

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
CONFERENCE RM #1, PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 8107 MUSTANG
DRIVE, PORTAGE, MI 49002
AUGUST 3, 2026, 4:30 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. Comments or Communications

1. By Citizens

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IV. Action Items

1. Approve Collective Bargaining Agreements

- a. Agreement with Portage Support Professionals Association

Recommended Motion:

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

- b. Agreement with Bus Drivers' Association

Recommended Motion:

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

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 3, 2026
Re: Paraprofessional Negotiations Results

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the 2026-2027 Contractual Agreement with the Portage Support Professionals Association, KCEA/MEA/NEA.

BACKGROUND:

We are pleased to present this tentative collective bargaining agreement with the Portage Support Professionals Association for Board approval.

The proposed one-year agreement covers approximately 150 bargaining unit members. Key highlights include:

- Provides 12 paid time off (PTO) days annually, with the ability to accumulate up to 90 days. PTO may be used for any purpose, including Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA)-qualifying reasons, but may not be used for vacation. Bargaining unit members may also elect to use PTO during scheduled District closures.
- Added 10 paid holidays.
- Provides 12 hours of paid professional development annually.
- Effective January 1, 2027, bargaining unit members regularly scheduled to work 30 or more hours per week will be eligible for single subscriber health insurance at the PA 152 State Hard Cap. The District will also contribute an additional \$100 per month toward dual coverage and \$200 per month toward family coverage.
- Added employer-paid life insurance in the amount of \$30,000.
- Added employer-paid long-term disability insurance.
- Established a paraprofessional wage schedule ranging from \$18.00 to \$23.00 per hour.
- Established a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) wage schedule ranging from \$22.50 to \$25.00 per hour.
- Provides a one-time \$500 payment in December 2026 to bargaining unit members who worked the entire 2025–2026 school year and remain actively employed in the bargaining unit as of December 1, 2026

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 3, 2026
Re: Bus Drivers' Negotiations Results

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the 2026-2028 Contractual Agreement with the Portage School Bus Drivers' Association, MEA/NEA.

BACKGROUND:

We are pleased to present this tentative collective bargaining agreement with the Portage School Bus Drivers' Association for Board approval.

The proposed two-year agreement covers approximately 60 bargaining unit members. Key highlights include:

- Updated the contract to use gender-neutral language, promoting consistency and inclusivity throughout the agreement.
- Streamlined sick leave provisions and incorporated the requirements of the Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA).
- Increased vacation accruals for year-round drivers to more closely align with other district collective bargaining agreements.
- Added two paid holidays.
- Implemented annual step movement and a 1.5% increase to the wage schedule in each year of the agreement.
- Increased the cash-in-lieu payment to \$3.25 per hour.
- Increased the District's contribution toward dual and family health insurance premiums to 75% of the State Hard Cap.

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IV. Action Items

2. Approve New Administrator Appointment (OP 3120)

Recommended Motion:

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

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 3, 2026
Re: New Administrator Appointment Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the administrator appointment of Katelin Lopez as the new Assistant Principal at Portage Northern High School for the 2026-2027 school year.

Name of Person

Katelin Lopez is being recommended as the new Assistant Principal at Portage Northern High School for the 2026-2027 school year. Katelin previously worked for Portage Public Schools for 11 years as a Spanish teacher and, for the last year, as the Assistant Principal at Schoolcraft Community Schools.

Katelin has her Master of Arts from Eastern Michigan University.

Katelin's annualized starting salary will be \$103,572.

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V. Discussion Items

1. AI Policy (BL 0131.1)

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 ~~(H) - Superintendent - (H) _____~~
~~[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. - **[] -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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