

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL RM #1136, 8135 S. WESTNEDGE, PORTAGE, MI 49002
AUGUST 17, 2026, 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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**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

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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).

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

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III. Reports

1. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Administrator Introductions
 - b. Update on Bond Projects
 - c. Update on Summer Programs

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**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

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VI. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. July 20, 2026 Regular Business Meeting, & Closed Session
 - b. August 3, 2026 Special Meeting
 - c. August 13, 2026 Special Meeting & Closed Session

2. Policy Updates

That the Board of Education approve Policies 0100-Definitions and 5136-Wireless Communication Devices, as presented.

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS
JULY 20, 2026**

The Regular Business Meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, July 20, 2026, 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 Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Rohwer, that the Board of Education approve the agenda as printed.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Bond Project Update

Assistant Superintendent of Operations Russ Gerbers showed photos of construction progress at Woodland Elementary and provided a brief verbal update on other construction activity.

State Budget Update

Ms. Samantha Stevens, Business Manager, reported on the recently adopted state budget and the impact to the District.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Van Antwerp opened the floor to public comment. Board Secretary Novaria read aloud the guidelines for public comment.

Dustin McLean, Danielle Morrison, Kelley Cronkite, and Kayla Fernstrum addressed the Board regarding issues related to Angling Road Elementary.

Sara Barton addressed the Board regarding the need for school nurses.

President Van Antwerp thanked each of the public commenters for their remarks and opened the floor to Trustee comments.

Mr. Snyder thanked the public commenters for their remarks and noted that the Board cannot respond to personnel matters.

Dr. Stevenson acknowledged the public comments received during the meeting and the emails submitted to board members.

Ms. Larson and Mrs. Crawford echoed the sentiments shared by Mr. Snyder and Dr. Stevenson.

Mrs. Novaria reflected on personal experience and expressed the need for improvement.

President Van Antwerp thanked board members for their remarks.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Van Antwerp presented the following Consent Agenda item for approval by the Board of Education: minutes from the June 29, 2026 Special Meeting, Regular Business Meeting and Closed Sessions.

There being no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Architectural & Engineering Agreement Amendment #2

Mr. Russ Gerbers presented the recommended contract amendment and responded to questions from the Board.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, Amendment #2 to the Architectural & Engineering Agreement with TowerPinkster for continued design and engineering services associated with the District's 2021 Bond, 2025 Bond, and 2024 Sinking Fund Programs.

The motion carried unanimously.

Construction Manager Agreement Amendment #1

Mr. Russ Gerbers detailed the recommendation.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, Amendment #1 to the Construction Management Agreement with Owen-Ames-Kimball (OAK) for continued construction management services associated with the District's 2021 Bond, 2025 Bond, and Building Site and Sinking Fund projects.

The motion carried unanimously.

New Teacher Appointments

Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim, Director of Human Resources, provided brief comments regarding the proposed teacher hires.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of following teachers for Portage Public Schools, as presented:

- Jessica Kosticak, CHS Science Teacher
- Madison McAley, NHS Science Teacher
- Lucas Gilman, WMS Math Teacher
- Mariah van Wyk, ELL Teacher
- Rebecca Roe, NHS Science Teacher
- Abigail Coberly, School Psychologist
- Kayla Kokotovich, TWL 2nd Grade Teacher
- Rachel Boyer, LCE 2nd Grade Teacher
- Abigail Cotter, MBE 4th Grade Teacher
- Lauren Doyle, CMS ESI Teacher
- Madison Hill, TWL 4th Grade Teacher
- Gretchen Knowlton, ANG Art Teacher
- Alyssa Loucks, NHS English Teacher
- Mathew Musialczyk, NMS Science Teacher
- Lyvia Osterstock, CHS Social Studies Teacher
- Lauren Smith, WMS Spanish Teacher
- Beth Yozzo, LCE ESI Teacher
- Katelyn Vemich, Speech Language Pathologist

The motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Contract Extensions

Per Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim, this recommendation includes two administrators who were inadvertently omitted from the contract extension recommendation approved by the Board on June 29, 2026.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to issue Administrator contract extensions, not to extend beyond June 30, 2028, and with additional compensation in the aggregate, as approved by the Board as part of the initial 2026-2027 budget for the following individuals: Sidney Bailey IV and Alexandra McCullough.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approve Superintendent Evaluation & Public Statement

Board President Van Antwerp read aloud the recommendation and public statement. He congratulated Superintendent Edwards on the successful completion of his first year and his effective performance rating. The Board then engaged in discussion.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve a rating of effective for Superintendent Johnny Edwards based on the results of his annual evaluation for the 2025-26 school year and approve the public statement regarding this evaluation.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approve Superintendent Contract Modifications

Board President Van Antwerp read aloud the recommendation. The Board then discussed the recommendation.

Motion offered by Ms. Larson, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve an increase to the Superintendent's base salary by 4% consistent with the increase approved previously for the administrative group.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policy Updates

Dr. Michael Pascoe, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, presented the recommendation for two policies – one pertaining to definitions and the other pertaining to wireless communication devices. The latter covers provisions required by law. Dr. Pascoe explained the review process, and addressed questions from Trustees.

