

PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL RM #1136, 8135 S. WESTNEDGE, PORTAGE, MI 49002
SEPTEMBER 28, 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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II. Revisions/Approval of Agenda

Recommended Motion:

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

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III. Reports

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

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VI. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. September 14, 2026 Committee of the Whole Work Session

**PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION
SEPTEMBER 14, 2026**

The Committee of the Whole Work Session of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, September 14, 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. Novaria, that the Board of Education approve the agenda as printed.

The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Superintendent's Report

Start of School Year

Per Superintendent Edwards it was a good start to the school year. Opening day activities went well, and he was able to visit each school during the first week of school.

He pointed out an August 2026 article in *Money Inc.* listed the 30 best schools in Michigan. Portage ranked seventh!

Bond Project Update

Mr. Russell Gerbers, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, provided an update on bond projects. A review of summer projects was covered along with construction progress being made at the Woodland Elementary and Amberly Elementary sites.

BOARD EDUCATION

HGD 2-Year Review

Dr. Michael Pascoe, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, introduced teachers Anne Schnurstein and Andena Tanner, who presented the Human Growth and Development Two-Year Report on Achievement Goals and Objectives. The presenters addressed questions from Trustees.

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Van Antwerp opened the floor to public comments.

Kat Frink shared highlights of the great things students and staff are doing across the District.

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

Ms. Larson has enjoyed seeing the various social media posts highlighting opening day activities.

Mrs. Novaria was pleased to hear positive feedback about the PN vs PC football game and the 9/11 commemoration ceremony.

Mr. Snyder remarked this is an exciting time of the year.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Van Antwerp presented the following Consent Agenda item for approval by the Board of Education: meeting minutes from the August 17, 2026 Regular Business Meeting.

There being no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

ASSURANCE OF DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

Monitoring Report 2.6, Asset Protection

Superintendent Edwards reviewed highlights from his report.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. 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.

The motion carried unanimously.

Monitoring Report 2.10, Communications & Support to the Board

Superintendent Edwards presented key updates from the report.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, 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.

The motion carried unanimously.

REQUIRED ACTION ITEMS

MASB Delegate Assembly Representatives

At their last meeting, the Board discussed the upcoming MASB Delegate Assembly. At that time, Trustee Larson offered to serve as the voting delegate and President Van Antwerp offered to serve as the alternate.

The action below formally confirms their representation at this upcoming event.

Motion offered by Mr. Snyder, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education certify the following: Kimberly Larson as voting delegate and Randy Van Antwerp as voting alternate, for the 2026 Michigan Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly.

The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Use of Virtual Learning Days

Dr. Michael Pascoe, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, went over the District's planned use of virtual instruction days for this school year and addressed questions from Trustees.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board of Education approve the Resolution for District Planned Use of Virtual Instruction, as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

New Administrator Appointment

Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the educational qualifications and professional experience of the administrator appointee.

Superintendent Edwards reminded Trustees that this assignment fills the vacancy created when the previous administrator resigned just prior to the start of the school year. Ms. Bowen has stepped into the role seamlessly and has kept things moving forward.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the appointment of Ashley S. Bowen as Interim Principal of Angling Road Elementary for the 2026-27 school year.

The motion carried unanimously.

New Teacher Appointments

Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim reviewed the teacher appointment recommendation.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the appointment of the following teachers for Portage Public Schools: Chloe Irons – Young Fives Teacher at 12th Street Elementary, and Amber Bergman – Third Grade Teacher at Amberly Elementary.

The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Revisions to Policies 3140 & 4140

Ms. Jennifer Meisterheim reviewed the proposed changes to Policies 3140 and 4140, both titled “Termination and Resignation” and responded to Trustee questions. The Board opted to move the discussion item to action.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education move the discussion item – Revisions to Policies 3140 & 4140 - to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Mrs. Crawford, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the proposed revisions to Policies 3140 and 4140, both addressing Termination and Resignation.

The motion carried unanimously.

Capital Outlay Purchase

Mr. Russ Gerbers, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, provided an overview of the recommendation and rationale supporting it. The Board moved the item from discussion to action.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education move the Capital Outlay Purchase discussion item to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Rohwer, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the purchase of the 2026-27 District Capital Outlay items from Custer, Inc. in the amount of \$94,803.53 and approve the purchase of a kiln from West Michigan Clay in the amount of \$6,012.00, for total purchase of \$100,815.53, the funding for which will come from the 2026-27 General Fund Budget.

The motion carried unanimously.

Purchase of MS Furniture Using Grant Funds

Dr. Mackenzie Sheahan, Director of Curriculum Y5-8 and Professional Learning, reviewed the recommendation and addressed Trustee questions. The Board elected to take action on the discussion item.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Ms. Larson, that the Board of Education move the discussion item – Purchase of MS Furniture Using Grant Funds - to action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Mrs. Novaria, seconded by Dr. Stevenson, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the purchase of middle school furniture in the amount of \$56,845.46, the funding for which will come from the 2025-26 ASU/MEWI Furniture/Materials Grant Fund Budget.

The motion carried unanimously.

Student Chromebook Refresh for 2027-28

Superintendent Edwards introduced Mr. Brandon Polk, Technology Support Coordinator, who went over the Chromebook purchase recommendation. The Board opted to move this item to action.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion offered by Dr. Stevenson, seconded by Mrs. Novaria, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, the purchase of 950 student Chromebooks from Trafera Holdings, LLC in the amount of \$249,850.00, the funding for which will come from the Building and Site Sinking Fund.

The motion carried unanimously.

CoHS Graduation Requirements

Superintendent Edwards introduced the presenters. He added this item is not a recommendation for Board approval but rather an informational update.

Dr. Michael Pascoe, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Mr. Clint Wagner, Principal of Community High School, and Ms. Jennifer Hostetler, Dean of Students at Community High reviewed the history and evolution of the educational program at Community High, highlighting the need to continue adapting to meet the changing needs of students. They also outlined the rationale for reducing the Community High graduation credit requirement from 26 to 21 credits (18 core credits plus 3 elective credits).

The presenters addressed questions from Trustees. Board members shared positive comments and were appreciative for the update.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 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.

Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK
October 12-16, 2026**

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 12–16, 2026 as **National School Lunch Week**, and commends our food service professionals whose service ensures the success of our school nutrition program.

Proclaimed this 28th day of September, 2026
Portage Public Schools' Board Of Education



Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK
October 19-23, 2026**

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 19-23, 2026, 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 28th day of September, 2026
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 28th day of September, 2026
Portage Public Schools' Board of Education

Johnny Edwards
Superintendent
Phone: 269.323.5182
jedwards@portageps.org

**PROCLAMATION
PRINCIPALS MONTH
October 2026**

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 2026 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 28th day of September, 2026
Portage Public Schools' Board Of Education

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IX. Action Items

2. Superintendent Contract Extension (EL 4.5)

Recommended Motion

Motion offered by _____, seconded by _____, that the Board of Education approve, as presented, extending the Superintendent Contract of Employment with Johnny Edwards for an additional year, through June 30, 2029.

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Randy Van Antwerp
DATE: September 23, 2026
SUBJECT: Superintendent Contract of Employment

COPY TO: Johnny Edwards

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Board of Education extend Superintendent Johnny Edward's contract for an additional year through June 30, 2029.

BACKGROUND

On July 20, 2026, the Board of Education unanimously approved a rating of Effective, the highest rating possible under the evaluation methodology. It is appropriate to extend the contract of employment for an additional year consistent with established practice.

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X. Discussion Items

1. MASB Delegate Assembly Handbook

Chapter 5

Amended Resolutions

This chapter contains resolutions that the 2025-2026 Resolutions and Bylaws Committee is proposing for amendment. There are five amendments to resolutions being offered this year.

Lowercase letters represent current language; capitalized words and phrases indicate proposed new language; and words with strikethroughs will be deleted.

Each amended resolution will be presented individually, as provided in Rule 2.c. of the Delegate Assembly Rules and Procedures (see page 12).

A-6.15 Early Childhood Education

(2017; Rev. 2021)

The Michigan Association of School Boards supports a greater focus on and continued investment in early childhood education, especially from birth to age five, in the public schools and other supportive community agencies, recognizing the economically sensible and socially responsible role it plays in quality education. FUNDING SHOULD BE ADEQUATE TO COVER ALL QUALIFYING CHILDREN. The MASB urges:

- a. intermediate school districts TO work with the administration and the Legislature to take a greater leadership role in the education of children from birth to age five.
- b. local school districts TO realize the vital importance of early childhood education programs in helping children achieve success in school.
- c. THE STATE OF MICHIGAN TO SUFFICIENTLY FUND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS WITH DISABILITIES, DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS AND THOSE AT RISK FOR DELAYS DUE TO CERTAIN ESTABLISHED HEALTH CONDITIONS.
- d. the state of Michigan ~~will~~ TO continue to expand preschool funding to include all 4-year-olds regardless of income and ensure ~~adequate~~ SUFFICIENT funding for such programs, SUCH AS THE GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM.
- e. the state of Michigan and local and intermediate school districts TO encourage and support interagency cooperation in providing early childhood education programs.
- f. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO CONSISTENTLY AND SUFFICIENTLY FUND EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS SUCH AS HEAD START.

Rationale:

The committee wanted to expand on the programs that the state and local districts should focus on to help our youngest children and properly prepare them for school. It also felt that the funding language should be stronger.

A-6.75 Online Education

(2003; Rev. 2013)

The Michigan Association of School Boards supports the creation of online education options by traditional public schools in Michigan to meet the individual learning needs of students. These systems should ~~be developed to~~ work in concert with the traditional system

and could be a blended model or completely online, depending on the needs of the district and the students impacted.

The MASB opposes any effort to amend state law that would remove the local board from the decision-making process of approving online vendors that deliver content to students. MASB also opposes any attempt by the Legislature to mandate credit acceptance from online vendors that are not approved by the district.

THE MASB ALSO SUPPORTS THE ALLOWANCE OF VIRTUAL LEARNING DAYS FOR DISTRICT TESTING DAYS AND IN THE EVENT OF A SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO CONDITIONS OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT'S CONTROL, SUCH AS SNOW DAYS.

Rationale:

The committee wanted to state support for this allowance, which was removed in the 2025-2026 budget. Virtual days for testing would allow schools to still educate those students who don't report for testing on a certain day. It could also allow for pre-planning of days if extreme weather conditions are expected.

A-10.25 State Financial Support

(2017; Rev. 2021)

The Michigan Association of School Boards believes every child in Michigan should receive a comprehensive educational program. The MASB also believes that the state of Michigan must fulfill its constitutional responsibility to ensure sufficient funding to support quality public education and an equal educational opportunity for all. State funding must be sufficient to provide a well-rounded educational program that includes, but is not limited to, the state model core content standards for students in all districts. The MASB also believes that the federal government should provide adequate resources to supplement state funding, including, but not limited to, fully funding the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

To that end, the MASB supports:

- a. A constitutional amendment to limit the allowable usage of the State School Aid Fund to PreK-12 expenditures.
- b. Continued reduction in disparities in per-pupil revenue among school districts, with a final goal of equitable funding for all districts. THIS INCLUDES CREATING PROPER WEIGHTED FORMULAS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS AS PROPOSED BY THE SCHOOL FINANCE RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE AND ~~This should be accomplished without~~ reducing the revenues of any school district.
- c. Specifically dedicating sufficient state revenue sources to fully fund Michigan's PreK-12 public education system. ~~The current reliance on an annual appropriation from the state's General Fund needed in order to fully fund PreK-12 education should be eliminated. In the future, if~~ IF dedicated revenues are reduced, they MUST ~~should be~~ replaced with other dedicated revenues.
- d. Continued focus on research, INCLUDING THE SCHOOL FINANCE RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE, to clearly delineate the cost of providing a world-class education to

the children of Michigan.

- e. Requiring that prorated per-pupil funding follow students who transfer between public school academies (charter schools) and/or public school districts after the student count date.
- f. Funding for supplemental, categorical programs consistent with the state's obligation to assist students with diverse needs as demonstrated by careful study and research. Such special programs should be funded in addition to the ~~base~~ TARGET foundation allowance and should be reassessed periodically.
- g. Actively advocating for the SUFFICIENT FUNDING OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS TO REFLECT THE NEEDS OF THIS POPULATION AND ~~of at-risk funding on the basis of the current funding formula, with a minimum of an inflationary increase each year, so that schools may continue to provide these services.~~
- h. The timely appropriation and disbursement of state and federal funds so that local and intermediate districts can establish their budgets and maintain an adequate cash flow. THE MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE IS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW MCL 18.1365, REQUIRING THE STATE BUDGET TO BE PASSED AND PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR ON OR BEFORE JULY 1 EACH YEAR.
- i. All borrowing costs, either incurred by the state or a school district to enable appropriate cash flow ~~because of~~ DUE TO the state's payment schedule, should be borne by the state's General Fund. The distribution system needs to be returned to a system that awards districts all funds in the district's fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated.
- j. Providing individual districts with the ability to raise limited local revenues for operational purposes.
- k. Full state funding for state-mandated special education programs and services. At a minimum, the state must fund these programs at the Headlee Amendment minimums. The state must not count per-pupil foundation grants against funding for mandated categorical aid.
- l. Financial support for alternative discipline programs.
- m. State financial support for the development and operations of alternative disciplinary education programs, since many students who require these services result from state-mandated expulsions.
- n. State financial support for early middle college programs.
- o. State financial support for pupil transportation operational expenses.

School INFRASTRUCTURE improvements should be DETERMINED BY local needs assessmentS and planning, based upon the specific and unique needs of each community, with assistance provided by the state. Any attempt to restrict THE access of public school districts to the school bond loan fund is contrary to good public policy and should therefore be strongly opposed.

Rationale:

The committee felt this resolution should specifically call on the Legislature to follow the law on budget timing. It also needed updating to reflect changes in budgeting and the funding needs raised by the School Finance Research Collaborative.

A-10.50 Property Tax Assessments

(1992; Rev. 2016)

The Michigan Association of School Boards supports reform of the A property tax assessment system, THAT to:

- a. Establish uniform, statewide property assessment practices and procedures.
- b. Appoint qualified and certified assessors.
- c. Assure that taxpayers provide assessors with information needed to facilitate an accurate assessment process.
- d. Strengthen the initial appeals process to encourage the settlement of assessment challenges at the local level.
- e. Properly assess commercial property at a fair rate for its current use to maintain the integrity of the tax system and local revenues. INCLUDING BANNING THE USE OF UNOCCUPIED PROPERTIES AS COMPARABLE PROPERTIES WHEN VALUING CURRENTLY OPERATING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY.
- f. PROTECTS PROPERTY TAXES AS AN IMPORTANT FUNDING STREAM TO SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

Rationale:

The committee wanted to strengthen this resolution in light of recurring conversations about property tax reforms and the ongoing dark store issue many areas of our state face.

A-10.55 General Taxation

(Rev. 1996)

The Michigan Association of School Boards supports a state tax system that produces the revenues necessary to support quality public education and other needed public services. The tax system should provide for an equal educational opportunity for children throughout the state and should be based upon equitable, adequate and diverse tax sources.

Any proposal to change, revise or otherwise affect the taxing authority of local and intermediate school districts must contain guarantees to ensure that no district will suffer revenue losses from state-imposed tax reform.

Any tax-cutting legislation affecting State School Aid ACT revenues must provide for their direct replacement with revenue sources with long-term adequacy and stability. THIS SHOULD NOT SOLELY RELY ON THE STATE'S GENERAL FUND, BUT ON POTENTIAL NEW SOURCES.

INCOME, PROPERTY, SALES AND USE Tax exemptions should be reviewed and, if not appropriate, eliminated.

Control over school district policies, responsibilities and operations by local and intermediate boards of education is of primary importance to any acceptable tax system.

Rationale:

The committee wanted to include language formally in the Governance resolutions regarding revenue replacement and specify that new revenues should be sought if tax cuts negatively affect school funding.

Chapter 6

New and Substituted Resolutions

This chapter contains proposed new and/or substitute resolutions representing major revisions of prior resolutions. There are four new or substituted resolutions being offered this year.

A-3.15 Nonpartisan School Boards

The Michigan Association of School Boards strongly believes that public school boards should be and remain nonpartisan bodies. School board members must act as advocates for their students, district and public education. School boards are first and foremost tasked with hiring and overseeing the district superintendent; partisan politics must not play into this decision.

The MASB opposes any attempt to make public school board seats partisan positions. Partisan elections of school boards will narrow the already small pool of potential talent by creating new barriers for potential candidates. Federal employees, anyone in the military or those in positions funded with federal dollars are prohibited from running for partisan office. Also, partisan candidates would have to participate in two elections, a primary and a general. This becomes more expensive for a school board candidate.

For these reasons and more, the MASB strongly opposes legislation that requires public school board candidates to run on the partisan ballot.

Rationale:

Recently, there has been discussion in the legislature to require partisan school board elections. MASB opposed the legislation, and the committee believed it was important enough to include it in the advocacy resolutions.

A-5.35 Assessment and Competency Testing

The Michigan Association of School Boards supports consistency in assessments and competency tests required by the state. Longevity is needed to create clear benchmarks and support student learning. The state should provide funding for and, if necessary, lists of accepted assessments for districts to use with fidelity.

The MASB opposes the use of testing as the predominant criterion for student promotion, graduation, school district accreditation, teacher and administrator evaluations, school funding or for the determination of school district success. The use of any assessment should provide a means to improve teaching methods and curriculum and to aid in the focus of professional development activities.

Assessments or competency tests should also include reasonable testing windows that do not significantly reduce the time available for student instruction. All state standardized testing should be evaluated to determine if the amount of testing time can be reduced.

Rationale:

A similar resolution was included under the Governance resolutions. The committee felt it was important to also state it as an advocacy position.

A-9.40 Safe and Secure Schools

The MASB believes school districts should have robust school emergency operations response and crisis intervention plans. Plans must include risk and threat assessments to determine the proper training, technology and processes to implement in order to mitigate risks associated with threats from crime, natural disasters, technological incidents, medical incidents or human error.

The state must support public schools with resources and best practices related to safe and secure schools. However, legislation should not be enacted that creates prescriptive statewide mandates for districts' plans. Funding for school safety-related initiatives should be provided, but the use of that funding should be determined by the needs of the local district.

Rationale:

A similar resolution was included under the Governance resolutions. The committee felt it was important to also state it as an advocacy position.

A-9.45 School Buses

The MASB believes current research-based federal standards applicable to the safety of passengers on school buses are appropriate. Therefore, the MASB opposes any attempt to require that large school buses be equipped with seat belts.

The MASB also believes that the state should provide sufficient state funding to assist with employee training and to fully cover the costs of state safety inspections of school buses.

Rationale:

A similar resolution was included under the Governance resolutions. The committee felt it was more appropriately an advocacy resolution.

Chapter 7

Bylaws Proposals

This chapter contains amendments to the MASB Bylaws. A proposal to amend the Bylaws must be distributed in writing to the MASB membership at least 30 days before the Delegate Assembly convenes. Bylaw proposals require a two-thirds vote of the official Delegates present and voting for passage (Bylaws: Article IVIII, Section 2).

Lower letters represent current language; capitalized words and phrases indicate proposed new language; and words with strikethroughs will be deleted.

There are no MASB Bylaw proposals to be voted on this year.

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X. Discussion Items

2. Utility Easement Signing Authority

Should the Board opt to move this discussion item to action, the following recommendations are offered.

Recommendation - Move to Action:

Motion offered by ____, seconded by ____, that the Board of Education move the Utility Easement Signing Authority discussion item to action.

Recommendation to Approve

Motion offered by ____, seconded by ____, that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent or their designee to execute utility easements on behalf of Portage Public Schools.



Every student. Every future.

To: Johnny Edwards, Superintendent
From: Russ Gerber, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Cc: Paula Johnson, Director of Finance
Date: September 28, 2026
Re: Utility Easements Signing Authority

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent or their designee to execute utility easements on behalf of Portage Public Schools.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A utility easement is a legal right that permits a utility company to access and use a specific portion of private property to install, maintain, repair, or replace public services. The District has several construction and major renovation projects planned and underway which will increase the need to coordinate with utility providers for electric, gas, water, sewer, telecommunications, and other services. These projects may require the District to grant utility easements to allow for the installation, maintenance, and operation of necessary infrastructure. Authorizing the Superintendent or their designee with the authority to execute these easements will allow the District to address routine utility needs efficiently and help prevent unnecessary delays to construction schedules.

The enclosed easement serves as an example of what is required for Consumers Energy.

EASEMENT FOR ELECTRIC FACILITIES

SAP# 1078020772
Design# 11907757
Agreement# MI00000095109

PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, a Michigan school district, whose address is 8107 Mustang Drive, Portage, Michigan 49002 (hereinafter "Owner")

for \$1.00 and other good and valuable consideration [exempt from real estate transfer tax pursuant to MCLA 207.505(f) and from State real estate transfer tax pursuant to MCLA 207.526(f)] grants and warrants to

CONSUMERS ENERGY COMPANY, a Michigan corporation, One Energy Plaza, Jackson, Michigan 49201 (hereinafter "Consumers")

a permanent easement to enter Owner's land (hereinafter "Owner's Land") located in the City of Portage, County of Kalamazoo, and State of Michigan as more particularly described in the attached Exhibit A to construct, operate, maintain, inspect (including aerial patrol), survey, replace, reconstruct, improve, remove, relocate, change the size of, enlarge, and protect a line or lines of electric facilities in, on, over, under, across, and through a portion of Owner's Land (hereinafter "Easement Area") as more fully described in the attached Exhibit B, together with any pole structures, poles, or any combination of same, wires, cables, conduits, crossarms, braces, guys, anchors, transformers, electric control circuits and devices, location markers and signs, communication systems, utility lines, protective apparatus and all other equipment, appurtenances, associated fixtures, and facilities, whether above or below grade, useful or incidental to or for the operation or protection thereof, and to conduct such other activities as may be convenient in connection therewith as determined by Consumers for the purpose of transmitting and distributing electricity. Consumers may attach additional lines outside the Easement Area, running laterally from a line within the Easement Area to the North edge of Owner's Land, in which event the Easement Area shall include a 30.00-foot-wide strip of land, being 15.00 feet on each side of each such lateral line.

