

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

January 8, 2007

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, January 8, 2007, was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President Shirley Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge.

Board Trustees Present: Tom Eddy, Kathy Howland, Shirley Johnson, Linda Lueth, Wendy Mazer, Deb Polderman, and Jennifer Whistler

Board Trustees Absent: None

The Board received an update relating to the facilities and technology bond campaign and reviewed and adjusted the Superintendent search timeline. Board discussion resulted in the addition of Trustees' phone numbers being listed in the District web site.

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, January 8, 2007, was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Johnson in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 35 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Johnson recognized Ms. Donna Emerson for achieving National Board Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The Board welcomed Northern High School teacher and student senate advisor Mr. Rick Searing, along with a building activities update from the student senate president and vice-president.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Lueth, that the minutes of the December 18, 2006 Special and Regular Meetings be approved noting changes on page one in the special meeting minutes section of the document. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Howland, supported by Mrs. Whistler, that the Board of Education approve the Curriculum Instruction Council recommendations that more rigorous graduation requirements be adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Howland, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education approve the Curriculum Instruction Council recommendations for Dance Movement/Color Guard Class to be added to the high school fine arts curriculum. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Lueth, that the Board of Education approve the following new and revised Graduation Policies: Policy 5000 Table of Contents; Policy 5260, Graduation Requirements Through the Class of 2010; Policy 5261, Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2011 and Beyond; Policy 6000 Table of Contents; Policy 6100, Curriculum and

Instruction Through the Class of 2010; and Policy 6101, Curriculum and Instruction for the Class of 2011 and Beyond and included Policy 6560, Summer School, that was moved from a discussion item to an action item. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Lueth, supported by Mrs. Howland, that the Board of Education approve the tenure recommendation for Ms. Andrea Ramsdell in accordance with Public Act 59 of the State of Michigan. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was offered by Mrs. Polderman, supported by Mrs. Lueth, that the Board of Education approve the leave of absence for Ms. Tammy Bumgarner effective March 10, 2007. Motion carried unanimously.

This concluded the action portion of the agenda. Mrs. Johnson then opened the meeting for comments.

President Johnson responded to a recent Kalamazoo Gazette article and editorial about Board norms.

Mrs. Mazer congratulated the Central High School wrestling team on their successful competition this past weekend, thanked Ms. Melanie Kurdys for the MEAP data she compiled, and discussed Board norms.

Mr. Eddy discussed Board norms.

The following parents and citizens discussed Board norms: Ms. Mary Balkema, 1131 Whites Rd., Kalamazoo City Commissioner; Mr. Jim Rodbard, 3705 Glengarry, State President of the American Civil Liberties Union; Mr. John Zull, 416 Barberry, Republican County Commissioner; Mr. Jack Hoogendyk, 8607 W R Ave., State Representative; Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale St.; Ms. Margaret O'Brien, 1625 Bellaire, Portage City Councilwoman; and Mr. Nasim Ansari, 5689 New Haven Dr., Republican County Commissioner.

Mr. Bob Schafer, 7667 Cobblewood, discussed the IB program concerns.

Ms. Melanie Kurdys, 2267 Preserve Blvd., discussed Board norms and MEAP scores.

Ms. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood St., discussed concern for security of student records and information.

Mrs. Lueth clarified a Board member quote recited by Ms. Melanie Kurdys.

President Johnson reiterated that all perspectives are welcomed in an open and honest forum.

Mrs. Whistler further explained her concerns about Board information and the right to free speech.

Mrs. Mazer stated she felt her opinions were being squashed.

Mrs. Polderman commented on Board dissention and not getting to the destructive point that the Portage City Council experienced several years ago.

Initiating the reports portion of the meeting, Mrs. Lueth presented the Treasurer's Report of Bills Approved for Payment as of December 13, 2006, December 28, 2006, and December 29, 2006, General Fund bills in the amount of \$6,041,190.19, and Building & Site Fund bills in the amount of \$4,044.00, for a grand total of \$6,045,234.19.

Superintendent McFarlane commented on the democratic process at tonight's Board meeting. He shared information from a recent issue of e-School News that focused on best practices and school technology and proudly stated that every article touched on what we are doing in Portage Public Schools. The Superintendent informed the audience that January is "Board of Education Recognition Month" and applauded our Trustees for their dedicated commitment to the students of our community. His rough estimate of the hours these individuals spend on a yearly basis between work study sessions, Board meetings, committee meetings, classes, and conferences is between 300-400 hours.

The Board received a Board Committee report from Mrs. Howland regarding the Curriculum and School Improvement Committee's Middle Years IB Program review process.

Mrs. Whistler led a discussion about the new and revised Policies as follows: 7000 series Policies pertaining to Physical Facilities with the exception of Policy 7140 which was removed for further modification; Policy 4330, Safety and Security; and Policy 6560, Summer School. Mrs. Whistler noted the following corrections prior to bringing this group of Policies for Board approval: Policy 7200, Legal and Financial Services for Building Construction, the first sentence will now read "The Superintendent shall manage all building construction programs." Policy 7420, Dedicatory Plaques, the last sentence will now read "The plaque shall list the Superintendent and trustees who held office at the time the initial construction contract was awarded."

A brief legislative update was received from Mrs. Whistler pertaining to the Revenue Estimating Conference scheduled for next week and the budget shortfall.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary