

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE WORK SESSION**

**January 16, 2012**

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, January 16, 2012, was called to order by President Snyder at 5:02 p.m. in the Media Center of the Angling Road Elementary School, 5340 Angling Road.

Board Members Present: Tom Eddy, Ted Hartridge, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp, and Joanne Willson

Board Members Absent: Geoff Howe

Administration Members Present: Ric Perry, Mark Root, Tom Vance and Heather Yankovich

**PRESENTATION**

Angling Road Elementary School Principal, Ms. Heather Yankovich, facilitated a report on Angling Road Elementary School updates. Ms. Yankovich responded to Trustee questions.

The Board called recess at 6:00 p.m.

The work study session of the Board of Education of the Portage Public Schools held on Monday, January 16, 2012, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Snyder in the Community Room of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. He welcomed an audience of 8 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Tom Eddy, Ted Hartridge, Rusty Rathburn, Bo Snyder, Randy Van Antwerp and Joanne Willson

Board Trustees Absent: Geoff Howe

**REPORTS**

**Superintendent's Report:** Interim Superintendent, Dr. Ric Perry, acknowledged and recognized Martin Luther King Day. He discussed the District's observance as well as local celebrations marking this occasion.

Dr. Perry briefed the audience that Superintendent Evaluation discussions took place at the January Board Retreat. He thanked the Trustees for their feedback and looks forward to incorporating their ideas.

Dr. Perry shared the Principals timeline for Performance Evaluation Training noting this is the first step to move into compliance with the requirements of the new legislation. The Board will continue to receive updates and adjustments that occur during the development of this important new requirement.

Dr. Perry removed the Discussion Item pertaining to the West Middle School Kitchen Equipment Purchase Recommendation from the agenda for further analysis. He noted, should the equipment fail

altogether before the next scheduled Board Meeting, Trustees could be called to a Special Meeting for this item.

Dr. Perry introduced Mrs. Lynne Cowart, Director of Curriculum, who shared an update on the Fall 2011 Performance Series. Mrs. Cowart and Dr. Perry responded to Trustee questions.

The Business Manager, Mrs. Karla Colestock, provided a follow-up summary of the Revenue Estimating Conference held on January 13. She discussed the consensus on the 2011/12 school year as well as the projections for the 2012/13 school year. Mrs. Colestock and Dr. Perry responded to Trustee questions.

## **COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS**

President Snyder opened the comments and communications portion of the meeting and asked if there were any citizens who would like to speak to the Board. Mr. Hartridge explained guidelines the Board uses for this portion of the meeting.

Mr. Jeff Plunkett, 1377 Cliff Barnes Drive, President of the Custodial and Maintenance Union, shared support for the Interim Superintendent, Dr. Perry.

Ms. Judi Santek, 7537 Autumn Street, a citizen, shared support for the Interim Superintendent, Dr. Perry, and disappointment that this was not a unanimous vote by the Board.

Mrs. Terri Novaria, 3489 Whistling Lane, a parent, discussed parent changes recommended regarding the science curriculum, thanked the Board, Dr. Perry, and Ms. Denise Bresson, School Improvement and Professional Development Specialist, for resolutions to the curriculum. Mrs. Novaria shared a request for further changes to the International Baccalaureate science curriculum.

President Snyder opened the floor to comments from fellow Board members regarding the January Retreat.

President Snyder shared a summary of the January 9, 2012, Board Retreat noting action items are not routine at these meetings. He acknowledged the tight timeline and challenging schedules forced the Board vote on January 9. This agenda item was added in order to allow all Trustees the opportunity to address the public on this matter.

Mr. Van Antwerp noted his support for Dr. Perry, yet he was in favor of proceeding with a national search. His decision was based on the fact that top tier districts conduct national searches; the search conducted in the spring of 2011 was weak; it would unite the community behind the Superintendent and it would help the Board make this important decision.

Mr. Hartridge was in favor of proceeding with a national search as the selection of a Superintendent and periodic evaluations are crucial for student achievement. He proposed a District-wide survey be conducted by the Superintendent search firm selected in November, Hazzard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd., regarding academic and community wide expectations.

Mrs. Willson was in favor of proceeding with a national search and echoed comments made by Mr. Van Antwerp and Mr. Hartridge. She supports a community survey by Hazzard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd., regarding leadership expectations in order to move the District from good to great.

Mr. Rathburn noted he voted not to proceed with the Superintendent search at this time commenting he is impressed with Dr. Perry's engaging management style and was reluctant to threaten District momentum.

Mr. Eddy noted he voted not to proceed with the Superintendent search at this time and acknowledged he appreciates Dr. Perry's communications with the Board. He acknowledged a search at this time would slow down the teacher evaluation process.

President Snyder thanked all Trustees for their comments on this issue. He noted he voted not to proceed with the Superintendent search at this time and believes Dr. Perry is exceeding expectations.

President Snyder opened the floor to additional comments from fellow Board members.

Mrs. Willson offered condolences to the family and friends of a retired teacher, Mrs. Ragotzy.

Mr. Hartridge urged all to attend the Central High School's Performing Arts production of The Phantom of the Opera.

Mr. Rathburn reminded the audience of the Northern High School's Drama Department production of And A Child Shall Lead. He thanked Mrs. Novaria for working with the Administration on the science curriculum revisions.

Mr. Eddy applauded all involved in the science curriculum revisions.

President Snyder opened the floor to Board Committee reports.

Mr. Hartridge reported the Finance Committee met and discussed the suggestion by District Auditors Rehmann & Robson to add the following prefix to Policy 2.4, Financial Planning/Budgeting: "It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of federal and state grant agreements in the conduct of its financial operations. The Board of Education instructs the Superintendent to develop appropriate operating procedures to ensure such compliance." Mr. Hartridge commended Mrs. Colestock and the Business Office for their efforts. President Snyder noted, as all Trustees were in consensus with this suggestion made by the District Auditors, this item would appear on the January 30, 2012, Consent Agenda for approval.

Mr. Rathburn urged all to attend the Portage Athletic Foundation Fundraiser, "Steppin' Out" on January 28, 2012, at the State Theatre.

President Snyder reported the Executive Committee discussions pertained to the Board holding an additional Retreat in March in order to conduct Dr. Perry's formal review and discuss his contract. President Snyder confirmed Dr. Perry's title remains Interim Superintendent and he discussed the next steps of articulating a vision statement and mission process.

For Board Learning Time, Mr. Eddy shared the Board Norms and Code of Ethics the Trustees adopted on November 21, 2011, noting both will be posted in the Community Room.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**New Hires.** Dr. Perry shared background information on the new employees, Ms. Chelsea Crouch, Ms. Rachel Mancino-Smith and Ms. Laurie Waldvogel.

**Bond Technology Project Bids: Technology Enhanced Classroom Document Camera Purchase Recommendation.** Mr. Dan Vomastek, Director of Information and Technology Systems, provided background information on the recommended purchase of 275 document cameras for use with Technology Enhanced Classroom systems from Netrix in an amount not to exceed \$54,628.75, monies coming from the 2008 Bond Funds #1 and #2.

**Bond Technology Project Bids: Laptop Computers Purchase Recommendation.** Mr. Vomastek shared information on the recommendation to purchase 50 laptop computers from Insight Public Sector for an amount not to exceed \$29,820.50, proceeds coming from the 2008 Bond Fund #1.

**Bond Technology Project Bids: Middle School and Community Education Center Large Screen Display Purchase Recommendation.** Mr. Vomastek provided details on the recommended purchase of 136 large screen displays from Troxell Communications, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$321,920.16, funds coming from the 2008 Bond Fund #1.

**Science Recommendations.** Mrs. Lynne Cowart, Director of Curriculum, shared the recommended changes and additions to the science curriculum that were approved by the District Curriculum and Instruction Council (CIC) on December 14, 2011, and are supported by the Administration. A summary of the CIC Science Recommendations for Middle School are: 1) The curriculum for grades 5 – 7 should be integrated across science disciplines including GLCEs from earth, physical and life science. Issue addressed: All Middle School GLCEs need to be taught by the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade since they are tested at the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. 2) An Honors Earth Science Class (Science Plus) should be implemented at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level for advanced students. Students who pass the class will receive .5 HS credit for Earth Science – fulfilling the Earth Science graduation requirement. Issue addressed: Parent concerns that advanced science students had to “double up” on science at the HS in order to meet Earth Science requirement.

A summary of the CIC Science Recommendations for High School are: 1) Honors Chemistry 2 and Honors Physics 2 should be added to the high school course offerings. Issue addressed: Parent concerns that advanced students were unable to complete a full year of advanced chemistry and physics without taking IB Chemistry or Physics. Honors Chemistry 1 and Honors Physics 1 are already offered.

**Grand Rapids Building Services Recommendation.** Dr. Craig Ross, Community Education Center Administrator, discussed the recommendation to approve the three-year extension of the Custodial Services Contract with Grand Rapids Building Services, Inc. Dr. Ross further recommended that the Board of Education not approve the Day-Time Staff Option presented.

**Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency Parent Advisory Committee Representative.** Mrs. Gail Van Daff, Director of Special Education, provided background information on the nomination of Ms. Patti Chen to the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee at KRESA

(Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency). This appointment would be for a three-year term expiring in the 2014-15 school year.

**Policy 2.5, Financial Condition and Activities.** Mr. Van Antwerp led a discussion pertaining to Policy 2.5, Financial Condition and Activities, highlighting changes to 2.5.7 and 2.5.11 that clarify wording upon advice from legal counsel.

**Community Survey.** An additional agenda item was brought forward by Mr. Hartridge. He discussed a request that Hazzard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd., (the firm selected to conduct a Superintendent search) conduct a survey regarding academic and community wide expectations.

President Snyder opened the floor for comments on the Discussion Items.

Mr. Jeff Plunkett, 1377 Cliff Barnes Drive, President of the Custodial and Maintenance Union, shared comments regarding the contract with Grand Rapids Building Services and inquired about student workers.

Mrs. Terri Novaria, 3489 Whistling Lane, a parent, clarified that parents are pleased with the recommended changes to the science curriculum.

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