

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

October 13, 2008

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, October 13, 2008, was called to order at 6:29 p.m. by President Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 15 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Board Trustees Absent: None

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent Wells acknowledged the recent recognitions honoring Ms. Lindsay Tarpley and shared some partnership activities between the Olympic gold medal winner and the Portage Athletic Foundation (PAF). She informed the audience that the PAF has donated \$50,000 to the District for enhancement and support of the athletic programs.

Superintendent Wells shared highlights from the Substance Abuse Task Force meeting last week, prevention curriculum investigation, professional development plans, and three parent meetings being planned this year at the middle schools. She confirmed that up-to-date information about specific additional activities being initiated by the District can be found on the web site.

The Superintendent acknowledged October 13-17, 2008, as National School Lunch Week; October 19-25, 2008, Michigan Safe Schools Week; and October 20-24, 2008, as Michigan School Bus Safety Week. She recognized and thanked the food service and transportation employees for their service and dedication to the District.

Superintendent Wells acknowledged and commented on the craftsmanship of the new podium built by Mr. Barry Bates, a District employee.

Superintendent Wells responded to an inquiry by Mrs. Kurdys pertaining to updates to the Substance Abuse Plan and availability to the public, and informed the audience updates would be available on the District web site.

Mrs. Polderman reminded fellow Trustees that an Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2008 at 8:00 a.m.

Mrs. Mazer thanked the District for keeping her informed and updated on a recent Policy Governance meeting. She voiced support for recording all open Board meetings and making these tapes accessible to the community through the web site.

Mrs. Kurdys discussed the transition to Policy Governance and encouraged fellow Trustees to consider the recommendation from the Michigan Association of School Boards that Board members act as well-informed educational leaders.

Mr. Rathburn informed the audience he and Mr. Posthumus visited the Local 357 employees and discussed the importance of skilled trades for those students that do not pursue college after graduation.

Mrs. Whistler reminded the audience of the upcoming District musicals “Do Black Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Up?” which begins at Central High School on October 18th and “Bye-Bye Birdie” which begins on November 7th at Northern High School.

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, shared concerns with math curriculum, technology, construction, and her election philosophy pertaining to academic achievement.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Project Update: 1) Commissioning Discussion. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr provided updated background information on the recommended pursuit of fundamental commissioning on all four facilities (12th Street Elementary, Lake Center Elementary, Central High, and Northern High) which was discussed earlier at the June Board Work Session. He responded to Trustee questions and indicated cost savings were anticipated as a result of this process, based upon feedback from other organizations that have used the process. He discussed a request for proposal (RFP) for a commissioning agent for these facilities, the comprehensive document outlining District expectations as well as giving agents important background on the four projects. Mr. Noverr announced the interview and selection committee consists of himself; Facilities and Maintenance Supervisor, Mr. Bob Small; and Owner’s Representatives Mr. John Spencer and Mr. Gary Kalleward. It is also likely the District will have staff from Byce & Associates and TMP Architects attending the interviews and providing input to the selection committee. Mr. Noverr responded to numerous Trustee questions and received feedback pertaining to cost savings, building occupant satisfaction, testing of operational systems, sub accountability, benchmarking, monitoring reports, and confidence in the system.

2) High School Site Plans Discussion. Mr. Tom Noverr shared draft Central and Northern High School site plans. He added the District has been meeting and working with the City of Portage, High School and Middle School Principals, and the Community Education Center about traffic flow concerns. He responded to Trustee questions pertaining to tennis court placement and building signage aspects. Superintendent Wells indicated that a more detailed report regarding next steps in the planning process would be routed to Board members by the end of the week.

Bond Refunding Resolution Discussion. Mr. Tom Noverr, presented background information on the feasibility of this refunding resolution regarding the 1999 bonds, Internal Revenue Service regulations, the timing of refunding, and introduced the bond financial consultant, Mr. Mike Givler, CPA from Umbaugh & Associates, and Mr. Dan Barlow. Mr. Noverr and Mr. Givler responded to Trustee questions pertaining to theoretical costs, affect on millage rate, market volatility, and sharing forecasts with the Board. Mr. Noverr added this would be an action item at the October 27, 2008 Board Meeting.

Board Governance Process, Monitoring Reports Regarding Board-Ownership Linkage and Board-Superintendent Linkage Discussions. President Johnson polled the Trustees to schedule the next Board Governance meeting to discuss policy questions, by-laws, and monitoring reports. A meeting was scheduled for Thursday, October 23, 2008 at 4:45 p.m. and it was requested that all Trustees bring their calendars. Trustee discussions pertained to further review of Policy 2.5.7, establishing a schedule for the Governance/Ownership Linkage Commitment and Board-Superintendent Linkage review, thoughts of ordering the sections and timelines, on-line availability of Policies, using Policy 3.5 President's Role as an exercise in testing the individual monitoring report. Superintendent Wells informed the Board she will provide a schedule of priorities for the Executive Limitations Policies. President Johnson informed the Board the Policies and By-laws would be on the District web site as soon as her introduction statement was completed and requested Trustees to send feedback to her to compile.

Michigan Association of School Boards Delegate Representation Discussion. Mrs. Kurdys shared drafts of the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) proposed revised and new legislative resolutions. Feedback was received from fellow Trustees for Mrs. Kurdys to proceed at the MASB Delegate Assembly.

Public Comments on Discussion Items.

Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale, a citizen, shared thoughts about monitoring construction and not being short-sighted on the new buildings under construction.

Mr. Bob Schafer, 7667 Cobblewood, a parent, shared concerns with safety and traffic flow at the Northern High, Central High, and North Middle School sites.

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 negotiations. Upon a roll call vote, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

The Board moved into closed session at 8:35 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 8:55 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary