

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION**

September 8, 2008

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, September 8, 2008, was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by President Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 17 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Shirley Johnson, Wendy Mazer, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, Rusty Rathburn, and Jennifer Whistler

Board Trustees Absent: Melanie Kurdys

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

President Johnson announced the September 22, 2008 Board meeting would begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 6:45 p.m. so the Trustees can attend the Portage Community Call To Action meeting to address the youth substance abuse in Portage. President Johnson opened the floor to comments from fellow Board members.

Mrs. Polderman thanked Superintendent Wells for a very moving Opening Day 2008 program. She also commented on the quality of the recent Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) presentation.

President Johnson also commented on Opening Day and the KRESA presentation given by Mr. Roger Crawford.

President Johnson opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board. Mrs. Polderman informed the audience of the public comment guidelines.

Ms. Millie Taraszka, 410 Marylynn Ct., a citizen, inquired about non-televised Board meetings.

Superintendent Wells informed Ms. Taraszka that the first Board meeting of the month is a work study session and special arrangements were made to tape segments of the meeting for an absent Trustee.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda items as presented.

Included on the Consent Agenda was the approval of the recommended new teacher appointments as follows: Ms. Nicole Boomershine, Ms. Shelli Candey, Mr. Craig Jeffers, Mr. Brett McNeal, Ms. Susan Salvat, Ms. Susan Schroder, and Ms. Samantha Stephenson.

Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Project Update, Construction Report. Superintendent Wells invited Mr. Casey Peters, Project Manager from AVB Triangle Associates, to present updates. Mr. Peters provided construction updates on 12th Street Elementary School. Mr. Peters also introduced the 12 Street Elementary Project Superintendent from AVB Triangle Associates, Mr. Rick Ball. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, and Director of Technology Systems, Mr. Michael Batterson, and Mr. Peters responded to Trustee questions pertaining to budgets and technology.

Mr. Peters introduced Mr. Ryan Leaser, the Northern High School Project Manager from AVB Triangle Associates. Mr. Leaser shared construction updates on Northern High School. Mr. Peters and Mr. Leaser responded to Trustee questions pertaining to timing of future bid packages and demolition of different portions of the building.

Mr. Peters provided a bond project update on Lake Center Elementary, adding bid package 1 documents will be bid in January 2009.

Mr. Peters informed the audience the District has just entered the document phase with bids at Central High School and anticipates bids on package 1 in February 2009. Mr. Batterson shared information on the server room that was placed at Waylee Elementary over the summer. Mr. Noverr informed the audience the District continues to look at site plans. The District is constantly evaluating to find the best plan to handle traffic issues and will work with administration and Portage City officials until we are confident the best solution for all stakeholders is reached.

Bus and Maintenance Facility Bid Discussion. Superintendent Wells invited Mr. Mark Reile, Project Director from TMP Architects, to provide updates on the bus and maintenance facility. Mr. Reile shared a site map, reviewed site plans, discussed timelines, and, along with Mr. Noverr, discussed construction management cost savings on this project.

Technology Bid Discussion. Mr. Michael Batterson, presented background information on the technology bid request and responded to Trustee questions pertaining to a clarification of funding and equipment. President Johnson informed the Trustees, since there were no further questions, this would be a Consent Agenda item at the September 22, 2008 Board Meeting.

Bid Process. Mr. Noverr discussed the contractor selection process modifications, Board guiding principals, local preference, parameters for a local contractor, and past performance issues. These changes will strengthen the District's fair and transparent bidding process. Mr. Noverr responded to Trustee questions pertaining to limiting opportunities for non-local bidders, posting District criteria, and addressing performance concerns. President Johnson commented on the timing involved by the Board in processing and reviewing all the information distributed on bid packages and questioned

fellow Trustees about the potential need for more time to process future material. Superintendent Wells also commented on the fact that the timing of the Board meetings may not coincide with bid packages. Trustees were in favor of more time to review requests. It was agreed that the Board will consider holding Special Meetings in order to process requests in a timely manner.

District Academic Achievement Status Report. The Director of Assessment and Student Information Systems, Mr. Dan Vomastek, presented the achievement update containing the District Mission and Vision, driving questions, Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) fall 2007 results, Michigan Merit Exam (MME) spring 2007 and 2008 results, comparison districts, graduation rates, Ed Yes!, Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), and the 2007-2008 Michigan School Report Cards. Mr. Vomastek, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Dr. Richard Perry, and Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, Ms. Denise Bresson, responded to Trustee questions pertaining to MEAP review and schedule, discrepancies in writing scores, and changes from the curriculum audit. At the Board's request, Mr. Vomastek agreed to route additional data to them pertaining to areas mentioned in the discussion.

The Community Education Center Administrator, Mr. Craig Ross, shared background on the student population at his building, issues they face, testing results, and programming.

School Opening Update. Superintendent Wells discussed the Opening Day activities and the goal to help all students discover their full potential. She shared open house schedules and a positive snapshot of District enrollment.

Dr. Perry invited the community to attend the Portage Community Call To Action meeting to address the youth substance abuse in Portage on September 22, at 7:00 p.m. at Portage City Hall. He stated this meeting is recommended for anyone 13 years and older, due to content of a video that will be shown during the meeting. On-site babysitting arrangements are being made.

Superintendent Wells complemented and thanked the Portage District Library for graciously hosting our annual summer Kindergarten screening in August.

Public Comments on Discussion Items.

Ms. Millie Taraszka, 410 Marylynn Ct., a citizen, inquired about elementary MEAP testing and a comparison of scores from previous years.

Ms. Joanne Willson, 7122 Leawood, a citizen, thanked the District for providing the Academic Achievement Status Report on our web site. She inquired about credit recovery, seminars and core classes, and athletic trainer fees.

Ms. Debbie Rude, 6650 Oleander, a parent, also thanked the Board for the Academic Achievement Status Report and shared ideas to address deficits.

President Johnson informed Ms. Taraszka that the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, Ms. Denise Bresson, would contact her to provide further clarification.

Superintendent Wells informed Ms. Willson the District would contact her to provide clarification to her questions.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion offered by Mrs. Whistler, supported by Mrs. Polderman, that the Board of Education move into closed session for the purpose of discussing attorney/client privileged information.

The Board moved into closed session at 8:50 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 9:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary