

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL RM #1136, 8135 S. WESTNEDGE, PORTAGE, MI 49002
SEPTEMBER 22, 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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VI. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. September 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole Work Session & Closed Session

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION
SEPTEMBER 8, 2025**

The Committee of the Whole Work Session of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, September 8, 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. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve the agenda as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Bond Project Update

Mr. Russell Gerbers, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, provided an update on bond projects.

The open house at Central Elementary was held on September 3, 2025 and was well attended. Haverhill's is set for September 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Both schools opened on schedule. At both schools, work continues on punch list items, hardscape, and landscaping. Building systems will undergo commissioning to ensure mechanical systems are fully optimized.

At the Woodland Elementary site, earthwork is complete. Work on footings and poured walls is wrapping up. Masons will be on site later this month to begin laying brick. Work will be done in phases on this project.

Over the summer, the roof and boiler were replaced at PCEC.

Currently, a new LED lighting system is being installed after school hours at Lake Center Elementary.

November 4 Bond Update

Mr. Gerbers provided introductory remarks. Ms. Michelle Karpinski, Community Relations Manager, presented a view slides relative to marketing the bond proposal request on the ballot for

the November 4, 2025 election. The District will get the word out with a focus on the why behind the request using the website, social media, a billboard, video, radio, mailings, information nights, information table at the PN/PC football game, and text alerts.

Other

Superintendent Edwards thanked staff for a great start to the school year. During the first week he was able to visit all schools.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Van Antwerp opened the floor to public comments.

Kat Frink shared positive things happening throughout the district.

President Van Antwerp thanked Ms. Frink for her remarks and opened the floor to Trustee remarks.

Mrs. Rohwer shared that Texas Township Supervisor, JoAnne O'Rourke, would be speaking about the District's bond proposal at a township meeting.

Ms. Larson welcomed educators back to school and congratulated those selected to roles in upcoming student productions.

Mr. Snyder thanked Superintendent Edwards for the opening day event and adding a personal touch to that occasion. He also thanked Kat Frink for often attending board meetings and sharing the positive things happening around the district.

Mrs. Novaria attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at Central Elementary. "It was a well-orchestrated event."

President Van Antwerp shared a thank you card from Mark Bielang with Trustees.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Van Antwerp presented the following Consent Agenda items for approval by the Board of Education: meeting minutes from the August 18, 2025 Special Meeting, Closed Session, and Regular Business Meeting.

There being no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

ASSURANCE OF DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

Monitoring Report 2.6, Asset Protection

Motion offered by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Ms. Crawford, that the Board of Education accept as presented, the Monitoring Report on 2.6, Asset Protection, as a reasonable interpretation and evidence of compliance with policy.

Superintendent Edwards reviewed highlights from his report.

The motion carried unanimously.

Monitoring Report 2.10, Communications & Support to the Board

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Ms. Crawford, that the Board of Education accept Monitoring Report 2.10, Communications & Support to the Board, as a reasonable interpretation and evidence of compliance with policy.

Superintendent Edwards shared highlights from the report.

Related to section 2.10.2 of the report, Dr. Stevenson expressed his appreciation for the recent discussion regarding Policies 5410 and 5112 and looks forward to continued discussion on those policies.

The motion carried unanimously.

REQUIRED ACTION ITEMS

MASB Delegate Assembly Representatives

President Van Antwerp offered to serve as the voting delegate at the upcoming MASB Delegate Assembly. No one from the Board volunteered to serve as alternate. The Board took action to confirm their representation at this upcoming event.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board of Education certify the following delegate, Randy Van Antwerp for the 2025 Michigan Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly.

The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

New Teacher Appointments

Mr. Brad Galin, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the professional background of the teacher appointees. He added that at this time, all teaching vacancies are filled.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following teachers for Portage Public Schools: Shannon SaintAmour – Healthy Living Teacher at North Middle School, Caroline Wildasin – Fourth Grade Teacher at Amberly Elementary, Jennifer Leone – PE Teacher at Kalamazoo Country Day School and St. Michaels, Alexis Keen – Third Grade Teacher at Woodland Elementary, and Heidi Thorpe – Speech Language Pathologist at Lake Center Elementary.

The motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Discuss Collective Bargaining Strategy

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Rohwer, that the Board of Education move into closed session to discuss collective bargaining strategy, as allowed under the Open Meetings Act 15.268, Sections 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 7:29 p.m.

POST-CLOSED ACTION

Approve Agreement with Portage Education Association

The Board took the following action in open session.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board of Education approve the financial opener for the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Portage Education Association.

The motion carried unanimously.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barb Atkinson
Recording Secretary

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IX. Action Items

1. Proclamations

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the following proclamations - National School Lunch Week Proclamation, School Bus Safety Week Proclamation, Red Ribbon Week Proclamation, and National Principals Month Proclamation.



