

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

May 11, 2009

The committee of the whole work session of the Board of Education of Portage Public Schools held on Monday, May 11, 2009, was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Johnson in the Professional Development Center of the Administration Building, 8111 S. Westnedge. She welcomed an audience of 20 people and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Trustees Present: Shirley Johnson, Melanie Kurdys, Deb Polderman, Dale Posthumus, Rusty Rathburn, Jennifer Whistler (left at 8:30 p.m.), and John Whyte

Board Trustees Absent: None

COMMENTS OR COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent Wells invited the Community Relations Manager, Mr. Tom Vance, to share news of a City Hall press event. Mr. Vance acknowledged the District is pleased to be a part of the “Smart Summer 2009” initiative being launched on Tuesday, May 12, 2009, prior to the City Council meeting, in partnership with the City of Portage and the Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force. This initiative will focus on the following components: operating “Under the Influence” Enforcement Zones, educating alcohol vendors, creating awareness of parent host liabilities, launching a “Silent Observer Text-a-Tip” Program, and a series of 12 weekly “Smart Summer 2009” messages to parents and the community-at-large to help keep youth safe.

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.

Mr. David Dudd, 3595 Arbutus Trail, a parent, shared concern regarding privatization of 2nd and 3rd shift custodial positions.

President Johnson opened the floor for Board Trustee comments.

Mrs. Polderman congratulated Mr. Randy Van Antwerp on his election to the Board and stated she looks forward to working with him.

Mrs. Whistler offered thanks to both Mr. Van Antwerp and Mrs. Joanne Willson for running for the open seat on the Board.

President Johnson shared the exciting news of District students securing scholarships. She thanked the Portage Rotary and Excellence In Education and recognized the International Baccalaureate Diploma candidates and the National Merit Finalists.

Mr. Rathburn provided an overview of the final elementary school tour that he and Mr. Posthumus completed. He encouraged other Trustees to visit District elementary schools to learn about all the great things going on in the buildings.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Bond Project Update, Lake Center Elementary Bid Recommendation. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Mr. Tom Noverr, shared some background information pertaining to the bid category for Lake Center Elementary, Bid Package 2 and invited Mr. Ryan Leaser, AVB Triangle Project Manager, to respond to Trustee questions. Mr. Noverr and Mr. Leaser responded to questions pertaining to a Bond credit line item and work typically done by the City and the District. President Johnson noted this contract will be awarded locally and is under budget.

Bond Project Update, Technology Tools for Teachers Demonstration. The Director of Technology Systems, Mr. Michael Batterson, introduced Integration Specialist, Mr. Chuck Haskin, and shared a few highlights of the technology tools being tested in the District. Mr. Haskin invited the following teachers to share their experiences from field testing the equipment: Mr. Rob Hoopingarner, Central High; Ms. Jennifer Bonner, North Middle; and Ms. Kelly Jensenius, Amberly Elementary. Mr. Batterson, Mr. Haskin, and the three teachers responded to Trustee questions pertaining to equipment increasing scores, training, assignments available to ill students, juried reference sites, web content filters, bids and vendors, District-wide technology plans.

Bond Project Update, Other. Mr. Noverr provided an update on concerns raised at previous Board meetings by Mr. Ken Dumas were answered to Mr. Dumas' satisfaction by Mr. Mark Reile, Architect from TMP Associates. Mr. Noverr informed the Board that the District is moving forward on the Idaho and Oregon Street redesign funded from Bond Fund #1. He indicated the site will be made available to Habitat For Humanity and training opportunities for the City of Portage before deconstruction begins. Mr. Noverr also updated the audience on the Bus and Maintenance Facility and the 12th Street Elementary. He noted the June 22 completion date for the Bus and Maintenance Facility and impacts to Waylee Elementary and Central High classroom moves. Superintendent Wells responded to a Trustee question stating an update to high school traffic safety is planned for the June 1st meeting. President Johnson clarified Bond Fund money can not be used for budget deficits.