MASB 2026 Annual Leadership Conference

President Van Antwerp briefly reviewed information about the 2026 MASB Annual Leadership Conference and the Summer Institute.

Truck Purchase

Mr. Russ Gerbers presented the recommendation for the purchase of a new plow truck.

The Board opted to move the discussion item to action.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education move the truck purchase discussion item to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve the purchase of a new plow truck from Lunghamer Ford in the amount of \$55,983.00, the funds for which will come from the 2024 Building and Site Sinking Fund.

The motion carried unanimously.

CHS Long Jump Resurfacing & Track Repairs

Mr. Russ Gerbers presented the recommendation and responded to Trustee questions.

The Board opted to move the discussion item to action.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education move the CHS long jump resurfacing & track repairs discussion item to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve a contract with Beynon Sports in the amount of \$128,975.00 to resurface the long jump runway and repair various areas of damage on the track, the funding for which will come from the 2019 Building and Site Sinking Fund.

The motion carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, 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 8:35 p.m. and returned to open session at 8:49 p.m.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb Atkinson,
Recording Secretary

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 3, 2026**

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, August 3, 2026, was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by President Van Antwerp. The meeting was held in Conference Room #1 of the Administration Building.

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

Board Trustees Absent: Kimberly Larson

Executive Leadership Present: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent; Jennifer Meisterheim, Director of Human Resources; Ryan Miller, Director of Information & Technology

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.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

There were no comments or communications.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Collective Bargaining Agreements

Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the paraprofessional contractual agreement as well as the school bus driver agreement. Board action followed.

Motion offered by Mrs. Crawford, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, that the Board of Education approve the 2026-2027 Contractual Agreement with the Portage Support Professionals Association, KCEA/MEA/NEA, as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Rohwer, that the Board of Education approve the 2026-2028 Contractual Agreement with the Portage School Bus Drivers' Association, MEA/NEA, as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approve New Administrator Appointment

Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim briefly reviewed the recommendation.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Rohwer, that the Board of Education approve the appointment of Katelin Lopez as the new Assistant Principal at Portage Northern High School for the 2026-27 school year, as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

AI Policy

Dr. Ryan Miller, Director of Information & Technology Systems, went over the proposed AI policy.

The special meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barb Atkinson,
Recording Secretary

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 13, 2026**

The special meeting of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Thursday, August 13, 2026, was called to order at 4:30 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, Terri Novaria, Mary Lou Rohwer, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp

Board Trustees Absent: Mark Stevenson

Executive Leadership Present: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent; Jennifer Meisterheim, Director of Human Resources

Others Present: Attorney Mary Jo Banasik of Thrun Law Firm

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.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

Tia Engelby addressed the Board regarding concerns pertaining to Angling Road Elementary. President Van Antwerp thanked Ms. Engelby for her remarks.
There were no Trustee comments.

CLOSED SESSION

Consider Attorney-Client Privileged Material

Motion offered by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, that the Board of Education move into closed session to consider attorney-client privileged material as allowed under the Open Meetings Act 15.268, Section 8(h).

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board entered into closed session at 4:39 p.m. and returned to open session at 5:41 p.m.

With no further business to come before the Board, the special meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barb Atkinson
Recording Secretary



Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

To: Board of Education
From: Johnny Edwards *J.E.*
Date: July 15, 2026
Re: Policy Update
CC: Executive Team; Principals and Assistant Principals

The proposed operational policies included in this update has been reviewed by NEOLA's legal counsel to ensure compliance with applicable statutes and further examined by the appropriate district-level administrators and are recommended for adoption by the Board. The policies referenced below are enclosed for your review.

POLICY UPDATES

Policy 5136 – Wireless Communication Devices (WCDs) (Replacement)

This replacement policy reflects the provisions of S.B. 495 (Public Act 1 - 2026) and H.B. 4141 (Public Act 2 - 2026) which were signed by Governor Whitmer on February 10, 2026. The policy is required to be in place for the 2026-27 school year.

This legislation prohibits students from using a wireless communications device on school grounds during instructional time, allows for specific exemptions, and requires a protocol for when and how pupils are permitted to use wireless communications devices during an emergency be included in the District's emergency operations plan.

This replacement policy should be adopted in order to reflect current provisions of state law.

Policy 0100 – Definitions (Revised)

This policy has been revised to update the definition for Personal Communication Devices and add the definition for Wireless Communication Device.

Adoption of this policy is in order to maintain accurate and current definitions.

Enclosures

po5136

Vol. 40, No. 2 - February 2026 Replacement WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES (WCDs)

Replacement Policy - Vol. 40, No. 2

5136 - WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES (WCDs)

Students are prohibited from using a wireless communications device ("WCD") on school grounds during instructional time.

Definitions

A WCD is an electronic device capable of, but not limited to, text messaging, voice communication, entertainment, navigation, accessing the internet, producing audio or video recordings, or sending and receiving photos and videos, or producing email and/or other digital content.

A WCD does not include a basic telephone, which is a device primarily used for voice calling that cannot support third-party applications, except those preinstalled, and does not support access to internet platforms via applications or web browsers.

At the K-5 grade level, instructional time is defined as all time that students are under the supervision of the school which begins upon arrival at school and ending upon departure from school at dismissal.

At the 6-8 grade level, instructional time is defined as the beginning of first period to the end of the last period of the school day.

At the 9-12 grade level, instructional time is defined as the period between the start time and end time of each scheduled class period.

For purposes of this policy, school grounds means a building, playing field, or property used for school purposes to impart instruction to children or used for functions and events sponsored by a school. School grounds does not include a building used primarily for adult education or college extension courses.

The prohibition on WCD use does not apply to the following:

- A. Medically necessary devices.

B. District-owned devices including, but not limited to, school-issued tablets and laptops.

C. Devices designated by the District to be used for instructional purposes.

D. Devices used for special education programming or devices provided as an accommodation to students as required under Section 504 of Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, or as part of an individualized education plan under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12131 to 12165.

E. Lesson-specific academic assignments, at the limited and direct discretion of a classroom teacher.

F. Emergency situations. Use of a WCD under this exemption must not interfere with school emergency protocols or the actions of first responders, and must not endanger students or faculty. A protocol for when and how pupils are permitted to use wireless communications devices during an emergency is included in the District's Emergency Operations Plan (Policy 8402).

[SELECT OPTION A, OPTION B, OR OPTION C - (DRAFTING NOTE: M.C.L. 380.1303a (Public Act 2 of 2026) requires the policy to include enforcement language, but does not specify what that language must say. The following is optional language for the district to consider.)]

[] [OPTION A]
Enforcement:

Students who violate this policy by using a WCD on school grounds during instructional time will be subject to discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

[END OF OPTION A]
[] [OPTION B]

-

Students who violate this policy by using a WCD on school grounds during instructional time will be subject to the following progressive disciplinary measures:

- A. **First Offense: Verbal warning and confiscation of the device until the end of the school day.**
- B. **Second Offense: Confiscation of the device with parent/guardian notification and required parent/guardian pickup.**

- C. ~~Third Offense: Confiscation of the device, parent/guardian conference, and additional disciplinary action as determined by school administration.~~

~~These enforcement mechanisms are designed to achieve the goals of this policy.~~

~~[END OF OPTION B]~~

~~-~~

~~[] [OPTION - C]~~

~~Enforcement mechanism language as drafted by the District.~~

~~[END OF OPTION C]~~

~~[DRAFTING NOTE: CHOOSE OPTION #1, OPTION #2, OR OPTION #3]~~

~~[] [OPTION #1]~~

~~The use of WCDs that contain built-in cameras (i.e., devices that take still or motion pictures, whether in a digital or other format) is prohibited in () classrooms, () gymnasiums, [END OF OPTIONS] locker rooms, shower facilities, rest/bathrooms () and/or swimming pool [END OF OPTION] :~~

~~[END OF OPTION #1]~~

~~[] [OPTION #2]~~

~~The use of WCDs in () classrooms, () gymnasiums, [END OF OPTIONS] locker rooms, shower facilities, rest/bathrooms () and/or swimming pool [END OF OPTION] is prohibited.~~

~~[END OF OPTION #2] [] [OPTION #3]~~

Use of WCDs with Cameras and Recording Applications:

WCDs, including, but not limited to, those with cameras and microphones that can be used for visual or audio recording, may not be activated or utilized at any time in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include, but are not limited to, () classrooms, () gymnasiums, [END OF OPTIONS] - locker rooms, shower facilities, rest/bathrooms, and any other areas where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes. The Superintendent and building principals are authorized to determine other specific locations and situations where use of a WCD is absolutely prohibited.

~~[END OF OPTION #3]~~

Students shall have no expectation of confidentiality with respect to their use of WCDs on school premises/property.

Students may not use a WCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed, or intimidated. See Policy 5517.01 – Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior.

In particular, students are prohibited from using WCDs to: (1) transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs; and (2) engage in "sexting" - i.e., sending, receiving, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form. Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, such actions will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Students are also prohibited from using a WCD to capture, record, and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using WCDs to receive such information.

A copy of the District's Wireless Communications Devices policy shall be posted on the District's website.

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Legal

M.C.L. 380.1303a (Public Act 2 of 2026)

Book	Policy Manual
Section	00000 Bylaws
Title	DEFINITIONS
Code	po0100
Status	Active
Adopted	September 14, 2015
Last Revised	July 19, 2023

0100 - DEFINITIONS

The bylaws of the Board of Education of this District incorporate quotations from the laws and the administrative code of the State of Michigan. Such quotations may be substantively altered only by appropriate legislative, judicial, or administrative action.

Whenever the following items are used in these bylaws and operational policies, they shall have the meaning set forth below:

Administrative Guideline

A statement, based on policy, usually written, which outlines and/or describes the means by which a policy should be implemented and which provides for the management cycle of planning, action, and assessment or evaluation.

Agreement

A collectively negotiated contract with a recognized bargaining unit.

Apps and Services

Apps and services are software (i.e., computer programs) that support the interaction of personal communication devices (as defined in Bylaw 0100) over a network, or client-server applications in which the user interface runs in a web browser. Apps and services are used to communicate/transfer information/data that allow students to perform actions/tasks that assist them in attaining educational achievement goals/objectives, enable staff to monitor and assess their students' progress, and allow staff to perform other tasks related to their employment. Apps and services also are used to facilitate communication to, from and among and between, staff, students, and parents, Board members and/or other stakeholders and members of the community.

Board

The Board of Education.

Bylaw

Rule of the Board for its own governance.

Classified or Support Employee

An employee who provides support to the District's program and whose position does not require a professional certificate.

District

The School District.

Due Process

Procedural due process requires prior knowledge (a posted discipline code), notice of offense (accusation), and the opportunity to respond.

Procedural due process may require consideration of statutorily mandated factors, right to counsel and/or confrontation or cross-examination of witnesses, depending upon the situation.

Family Member

"Family member" means a person's spouse or spouse's sibling or child; a person's sibling or sibling's spouse or child; a person's child or child's spouse; or a person's parent or parent's spouse, and includes these relationships as created by adoption or marriage. (See Bylaw 0144.3)

Full Board

Authorized number of voting members entitled to govern the District.

Information Resources

The Board defines Information Resources to include any data/information in electronic, audio-visual or physical form, or any hardware or software that makes possible the storage and use of data/information. This definition includes but is not limited to electronic mail, voice mail, social media, text messages, databases, CD-ROMs/DVDs, web sites, motion picture film, recorded magnetic media, photographs, digitized information, or microfilm. This also includes any equipment, computer facilities, or online services used in accessing, storing, transmitting or retrieving electronic communications.

May

This word is used when an action by the Board or its designee is permitted but not required.

Meeting

Any gathering which is attended by or open to all of the members of the Board, held with the intent on the part of the members of the body present to discuss or act as a unit upon the specific public business of that body.

Parent

The natural or adoptive parents or individuals with a valid power of attorney for the care and custody of the student for purposes other than educational placement. Parent also refers to any individual appointed by the State or court as a legal guardian or custodian for the student. Both parents will have equal access to records and rights regarding the student's education absent a court order restricting such rights. Step-Parents are not included in this definition.

Personal Communication Devices

Personal communication devices ("PCDs") **may** include computers, laptops, tablets, e-readers, **wireless communication devices ("WCDs")**, cellular/mobile phones, smartphones, telephone paging devices (e.g., beepers or pagers), and/or other web-enabled devices of any type.

Policy

A general, written statement by the governing Board which defines its expectations or position on a particular matter and authorizes appropriate action that must or may be taken to establish and/or maintain those expectations.

President

The chief executive officer of the Board of Education. (See Bylaw 0171.1)

Principal

The educational leader and head administrator of one (1) or more District schools or programs, as designated by the Board of Education. The Principal must hold an appropriate school administrator certificate or permit. The Principal is responsible for the supervision of the school or program consistent with Board policy and directives of the Superintendent and may delegate responsibility to subordinates as appropriate.

Professional Staff Member

An employee who implements or supervises one (1) or more aspects of the District's program and whose position requires a professional credential from the State.

Relative

The mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, parent of spouse, child, grandparents, grandchild, or dependent in the immediate household as defined in the negotiated, collectively-bargained agreement.

Secretary

The chief clerk of the Board of Education.

Shall

This word is used when an action by the Board or its designee is required. (The word "will" or "must" also signifies a required action.)

Social Media

Social media are online platforms where users engage one another and/or share information and ideas through text, video, or pictures. Social media consists of any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, web logs ("blogs"), wikis, online forums (e.g., chat rooms), virtual worlds, and social networks. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, Skype, and FaceTime. Social media does not include sending or receiving e-mail through the use of District-issued e-mail accounts. Apps and web services shall not be considered social media unless they are listed on the District's website as District-approved social media platforms/sites.

Student

A person who is officially enrolled in a school or program of the District.

Superintendent

The chief executive officer of the School District responsible to supervise all programs and staff of the District and to implement Board policy and follow Board directives. Consistent with Board policies and directives, the Superintendent must hold an appropriate school administrator certificate or permit. Consistent with Board policies and directives, the Superintendent may delegate responsibility to subordinates as appropriate.

Technology Resources

The Board defines Technology Resources to include computers, laptops, tablets, e-readers, cellular/mobile telephones, smartphones, web-enabled devices, video and/or audio recording equipment, projectors, software and operating systems that work on any device, copy machines, printers and scanners, information storage devices (including mobile/portable storage devices such as external hard drives, CDs/DVDs, USB thumb drives and memory chips), the computer network, Internet connection, and online educational services and apps.

Treasurer

The chief financial officer of the District.

Vice-President

The Vice-President of the Board of Education.

Voting

A vote at a meeting of the Board of Education. Except to accommodate the absence of any member of the Board due to military duty or for any other purpose permitted by law, Board members must be physically present to have their vote officially recorded in the Board minutes.

Wireless Communication Device ("WCD")

For the purposes of Policy/Administrative Guideline 5136 - Wireless Communication Devices (WCDs), a WCD is an electronic device capable of, but not limited to, text messaging, voice communication, entertainment, navigation, accessing the internet, sending and receiving photos and videos, or producing email. A WCD does not include a basic telephone, which is a device primarily used for voice calling that cannot support third-party applications, except those preinstalled, and does not support access to internet platforms via applications or web browsers.

Citations to Michigan Compiled Laws (M.C.L.) are shown as M.C.L. followed by the Section Number (e.g., M.C.L. 380.1438). Citations to the Michigan Administrative Code are prefaced A.C. Rule (e.g., A.C. Rule R380.221). Citations to the Federal Register are noted as FR, to the Code of Federal Regulations as C.F.R., and to the United States Code as U.S.C.

~~Revised 1/9/17~~

~~Revised 11/26/18~~

~~Revised 5/20/19~~

~~Revised 10/25/21~~

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**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

Note Page

IX. Action Items

1. 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:

- Jenna Carr – Kindergarten Teacher, Angling Road Elementary
- Stephanie Hallgren – Multi-Language Learner Coordinator
- Kimberly Helgeson – Educational Supports & Intervention Teacher, Central Middle School
- Dannie van Gent – Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

Jennifer Meisterheim, SHRM-CP
Director of Human Resources
Phone: 269.323.5157
jmeisterheim@portageps.org

To: Board of Education
From: Jennifer L. Meisterheim, SHRM-CP
Date: August 17, 2026
Re: Teacher Appointment Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the appointment of the following teachers for Portage Public Schools 2026-27 School Year:

Jenna Carr– (ANG Kindergarten Teacher) – Jenna comes to PPS from Kalamazoo RESA's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, where she worked as a Parapro. She has a bachelor's degree from Grand Canyon University.

Stephanie Hallgren– (Multi-Language Learner Coordinator) – Stephanie comes to PPS from Hartford Public Schools. She has a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and a Master's degree from Grand Valley State University.

Kimberly Helgeson– (CMS Educational Supports & Intervention Teacher) – Kimberly comes to PPS from Mattawan Consolidated Schools. She has a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and a Master's degree from Grand Valley State University.

Dannie van Gent– (Early Childhood Special Education Teacher) – Dannie has taught at Kalamazoo Public Schools and Kalamazoo RESA. She has a bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and is working on a Master's degree at Eastern Mennonite University.

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
PORTAGE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

Note Page

IX. Action Items

2. WOD Asphalt & Landscaping Contracts (OP 6320)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education authorize Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. to issue Notice of Pending Awards in the amounts indicated below to the following contractors pending confirmation that all requirements of the contract documents have been met, and furthermore, upon receipt by Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. of the appropriate documentation, contracts be awarded to these contractors by Portage Public Schools, the funding for which will come from the 2026 Bond Fund (the fourth series from the 2021 vote):

- **Rieth-Riley, asphalt work, award amount of \$308,250.00**
- **Lounsbury Excavating, Inc., landscaping, award amount of \$440,100.00**

To: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent
From: Russ Gerbers, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Cc: Paula Johnson, Director of Finance
Date: August 13, 2026
Re: Woodland - Asphalt and Landscaping

Recommendation

I move that Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. be authorized to issue Notice of Pending Awards, in the amount indicated, to contractors and suppliers listed below, pending confirmation that all requirements of the Contract Documents have been met. Furthermore, upon receipt by Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. of the appropriate documentation, contracts are awarded to these contractors and suppliers by Portage Public Schools, the funding for which will come from the 2026 bond fund (the fourth series from the 2021 vote).

BC#	Bid Category	Contractor	Award Amount
2	Asphalt	Rieth-Riley	\$308,250
3	Landscaping	Lounsbury Excavating, Inc.	\$440,100

Background Information

When the Board of Education approved the primary Woodland Elementary construction bid package approximately a year and a half ago, the District intentionally held a portion of the project contingency for the asphalt and landscaping work. These categories were planned to be bid closer to the time the work would actually occur.

The District follows this approach because asphalt and landscaping pricing can fluctuate significantly with market conditions, material costs, and contractor availability. Obtaining firm pricing too far in advance can result in contractors including additional cost to account for that uncertainty. Bidding the work closer to construction allows the District to obtain more current and competitive pricing while using the contingency that was established for these items as part of the overall project budget.



Bid Category No. 02 - Asphalt				
Contractor	Bid Bond	Addendum	Base Bid	Notes
Reith-Riley (Benton Harbor, MI)	Y	1,2	\$308,250	
Wyoming Asphalt Paving Co. (Plainwell, MI)	Y	1,2	\$332,000	
Michigan Paving and Materials Company (Grand Rapids, MI)	Y	1,2	\$345,350	

Portage Public Schools
 Woodland Elementary - Asphalt & Landscaping
 Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. - Construction Manager
 Bid Opening - July 29th, 2026 - 2:00 PM



Bid Category No. 03 - Landscaping				
Contractor	Bid Bond	Addendum	Base Bid	Notes
Lounsbury Excavating, Inc. (Paw Paw, MI)	Y	1,2	\$440,100	
County Line Nurseries (Bangor, MI)	Y	1,2	\$490,000	
Naylor Landscape Management, Inc. (Kalamazoo, MI)	Y	1	\$601,166.09	
Twin Lakes Nursery (Grand Rapids, MI)	Y	1,2	\$639,800	

**Portage Public Schools
Woodland Elementary
Motion Recommendation
Construction Manager: Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.**

RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. be authorized to issue Notice of Pending Awards, in the amount indicated, to contractors and suppliers listed below, pending confirmation that all requirements of the Contract Documents have been met. Furthermore, that upon receipt by Owen-Ames-Kimball Co. of the appropriate documentation, contracts be awarded to these contractors and suppliers by Portage Public Schools.

BC#	Bid Category	Contractor	Award Amount
2	Asphalt	Rieth-Riley	\$308,250
3	Landscaping	Lounsbury Excavating, Inc.	\$440,100
Total Awards \$			748,350

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

Note Page

X. Discussion Items

1. MASB Delegate Assembly (MASB)

Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

To: Board of Education
From: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent 
Date: August 12, 2026
Re: 2026 MASB Leadership Conference & Delegate Assembly

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education certify the following delegate(s): _____
and alternate(s): _____ for the 2026 Michigan Association of School Boards Delegate
Assembly, as presented.

BACKGROUND:

The Michigan Association of School Boards will hold their annual Delegate Assembly the
evening of Thursday, October 15, 2026 at the Lansing Center.

During the Delegate Assembly, board-certified delegates from school districts across Michigan
will establish MASB's positions on a wide range of educational issues. Delegates and certified
alternates have the opportunity to introduce motions and vote on matters that guide the
association's advocacy efforts. Based on the District's student enrollment, Portage Public
Schools is eligible to appoint four voting delegates and four alternates to represent the Board at
the Assembly.

To participate, local boards of education must formally designate their delegates and alternates
and certify those selections with MASB by October 1, 2026. Accordingly, Board action to
appoint and certify Portage Public Schools' representatives must occur prior to that date.

Board members are encouraged to either consider serving as a delegate or alternate.

This item will return to the Board for action at the September 14, 2026 Board meeting.

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM #1136
AUGUST 17, 2026, 6:30 P.M.**

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X. Discussion Items

2. AI Policy (BL 0131.1)

Should the Board opt to move this item to action, the following recommendations are provided:

Motion to move discussion item to action

Motion offered by ____, seconded by ____, that the Board of Education move the AI policy discussion item to action.

Motion to approve

Motion offered by ____, seconded by ____, that the Board of Education approve Policy 7540.09 - Artificial Intelligence (AI), as presented.

Portage Public Schools

FOR BOARD

po7540.09

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

NEW Policy

7540.09 - **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

The Board acknowledges the positive impact and transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence ("AI") in education and operations, emphasizing a balanced, people-centered approach. It supports the responsible and innovative use of AI in classrooms and professional settings, with the understanding that AI should enhance human interaction and instruction, not replace it, and all AI-driven decisions require human review. The Superintendent is authorized to support the use of artificial intelligence technology when its use is consistent with the District's mission, goals, and operational integrity. The ~~(S) - Superintendent - (S) _____~~
[END-OF-OPTIONS] is responsible for overseeing and ensuring compliance of this policy.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Artificial Intelligence ("AI")

AI refers to systems or tools capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence including, but not limited to, decision-making, problem-solving, and language understanding. AI is computer code that can resemble human intelligence to complete a given task (e.g., problem-solving, planning, etc.). It involves developing algorithms and systems that can perceive, reason, learn, and make decisions based on data made available to the AI tool.

Generative AI

A subset of AI that uses large language models ("LLMs") and other advanced algorithms to create content, such as text, images, audio, or video, in response to user input.

Generative AI works by analyzing large datasets to learn patterns and features, which it then uses to generate new, original content. It uses complex algorithms, often based on neural networks, to make predictions based on the input data it has processed; thereby enabling it to create a wide range of outputs, from text and images to music and code, that mimic the style or characteristics of the data on which it was trained.

At its core, generative AI predicts the flows of language. Trained on massive amounts of text taken from publicly available internet sources to recognize the relationships that most commonly exist between individual units of meaning (including full or partial words, phrases, and sentences), LLMs can, with great frequency, generate replies to users' prompts that are contextually appropriate, linguistically facile, and factually correct.

