Human Resources, until a school calendar is finalized with the PEA, the Board is asked to set a partial school calendar through September 2025 for the purposes of planning and operations. He added that both the Administration and the PEA agree on this partial calendar.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education affirm that the District shall operate through September 2025, within the framework of the 2025/26 school calendar that reflects the Board of Education's current school calendar proposal, as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

New Administrator Appointment

Mr. Galin reviewed the professional and educational background of Mr. Russell Gerbers. Superintendent Edwards added that the interview process was done by panels consisting of staff in various positions. In both interviews, Mr. Gerbers rose to the top.

Motion offered by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve the following administrator appointment for Portage Public Schools, Mr. Russell Gerbers as Assistant Superintendent of Operations.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gerbers was congratulated and formally introduced to the Board.

New Teacher Appointments

Mr. Brad Galin, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the teacher appointment recommendation and shared highlights about the appointees.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of following teachers for Portage Public Schools:

**Kourtney Bakalyar – Central High ESI Teacher
Katie Czirr – Northern High ESI Teacher
Megan Hall – Northern High Media Specialist
Graham Howard – Northern High Health/PE Teacher
Jason Milan – Central High ESI Teacher**

Samara Munoz – Lake Center Elementary Third Grade Teacher
Kyra Reese – 12th Street Elementary Second Grade Teacher
Suzanne Wofford – Lake Center Elementary Second Grade Teacher
Emma Chester – Northern High Spanish Teacher
Emily Stewart – School Social Worker
Nicholas Stawowy – Northern High School Counselor
Blake Schuster – Angling Road Elementary PE Teacher
James Rissi – Northern High Biology Teacher
Jaylin Bethke – Northern High Math Teacher
Julie DeGraff – West Middle Science Teacher
David Peters – STA/KHC/SMLS Music Teacher
James Pierucci – Music Teacher for St. Augustine, Hackett & St. Michaels
Ashley Stack – Central High Social Studies Teacher
Grace Wiesner – West Middle Math Teacher
Samantha Schatz – Northern High Family & Consumer Science Teacher
Jenny Maske – Music Teacher for Kalamazoo Country Day School & St. Michaels
Parker Bailey – North Middle Social Studies Teacher
Angela Boynton – Central High Social Studies Teacher
Hannah Stuart – Angling Road Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher
Erin Kissinger – Central Middle Media Specialist
Evan Jones – Angling Road Elementary Art Teacher
Madison McAllister – Central High Art Teacher
Abigail Shambo – Angling Road Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher
Shannon Howard – West Middle Spanish Teacher
Teresa Cooper – Instructional Consultant ELA

Mr. Galin responded to a Trustee question.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Staff Chromebook Purchase

Dr. Ryan Miller, Director of Technology and Information Systems, went over the recommendation to purchase staff Chromebooks. The Board opted to move this discussion item to action.

Motion offered by Mrs. Crawford, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board move the Staff Chromebook Purchase discussion item to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Ms. Larson, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve the purchase, as presented, of 100 staff Chromebooks from CDWG in the amount of \$44,347.00, the funds for which will come from the 2023 Bond Fund.

The motion carried unanimously.

Interactive Flat Panels for New CEL & HAV

Dr. Ryan Miller reviewed background information and recommendation for the purchase of interactive flat panels. In addition, he went over a handout providing more detailed information about the flat panels to be purchased. The Board opted to move this discussion item to action.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board move the Interactive Flat Panels discussion item to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, that the Board of Education approve the purchase, as presented, of 12 Smart RX Interactive Flat Panels from Forte, Inc. in the amount of \$67,314.00, the funds for which will come from the 2023 Bond Fund.

The motion carried unanimously.

MASB 2025 Annual Leadership Conference

President Van Antwerp briefly reviewed information for the upcoming MASB Annual Leadership Conference.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Mr. Snyder, that the Board of Education move into closed session to discuss collective bargaining strategy, as allowed under the Open Meetings Act 15.268, Section 8(c).

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board entered into closed session at 7:03 p.m. and returned to open session at 7:15 p.m.

POST-CLOSED ACTION

In open session, the Board took the following action.

Motion offered by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve the 2025-2028 Contractual Agreement with the Portage Custodial/Maintenance Group, MEA/NEA.

The motion carried unanimously.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Atkinson,
Recording Secretary

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 7, 2025**

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Thursday, August 7, 2025, was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by President Van Antwerp. The meeting was held in Conference Room #1 of the Administration Building.

Board Trustees Present: Emily Crawford, Mary Lou Rohwer, Bo Snyder, Mark Stevenson, Randy Van Antwerp

Board Trustees Absent: Kimberly Larson, Terri Novaria

Executive Leadership Present: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent; Brad Galin, Director of Human Resources

REVISIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion offered by Mrs. Crawford, seconded by Mr. Snyder, that the Board of Education approve the agenda as printed.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

There were no comments or communications.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Administrator Appointment

Mr. Brad Galin, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the hiring recommendation.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve the administrator appointment of James Swinehart, as Northern High's Athletic Director.

The motion carried unanimously.

The Board congratulated Mr. Swinehart.

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Barb Atkinson
Recording Secretary

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IX. Action Items

1. Approve Nursing Services Contract for 2025-26 (OP 6320)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, renewing the contract for nursing services between Portage Public Schools and Healthbar LLC in the amount of \$320,616.00 using funding from 31aa for the 2025-26 school year.

To: Board of Education
From: Bradley D. Galin, MBA, SPHR
Date: August 18, 2025
Re: School Nursing Services with HealthBar LLC

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve renewing the contract for nursing services between the Portage Public Schools and HealthBar LLC in the amount of \$320,616 using funding from 31aa for the 2025-2026 school year.

BACKGROUND

HealthBar LLC is a Michigan-based company and their School Nursing Program has been implemented in districts across the state of Michigan. This will be the fourth year of the partnership between HealthBar and Portage Public Schools.

The main goals of the program are the following:

- Increase access to healthcare services and education for students, faculty, and school communities
- Complete handling of medications and administrations
- Develop care plans for students with ongoing / chronic conditions
- Treatment and/or facilitation of injury/illness/mental health needs and services
- Health records maintenance and information gathering (immunizations/diagnosis/etc...)
- Policy development and review as it pertains to nursing and clinical topics
- Compliance monitoring with local and state regulations and guidelines
- Training in first aid basics for staff throughout the District

The contract provides for 3 nurses to be provided to PPS by HealthBar for 37.5 hours per week at a rate of \$73.54 per hour. Based on projected utilization, it is estimated this will be a total cost of \$320,616 with funds from 31aa being used this year.

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2. New Teacher Appointments (OP 3120)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following teachers for Portage Public Schools:

- **Monica Violante – Engagement Specialist, Angling Road Elementary**
- **Justin Rose – French Teacher, Central High & Central Middle Schools**
- **Faith Dennis – First Grade Teacher, Angling Road Elementary**
- **Jessica Folkert – Music Teacher, Angling Road Elementary**
- **Christopher Enders – Math Teacher, Northern High**

Bradley D. Galin, MBA, SPHR
Director of Human Resources
Phone: 269.323.5152
bgalin@portageps.org

To: Board of Education
From: Bradley D. Galin, MBA, SPHR
Date: August 18, 2025
Re: Teacher Appointment Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following teachers for the Portage Public Schools:

Monica Violante– (ANG Engagement Specialist) – Monica comes PPS from Kalamazoo Public Schools. Monica has a bachelor’s degree from Grand Valley State University.

Justin Rose– (CHS/CMS French Teacher) – Justin comes PPS from Dunlap Schools in Illinois. Justin has a bachelor’s degree from Hope College.

Faith Dennis– (ANG 1st Grade Teacher) – Faith comes PPS from Capac Community Schools. Faith has a bachelor’s degree from Saginaw Valley State University.

Jessica Folkert– (ANG Music Teacher) – Jessica comes PPS from Bangor Public Schools. Jessica has a bachelor’s degree from Western Michigan University.

Christopher Enders– (NHS Math Teacher) – Christopher comes PPS from Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools. Christopher has a bachelor’s and Master’s degree from Michigan State University.

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3. New Administrator Appointment (OP 3120)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following administrator for Portage Public Schools for the 2025-26 school year – Elizabeth Eves, Supervisor for Educational Supports and Intervention for the Southern Service Area of KRESA.

Bradley D. Galin, MBA, SPHR
Director of Human Resources
Phone: 269.323.5152
bgalin@portageps.org

To: Board of Education
From: Bradley Galin, MBA, SPHR
Date: August 18, 2025
Re: Administrator Appointment Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following administrator for the Portage Public Schools for the 2025-2026 school year.

Elizabeth Eves:

Ms. Elizabeth Eves is being recommended as the new Supervisor for Educational Supports and Intervention for the Southern Service Area of KRESA. Ms. Eves will be primarily assigned to the Vicksburg Community Schools.

Ms. Eves comes to PPS from KRESA. Prior to KRESA, Ms. Eves was an Occupational Therapist, Special Education Supervisor, and Principal for St. Joseph County ISD. Other experience includes time with Van Burn County Mental Health and the Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital

Ms. Eves graduated from Central Michigan University and then obtained her master's in Occupational Therapy from Western Michigan University. Ms. Eves also obtained her Educational Specialist degree from Western Michigan University. Ms. Eves starting annualized salary in the role will be \$108,936.

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4. School Meal Prices for 2025-26 (OP 6320)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve the student meal prices for the 2025-26 school year as presented.



To: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent
From: Paula Johnson, Director of Finance
Date: August 1, 2025
Subject: Recommended 2025/26 Student Breakfast and Lunch Prices

Recommendation

That the Board of Education set student meal prices for the 2025/26 school year as follows based on the pricing equity requirements from the Michigan Department of Education:

	<u>Current 2024/25</u>	<u>Proposed 2025/26</u>
Elementary Breakfast:	\$ no charge	\$ 1.50
Elementary Lunch:	\$ no charge	\$ 2.75
Ala Carte Entrée	\$ no charge	\$ 2.75
Milk	\$.50	\$.60
Secondary Breakfast:	\$ no charge	\$ 1.60
Middle School Lunch:	\$ no charge	\$ 3.50
High School Lunch:	\$ no charge	\$ 3.50
Premium Secondary Lunch (2Mato, So Deli, On the Go)	\$ no charge	\$ 3.75
Ala Carte Entrée	\$ 3.25 or \$ 3.50	\$ 3.50 or \$ 3.75

Background

For the past two school years, Portage has taken advantage of the free Michigan School Meals funding by the State of Michigan. On September 30, 2025 the funding for that program will expire as the state's fiscal year ends. Due to the ongoing budget process in Lansing, funding for free school meals for the 25-26 school year has not been negotiated.

We are bringing this pricing recommendation to the board to approve in order to follow the MDE requirements for meal pricing in the event we need to return to the traditional NSLP and SBP format on October 1, 2025. Due to the Excess Fund Balance in our Food Service Fund, we are also recommending that our students who are eligible for reduced priced meals through Direct Certification and the Education and Nutrition Benefit Applications be provided their meals at no cost this year, otherwise free.

The recommendation based on the PLE tool prepared by Chartwells is to increase student lunch prices at both the elementary and secondary levels to meet the "gap" between the federal reimbursement and the paid price of student meals.

Ala carte entrée prices will be adjusted to be consistent with the base and premium lunch price increases and to encourage students to choose a healthier complete meal vs just ala carte items. Pricing for staff meals and student ala carte foods are set following the required MDE pricing formula.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.


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X. Discussion Items

1. MASB Delegate Assembly Representatives (MASB)

Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

To: Board of Education
From: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent 
Date: August 18, 2025
Re: 2025 MASB Delegate Assembly

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education certify the following delegate(s): _____ and alternate(s): _____ for the 2025 Michigan Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly, as presented.

BACKGROUND:

The Board of Education participates annually in the Michigan Association of School Boards' Delegate Assembly. This year the event will take place on Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Grand Traverse Resort. Based on the District's student membership, Portage is allowed to send four voting delegates and an equal number of alternates to the Assembly. Delegates and alternates must be school board members. Districts must certify their delegate/alternate selections with MASB by no later than Thursday, October 2, 2025; therefore, board action to confirm these representatives must take place prior to that.

Delegates selected by boards of education across the state will decide on MASB's positions on a wide variety of issues affecting education. Board certified delegates/alternates may offer motions and vote on issues.

Please consider serving as a delegate or alternate for this upcoming event. This item will return to the Board for action at the September 8, 2025 board meeting.