Financial Planning Discussion, 2009/10 Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency Budget. Business Manager, Mrs. Karla Colestock, shared background information on the KRESA budget she reviewed with Mr. Noverr and responded to Trustee questions pertaining to salary increases, fund balances, tax revenue increased projection, health costs, Special Education budgets, reasonable charges, and comparing costs to other Intermediate School District models. President Johnson requested the Audit Committee to direct questions and share details at the June 1st Board meeting.

Financial Planning Discussion, 2009/10 Financial Planning. Mr. Noverr presented updated budget scenarios for the 2009/10 General Fund budget development. He discussed significant reductions, low District administrative costs, State financial situation, and future reductions and adjustments to respond to a revenue shortfall. Mr. Noverr and Superintendent Wells responded to Trustee questions pertaining to performance data, budget costs, revenue enhancement, remediation

costs, leveraging volunteer services, retirement impact, expenditure restrictions, and all day Kindergarten. Superintendent Wells informed the Board they will receive a budget presentation at their June 1st meeting and will vote on the budget at their June 15th meeting.

President Johnson called a recess at 8:30 p.m.

President Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:36 p.m.

Financial Planning Discussion, 2008/09 Building and Site Sinking Fund Amendment #2. Mr. Noverr shared information on the Resolution for Amendment #2 and responded to Trustee questions pertaining to site acquisition costs, West Middle School tennis courts, expanding the high school tennis courts to 12 rather than 10, estimates on traffic safety issues at a few elementary sites, extension of Constitution Boulevard, and a request for a priority list of contingency projects. Superintendent Wells received Board consensus to get an estimate of replacing the West Middle School tennis courts and to develop a priority list of future Building and Site Sinking Fund projects for Board review later this summer.

President Johnson opened the floor for citizen comments pertaining to the agenda discussion items. No citizens came forward to speak and President Johnson moved on to Governance Discussion.

Policy Governance Discussion, Audit Committee Report. Mrs. Polderman presented an Audit Committee Report that included Monitoring Reports and revisions made to Policy 2.5, Financial Conditions and Activities; Policy 2.11, Long Term Asset Planning; and Policy 3.9 Board Committee Structure. President Johnson stated these Policies would be moved to action items on the May 18th agenda.

Policy Governance Discussion, Governance Education Committee Report, New Board Member Education. Mrs. Kurdys presented background information pertaining to new Board member orientation material. Trustees discussed the addition of a Board operating guideline manual and financial resources. A consensus was reached on new member orientation materials and President Johnson asked Superintendent Wells to note items covered with Mr. Van Antwerp and share that list with the Board.

Policy Governance Discussion, Governance Education Committee Report, Tentative Agenda Plan for 2009/10. Mrs. Kurdys shared a tentative agenda plan for the 2009/10 year along with three additional planning meetings for continued Policy Governance professional development.

Policy Governance Discussion, Governance Education Committee Report, Selection Process for Policy Governance Facilitator for 2009/10. Mrs. Kurdys presented ideas for consultants to provide future Policy Governance development for the Board as well as to assist in getting community feedback for Strategic Planning. The Trustee discussions pertained to funding options such as finding underwriting to cover the costs, a priority list of issues, foregoing meeting pay for Policy Governance professional development, and a request for a more specific professional development

plan along with costs. Superintendent Wells recognized the concern about financial conditions and cautioned the Board to be thoughtful of their own leadership development as they determine future District directions. She also informed Trustees to convey unavailable dates for these additional meetings.

Policy Governance Discussion, Owner's Linkage Committee Report. Mr. Rathburn shared the Committee has begun to research various methods for engaging the community in dialog. He requested Trustees to forward feedback on this to his attention. The Committee is also reviewing the Strategic Management planning in hopes of resurrecting this initiative. There was more discussion pertaining to the challenges and changes in society, Board self development, investigating a trainer/consultant, and finding underwriting to assist with costs. This topic will be discussed further at a future meeting.

President Johnson reminded the Board of several compliance and monitoring reports that are due and the possibility of holding a Policy Governance Session on Monday, June 8, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edna Kent
Recording Secretary