Natural Language Processing ("NLP")

A field of artificial intelligence that focuses on enabling computers to understand, interpret, and respond to human language in a meaningful way. Examples of NLP include, but are not limited to, Grammarly, GPT-Based APIs, Google Cloud Natural Language AI, Microsoft Azure Text Analytics, IBM Watson NLP, Amazon Comprehend, etc.

Large Language Model ("LLM")

A sophisticated AI system trained on extensive text data to process and produce language; recognize patterns, grammar, and nuances. It can perform tasks like text generation, question answering, and language translation.

Algorithm

A set of rules or instructions guiding AI operations and decision-making.

Personally Identifiable Data/Personal Data

Refers to any information that can directly or indirectly identify an individual including, but not limited to, names, addresses, student records, and health information.

Proprietary Information/Data

Refers to a broad category of non-public, sensitive, or confidential data belonging to the District, its staff, or its operations. This information is considered the District's. This information is generally protected from unauthorized disclosure or use.

Open AI ("Open-Source AI")

Definition: AI models where the developers openly share the model's architecture, underlying code, and often the "weights" (the learned parameters of the model), and sometimes the training data. Open AI models accessed publicly present a high risk of data release, as data input is often used for AI tool training and can be publicly available. Open AI models may require the District to implement and manage its own wrapper or filtering layer. As a result, it

is not recommended that OpenAI tools/applications are used in districts due to the high potential of violating Federal and State laws. Open-Source AI also produces less reliable content, because it is accessing a pool of data that is not universally verified as accurate. **A** Any open AI the district uses will be housed internally on the district's own servers and not open to the public.

Closed AI ("Closed-Source/Proprietary AI")

Definition: AI models where the developers obscure or protect the model's architecture, underlying code, training data, and weights. Users interact with the model via a restricted service. Closed AI may offer better, contractually-guaranteed data security (e.g., "enterprise" versions), but its "black box" nature still requires a formal audit and contract. Closed AI developers typically manage these filters internally. Closed-Source or Proprietary AI produces more reliable results because it is accessing data sources that are controlled and can be verified as accurate.

Any use of artificial intelligence technology in the District's educational program or operations must be in accordance with State and Federal law as well as Board policies ➔ including, but not limited to, the following: Policy 5500 – Student Code of Classroom Conduct; Policy 5517 – Student Anti-Harassment; Policy 5517.01 – Bullying; Policy 2266 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities; Policy 8330 – Student Records; Policy 2240 – Controversial Issues in the Classroom; Policy 7540.03 – Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety; and Policy 7540.04 – Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety. - **[END-OF OPTION] - [DRAFTING NOTE: Confirm and Select as Needed]**

General Principles

A. Transparency

Users of AI tools must disclose when and how these tools have been employed in the creation of academic or professional work.

B. Ethical Use

District employees who use AI technologies must do so in ways consistent with institutional values, privacy standards, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), copyright laws, and ethical principles, honesty, trustworthiness, and personal dignity of both employees and students.

C. Content Responsibility

District employees who use AI technologies are responsible for the content created by that AI tool.

Evaluation and Approval

Before adopting any AI tool or system, the District will conduct a comprehensive risk assessment — evaluating data sources (including use of student Personally Identifiable Information), decision-making impacts on students, potential bias or disparate impact, and vendor compliance with privacy, security, and data retention laws — and ensure all contracts include clear legal, ethical, and technical safeguards aligned with FERPA, IDEA, COPPA, PPRA, Michigan statutes, and District policies. AI systems must be reviewed to ensure they are nondiscriminatory, fully accessible, and do not compromise the rights or individualized support of students, particularly those protected under federal and state civil rights laws.

AI Tool Selection

The District approves the use of Closed AI tools only, that have been carefully reviewed, evaluated, and approved by the Director of Technology (→ _____ **[e.g., IT Director, Curriculum Director, or a AI Committee]**) - for student and staff use.

Transparency

The District is committed to transparency and accountability in AI use by informing teachers, students, and parents when AI influences decisions, clearly explaining how it works and what data it uses, assigning oversight to (→ _____ the Director of Technology), and conducting regular audits to evaluate accuracy, fairness, and impact on equity and student rights. The District will maintain a public AI Tool Inventory that lists every approved AI tool and includes a summary of its data-handling and privacy features. - **[X] The AI Tool Inventory will be posted on the District website. [END OPTION]**

Vendor Vetting & Contracts

All AI tools used by the District must undergo a formal risk assessment by the IT/Legal department to review their Terms of Service and data handling practices to ensure compliance with all Federal and State privacy laws. The District prohibits the input by any user of any student information, staff information, or confidential district data into any AI tool that does not have a formal, vetted contract guaranteeing data privacy and non-use for training.

Employee Use of AI

Employees may integrate AI tools into their instruction at their discretion and should clearly define the parameters for AI usage in the classroom by students using District-approved AI applications/tools.

When using AI to create instructional materials, assessments, or feedback, employees shall maintain transparency by disclosing the role of AI in these processes. Employees must review and verify the accuracy and appropriateness of any AI-generated content.

Employees shall not input sensitive, confidential, personally identifiable, or proprietary information about students, colleagues, or institutional operations into AI systems that lack safeguards and policies to protect such data from being used in their training models, and if such information will be entered into an AI system, employees shall seek the approval of their ~~(+) supervisor (-) Principal [END OF - OPTION]~~ before doing so.

Using AI detection software to enforce academic integrity should be done in accordance with the knowledge that this software is not foolproof and that the disruptive nature of AI technologies in education can lead to considerable confusion regarding expectations for AI use. Employees should use AI-detection ethically and as the starting point of an inquiry into a possible violation of academic integrity rather than as a definitive indication of student dishonesty. Employees must also disclose the use of AI software in course curricula.

Employees may use AI tools to enhance workflows, such as drafting communications, analyzing data, or developing reports, provided the outputs are verified for accuracy and compliance with State and Board policies. The use of AI tools for such purposes should be disclosed when disseminating AI output.

Student Use of AI

~~Students shall receive age appropriate instruction about responsible AI use, digital citizenship, privacy, and the risks/limitations of AI prior to using AI.~~

~~Students are expected to develop their own knowledge, skills, and understanding of course material rather than relying solely on AI tools, and they should ask their teacher(s) when they have questions and/or need assistance.~~

~~Students may use AI tools for academic purposes when specifically and clearly permitted by their teacher(s). The use of AI must be properly disclosed and cited in accordance with the established guidelines and not be employed to undermine authentic learning or learning objectives for the course or assignment.~~

~~If a student has any questions about whether they are permitted to use AI tools for a specific class assignment, they should ask their teacher(s).~~

~~Unauthorized use of AI tools will be considered a form of plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or misrepresentation of AI-generated content as original work and any student found using these tools without permission or in a prohibited manner will be disciplined in~~

accordance with the Student Handbook or Policy 5500 – Student Code of Conduct. **[DRAFTING NOTE: Confirm the Board has adopted this policy if included in this policy]**

Use of Artificial Intelligence / Natural Language Processing Tools for School Work

Students are expected to complete academic work in an ethical and responsible manner that is consistent with the teacher's classroom and/or assignment expectations. The use of Artificial intelligence ("AI") and Natural Language Processing ("NLP") tools (collectively, "AI/NLP tools") will either be explicitly permitted or prohibited by the classroom teacher for the completion of school work. The use of AI/NLP tools, without the express permission/consent of a teacher, undermines the learning and problem-solving skills that are essential to academic success and that the staff is tasked to develop in each student. Students are encouraged to develop their own knowledge, skills, and understanding of course material rather than relying solely on AI/NLP tools, and they should ask their teachers when they have questions and/or need assistance.

Staff and administration have the responsibility for educating students as to what constitutes academic dishonesty and what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in regard to academic integrity. Staff and administration are also responsible for monitoring students' work for compliance with this policy.

Teachers are authorized, in consultation with their Principal, to apply appropriate consequences for violations of this policy. Disciplinary consequences for offenses of academic dishonesty may include an academic penalty or loss of credit on the assignment, restorative practices, detention, suspension, removal from the class with a failing grade, removal from student leadership positions, elimination of honors recognition, loss of membership in honor organizations, preclusion from taking AP or IB examinations, non-award of the IB Course Certificate, non-award of the IB Diploma as well as other disciplinary consequences appropriate to the nature of the violation.

Academic Accessibility

AI tools can be utilized to assist students with disabilities in accessing and understanding written materials. For example, text-to-speech software can help students with specific learning disabilities, visual impairments, or other disabilities in reading texts, and AI-powered translation tools can help students with hearing impairments understand spoken language (e.g., create transcripts or provide closed-captioning for spoken material). Specific use of AI technologies beyond universal application for students with disabilities is best addressed in each student's Individual Education Plan ("IEP").

Employee Training

Employees will receive training ~~() annually ()~~ periodically ~~[END OF - OPTION]~~ - to ensure adherence to this and other related policies, data privacy, student records, and allowable/approved AI tools in the District.

Non-Academic Use of AI

Students and staff are prohibited in the use of AI from generating false or knowingly misleading representations of other students, staff, volunteers, or Board members that are reasonably interpreted as derogatory, threatening, or otherwise objectionable to a reasonable person, including by way of AI generated or manipulated visual or verbal depictions of any such individual, or the distribution of such depictions through any means, for example via social media, regardless of whether the distributor created the depictions themselves.

Enforcement

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary consequences. Students may be disciplined for violations, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Staff may be disciplined for violations, up to and including suspension or termination of employment. The Superintendent will refer any illegal acts to law enforcement.

Questions or Concerns

Staff, parents, or members of the public who have questions or concerns regarding this policy or the use of AI in the District should contact the ~~() Superintendent ()~~ Director of Technology. _____ ~~[END OF OPTION]~~ :

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