Additional Work Space: In addition to the Easement rights granted herein, Owner further grants to Consumers, during initial construction and installation only, the right to temporarily use such additional work space reasonably required to construct said lines. Said temporary work space shall abut the Easement Area, on either side, as required by construction.

Access: Consumers shall have the right to unimpaired access to said line or lines, and the right of ingress and egress on, over, and through Owner's Land for any and all purposes necessary, convenient, or incidental to the exercise by Consumers of the rights granted hereunder.

Trees and Other Vegetation: Owner shall not plant any trees within the Easement Area. Consumers shall have the right from time to time hereafter to enter Owner's Land to trim, cut down, and otherwise remove and control any trees, brush, roots, and other vegetation within the Easement Area. Consumers shall have the right from time to time hereafter to enter Owner's Land to trim, cut down, and otherwise remove and control any trees, brush, or other vegetation located outside of the Easement Area which are of such a height or are of such a species whose mature height that in falling directly to the ground could come into contact with or land directly above Consumers' facilities.

Buildings/Structures: Owner agrees not to build, create, construct, or permit to be built, created, or constructed, any obstruction, building, septic system, drain field, fuel tank, pond, swimming pool, lake, pit, well, foundation, engineering works, installation or any other type of structure over, under, or on said Easement Area, whether temporary or permanent, natural or man-made, without a prior written agreement executed by Consumers' Real Estate Department expressly allowing the aforementioned.

Ground Elevation: Owner shall not materially alter the ground elevation within the Easement Area without a prior written agreement executed by Consumers Real Estate Department allowing said alteration.

Exercise of Easement: Consumers' nonuse or limited use of this Easement shall not preclude Consumers' later use of this Easement to its full extent.

Ownership: Owner covenants with Consumers that they are the lawful fee simple owner of the aforesaid lands, and that they have the right and authority to make this grant, and that they will forever warrant and defend the title thereto against all claims whatsoever.

Successors: This Easement shall bind and benefit Owner's and Consumers' respective heirs, successors, lessees, licensees, and assigns.

Counterparts: This Easement may be executed simultaneously in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument. It is not necessary that all parties execute any single counterpart if each party executes at least one counterpart.

Date: _____

Owner: PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, a Michigan school district

Signature

By: _____
Print Name

Its: _____
Print Title

Acknowledgment

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me in _____ County, _____,
on _____ by _____, _____ of
Date Print Name Print Title

Portage Public Schools, a Michigan school district, on behalf of the school district.

Notary Public

Print Name

County, _____

Acting in _____ County

My Commission expires: _____

**PROPERTY OWNERS MAIL
SIGNED EASEMENT TO:**

Richard Forrest
Consumers Energy Company
2500 E Cork St
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
ROW Manager: Amber Wiswell

Prepared By:
Kelsie Sutton, 7/21/26 EP7-464
Consumers Energy Company
One Energy Plaza
Jackson, MI 49201

**REGISTER OF DEEDS OFFICE USE
ONLY**

Return recorded instrument to:
Carrie J. Main, EP7-464
Consumers Energy Company
One Energy Plaza
Jackson, MI 49201

EXHIBIT A

Owner's Land

Land situated in the City of Portage, County of Kalamazoo, State of Michigan:

A parcel of land in the Southwest 1/4 of Section 8, Town 3 South, Range 11 West, beginning at a point 662.13 feet West and 1305.02 feet North of the South 1/4 post, Section 8; thence West parallel of the South line of said section, 829.42 feet; thence North 1026.24 feet; thence East 830.46 feet; thence South parallel North and South 1/4 line of said section, 1027.79 feet to the Place of Beginning.

Also known as: 6637 Amberly Street, Portage, Michigan 49024

Parcel ID: 10-00008-285-0

EXHIBIT B

Easement Area

A 30.00-foot-wide strip of land, being 15.00 feet on each side of the facilities of the line constructed on Owner's Land, the facilities to be located approximately as shown in the attached drawing.