Enclosure IX.1.a.
September 22, 2025

Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK
October 13-17, 2025**

WHEREAS, the school nutrition program plays a vital role in supporting student health, well-being, and academic success; and

WHEREAS, each day, our food service professionals prepare and serve thousands of meals while maintaining the highest standards of nutrition, safety, and customer care; and

WHEREAS, these dedicated employees demonstrate professionalism, patience, and skill in meeting the daily needs of students and staff; and

WHEREAS, National School Lunch Week provides an opportunity to recognize the contributions of our school nutrition professionals and to raise awareness of their impact on education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education proudly proclaims October 13–17, 2025 as **National School Lunch Week**, and commends our food service professionals whose service ensures the success of our school nutrition program.

Proclaimed this 22nd day of September, 2025
Portage Public Schools' Board Of Education



Enclosure IX.1.b.
September 22, 2025

Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK
October 20-24, 2025**

WHEREAS, school transportation professionals—including managers, drivers, mechanics, and support staff—play a critical role in ensuring the safe travel of students each day; and

WHEREAS, transporting students across numerous routes requires skill, responsibility, patience, and unwavering dedication; and

WHEREAS, our transportation team has established a proud record of safety and excellence, consistently meeting the highest standards during state inspections; and

WHEREAS, School Bus Safety Week provides an opportunity to thank our transportation staff and to remind all motorists of the importance of obeying school bus safety laws; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education proclaims October 20–24, 2025, as School Bus Safety Week, recognizes the dedication of our transportation professionals in ensuring student safety, and calls upon all citizens to drive responsibly and support efforts that protect students traveling to and from school.

Proclaimed this 22nd day of September, 2025
Portage Public Schools' Board of Education



Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
RED RIBBON WEEK
October 23-31 Annually**

WHEREAS, Red Ribbon Week is observed nationwide each year from October 23–31 to promote drug prevention and awareness; and

WHEREAS, substance abuse among youth—including tobacco, alcohol, and prescription drug misuse—remains a serious concern; and

WHEREAS, prevention education and open communication between parents and children significantly reduce the likelihood of drug use; and

WHEREAS, communities across the nation demonstrate their commitment to a healthy, drug-free lifestyle by participating in Red Ribbon Week activities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools does hereby support **RED RIBBON WEEK**, and encourages Portage citizens to participate in drug prevention education activities, showing our commitment to a drug-free community through education about the dangers of drug abuse, and by setting a good example.

Proclaimed this 22nd day of September, 2025
Portage Public Schools' Board of Education



Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
PRINCIPALS MONTH
October 2025**

WHEREAS, strong and inspiring leadership is essential to the success of our schools and to preparing students for achievement during their pre-K-12 years and beyond; and

WHEREAS, principals serve as instructional leaders, visionaries, community builders, managers, and advocates for students, ensuring that schools meet the highest educational and operational standards; and

WHEREAS, principals set the academic tone for their schools and work collaboratively with teachers and parents to develop and implement a clear mission, high curriculum standards and performance goals; and

WHEREAS, principals play a vital role in the success of students by creating school environments that facilitate great teaching and learning, as well as continuous school improvement; and,

WHEREAS, the dedication of principals is reflected in the success of students, the strength of school communities, and the recognition of student achievement; and

WHEREAS, Principals Month provides an opportunity to honor the important role of school leaders and to express gratitude for their work and dedication to education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby proclaims October 2025 as **Principals Month** in the Portage Public School District, and commends all of our principals for their service and commitment to educating our students. Every student. Every future.

Proclaimed this 22nd day of September, 2025
Portage Public Schools' Board Of Education

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IX. Action Items

2. Administrator Compensation Increase (EL 2.3)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education authorize a salary increase of four percent (4%) for the administrative group, with the exception of elementary principals, who shall receive a 6.38 percent (6.38%) increase, as determined by a salary review.

To: Board of Education
From: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent
Date: September 22, 2025
Re: Administrator Compensation Increase

After reaching an agreement with all groups subject to collective bargaining, it is my recommendation that the Board authorize administrator salary increases equal to four (4) percent for the administrative group with the exception of the elementary principals which, after a salary review, I recommend a 6.38 percent increase. Salaries for the administrator group are projected to be \$4,888,409, an increase in the aggregate of \$199,600 or 4.26 percent.

BLASINGAME, DARRYL D	12TH STREET ELEMENTARY
KAYLOR, AJA S	PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
WEBSTER, KATIE M	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
WALKER, JUSTIN E	PORTAGE CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
WAGENAAR, SARA L	CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MCCARREN, EFTHIMIA P	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
THOMSEN, TRAVIS S	PORTAGE NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL
SALISBURY, TAMA R	PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
SHEAHAN, MACKENZIE	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
JENSENIUS, KELLY L	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
GALIN, BRADLEY D	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
PASCOE, MICHAEL	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
ALBURTUS, ERIC A	PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
FUEHR, ANDREW	AMBERLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CARSON, JENNIFER A	WOODLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SCHAFFER III, JAMES A	PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
HOSTETLER, JENNIFER A	PORTAGE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
GORDON, ANNE	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
WAGNER, CLINTON J	PORTAGE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
HINGA, KELLY	PORTAGE NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL
SWINEHART, JAMES F	PORTAGE NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL
CROUCH, ZACHARY A	MOORSBRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MILLER, RYAN	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
MCCULLOUGH, ALEXANDRA C	LAKE CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
JOHNSON, PAULA	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
MEDD, CRAIG A	PORTAGE NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL
ZONTS, JEREMY A	HAVERHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FRENCH, LINDSAY	PORTAGE EARLY CHILDHOOD
MESSINGER, JASON	PORTAGE WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL
PATTERSON, DYLAN	PORTAGE NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL
BAILEY, SIDNEY, IV	PORTAGE WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL
CUGNETTI, KIMBERLY	PORTAGE CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
LOWDER, TRACEY T	PORTAGE NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL
SPEAKER-GERSTHEIMER, TRACY K	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
WILLIAMSON, ESSENCE D	ANGLING ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
DEVISSER, ABBY	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
GERBERS, RUSSELL E	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN
EVES, ELIZABETH J	PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMIN

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X. Discussion Items

1. Purchase of Vans (OP 6320)

To: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent

From: Russ Gerber, Assistant Superintendent of Operations

CC: Paula Johnson, Director of Finance

Date: September 22, 2025

Re: Purchase of Passenger Vans

RECOMMENDATION

I am recommending that the Board of Education approve the purchase of three 10-passenger vans from Tapper Ford, LLC in Paw Paw, MI for a total of \$200,643 to come from the 2024 Building Site and Sinking Fund.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Our district currently maintains a fleet of vans used to transport students and staff for athletics, choir, clubs, and other district activities. The acquisition of three additional vans will maintain our fleet at nine fully functional, reliable vehicles — greatly enhancing our ability to support longer-distance travel. Each new van increases seating capacity from eight to ten passengers and offers additional cargo space, improving overall efficiency and comfort.

These vehicles will be equipped with advanced safety features such as extended running boards for safer entry and exit, a reinforced frame for added stability, all-wheel drive for Michigan's challenging road conditions, and high-mount rear cameras to improve visibility.


At the same time, we will retire three aging vans that are currently in disrepair and no longer meet State of Michigan safety standards. The district last purchased three 10-passenger vans in 2025, and this investment ensures we continue providing safe, dependable, and cost-effective transportation for our students and staff.

BIDDING PROCESS

The passenger vans were competitively bid with Tapper Ford, LLC. being the lowest bidder who best fits the needs and requirements of the transportation department. A bid tab has been attached to this recommendation for your review. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Bid Tab RFP# 20471 8-10 Passenger Van (3)
 Responses Due 09/09/2025 @ 11:00 AM

Vendor Name	Lunghammer Ford	Pinckney Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep	Hoekstra Transportation	Tapper Ford	Kline Van and Speciality	Bob Maxey Ford	Bus Service, Inc
Location	Owosso, MI	Pinckney, MI	Grand Rapids, MI	Paw Paw, MI	Blue Springs, MO	Detroit, MI	Columbus, OH
Phone Number	989-725-2888 x105	734-878-3154	616-437-7087	269-657-3134	816-944-2229	313-420-1092	219-928-8902
Contact Name	Rich Frieling	Joe O'Connell	Tim Oddy	Josh Wright	Kelly Flowers	Frank Kurta	Jake Post
Contact Email	rfrieling@lunghammerford.com	joe.oconnell@genesisautogroup.com	toddy@hoekstrainc.com	josh@tapperford.com	commercial@vandoit.com	frank.kurta20@gmail.com	jake@buyabus.net
Legal Forms							
Iran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Familial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vehicle Make/ Model	Ford Transit	Chrysler Pacifica	Ford X9C	Ford Transit All Wheel Drive	Ford Transit T-350	Ford Transit T-350	Ford Transit Mid Roof
Vehicle Year	2026	2026	2026	2026	2025	2025 and 2026	2026
Max Passenger Capacity	10	8	10	10	15	10	10
Cubic Feet of Cargo:	357	32.3		134	72.8	80	42
Unit Price Delivered	\$75,845.00	\$46,240.00	\$76,000.00	\$66,881.00	\$80,730.00	\$62,530 (1 2025 available now) and \$66,980 (2026 Vans)	\$71,766.00
Total Price	\$227,535.00	\$138,720.00	\$228,000.00	\$200,643.00	\$242,190.00	\$196,490 (1-2025 2-2026) \$200,940 (3 -2026)	\$215,298.00
Estimated Delivery	90-120 days from order	December 2025	February 2026	4-5 Months	90-120 Days from Order	2025 Now 2026 - 80-100 Days ARO	30 Days from receipt of chassis
MISC	Extended Warranty Available					Free Delivery	

Signature 

Signature 