

**Portage Public Schools  
Monitoring Report**

Policy Type: Ends  
Policy Title: Ends Policy 1.5

**Certification**

I hereby present my monitoring report on Ends Policy 1.5 in accordance with the monitoring schedule established by the Board. I certify that the information provided in this report is true as of January 12, 2015.



Signature

1.6.15

Date

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### **1.5 POLICY LANGUAGE**

The District will actively build a culture of collaboration and service to the community.

#### **Interpretation**

A. I interpret “culture of collaboration” to mean that we will:

1. Create meaningful partnerships that support students, schools and families.
2. Maintain operational practices that involve and engage a broad range of stakeholders in the process of developing an effective and integrated school community.
3. Provide a range of educational, cultural and athletic experiences that engage the community.

B. I interpret “service to the community” to mean that we will:

1. Make schools and facilities available for community use.
2. Through our employees, make ourselves available as resources to the community.
3. Encourage students to be of service to others.

#### **Report**

**A.1.** Portage Public Schools is fortunate to be situated in a county rich with resources and is therefore able to maintain a number of partnerships with churches, service organizations, booster groups, businesses, foundations, individuals, and other groups who help support our students, our schools, and our greater school community.

This support manifests itself in multiple ways; including financial support, tutoring, school supplies, clothing, food, classroom presentations, assemblies, meals during special events, mini-grants and scholarships. A few examples are:

- Lake Center Bible Church provides food back packs for students and families in need
- Warm Kids provide winter clothing for families in need
- Portage Kiwanis Club provides 3<sup>rd</sup> graders with dictionaries
- Portage Public Safety does presentations on fire safety
- Safe Kids Kalamazoo provides ski/bike helmets
- Portage District Library presents programs on various topics
- Portage Rotary Club supports student youth groups and provides scholarship funds
- Portage Education Foundation provides student scholarships and financial support for enrichment activities (Teacher mini-grants/summer STEP program)
- Portage Athletic Foundation supports student athletes and the District’s athletic programs.

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Beyond this, Portage Public School staff engages organizations such as Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Southwest Michigan First, The Kalamazoo Community Foundation, The Learning Network and KC Ready 4's for grant opportunities, services to families and other identified supports.

The shared staffing at St. Michael's Lutheran, St. Monica's and St. Augustine's Catholic Schools has benefitted students, created new teaching positions, and benefitted Portage Public Schools financially.

An area of growth for the District would be clearer relationships with the Portage Athletic Foundation and the Portage Education Foundation to make certain that these volunteer-led organizations align their goals and activities with those set by the Board and District.

**A.2.** Portage Public Schools has established systems to ensure collaboration.

A number of vehicles exist to share and solicit various points of view from District stakeholders. Among those that meet regularly and routinely are:

**District Advisory Council:** A focus group for the District and an advisory organization for the Superintendent. The Council consists of parent, community, faculty, Board of Education, Portage Education Foundation and Administrative representatives.

**Curriculum Instruction Council:** The Council is made up of Pre-K-12 teacher leaders, building administrators, central office Administrators, support staff, community members, parents, and School Board members. The Council helps design, implement, communicate and perpetuate a District-wide system of research, standard development, assessment and articulation of District curriculum and instruction.

**Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Presidents Council:** PTO Presidents meet several times each year to share information about initiatives, improve communication and clarify priorities and District direction.

The District also creates stakeholder committees as needed to further District initiatives. An example of this is the committee created to address District facilities. Nearly 50 community, staff, student, Administration and School Board representatives convened to help develop a Facility Master Plan and recommendations to move the plan forward. This Committee met over a four month period to develop the plan. The final report was presented to the Board in December of 2014.

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The District values stakeholder input into the decision-making process and looks for ways to incorporate effective and meaningful input.

Portage Public Schools also practices internal collaboration. Book Buddies (early elementary student assigned to an older student to practice literacy) crossing guards and lunch-room volunteers are examples at the elementary level. The Moose Club at Central High School is a multi-age student initiative, monitored by school advisors, for practicing social skills among peers. This Club boasts a membership of 40 students. The Link Crew at Northern High School helps acclimate incoming freshmen to the school and its activities and traditions. Over 50 upperclassmen regularly participate.

**A.3.** The Districts Athletic and Fine/Performing Arts Programs provide for a vast array of opportunities for community members to witness the skills and talents of our students.

Community members have access to some of the best entertainment in Southwest Michigan through Portage Public Schools Fine and Performing Arts Programs. Concerts, musicals, school plays, and art displays all serve to showcase student talent and entertain audiences of all ages.

Interscholastic Athletic competitions at the middle school, freshman, Junior Varsity and Varsity levels are held throughout the year at the District's indoor and outdoor facilities.

Senior citizens (65 and older) can obtain "Gold Cards" at no cost to receive discounts to various athletic events.

**B.1.** The Portage Public School District has a long history of actively supporting and encouraging the public use of its facilities. As such, we ensure that our facilities are viewed as a resource that nurtures the growth and development of our children and also as a shared resource that benefits our community as a whole.

In addition to the extensive after-school use of our facilities by students, the District regularly schedules our facilities for use by over 250 non-school groups. The vast majority of which rent space within our facilities.

Top priority for facility usage is for student-related activities and programs. The facilities we schedule include gyms, community/activity rooms, cafeterias, media centers and outdoor fields. Generally speaking, certain facilities are reserved for students in block times. Facilities used by high school teams are reserved until 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; middle school gyms are reserved until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; elementary gyms, cafeterias and activity rooms until 6:30 p.m. for Curious Kids in six of the buildings.

The second priority level is for classes, programs and activities offered through the District's "Enriched For Life" Program. These offerings make use of District pools, athletic fields, gymnasiums, theaters and other smaller spaces as needed.

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Non-school groups can access any available facilities after student-related and school-sponsored needs are met. The District has Policies and Regulations in place that address the use of District facilities as well as for their scheduling and maintenance.

The District schedules approximately 40,000 events, most outside of the school day, on an annual basis. All gyms in the District are booked solid from November 1 through the first week of March in any given school year.

Among non-school facility users are:

- Adult Sports Groups
- Army National Guard
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
- Area Churches
- Drivers Education Providers
- Kalamazoo Area Runners
- Kalamazoo Christian Schools
- Little League Teams
- YMCA
- Youth Sports (various)
- Local Businesses, Boards and Associations

**B.2.** Our District staff of approximately 1,000 possesses a wide variety of skills, talents and abilities that are shared outside of the school day. While the District does not track employees serving as a community resource, it is a known fact that many of our employees generously give of their time and talents to benefit the greater community.

Employees can be found serving on boards, being active members of service organizations, volunteering time for any number of causes, leading out of school youth groups, mentoring others, teaching enrichment courses and a myriad of other activities.

As an organization, we look for ways to do the same. During the course of the past year:

Our Technology Department has engaged in active parent and community outreach efforts to teach concepts on Digital Citizenship and online safety for students.

Our counselors keep parents up-to-date about financial aid, college and career readiness and other issues parents encounter as their children transition to adulthood

Our Human Resources Department and Business Offices help employees with financial planning.

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Our Food Service Department recently expanded its offerings to include a “Summer Feeding Program” at two sites during the summer of 2014.

Our Curriculum Department provides parents with valuable on-line resources to assist them in understanding and helping with their child’s school work.

Our Special Education Department works with our SSA Special Education Parent Advisory Committee to host a monthly *Share and Learn* for parents and educators to come together to discuss a particular topic (e.g. home-school communication) through formal presentations, open discussion, and/or informal sharing of resources. Our Special Education Department also collaborates and in some cases works very closely with community advocacy agencies and medical professionals to ensure appropriate services are made available to our families and are provided to our students with IEPs. Additionally, we work with a number of local businesses to provide work-based learning opportunities for our students with IEPs at the high school level.

**B.3.** Students at all levels are provided with many opportunities to serve others. Students serve individually, in self-organizing groups, in school groups/organizations, as a class or building, or as part of a greater effort to help others.

The following is a list of beneficiaries from student service:

- Kalamazoo Gospel Mission
- American Heart Association
- Portage Community Outreach Center
- Portage Senior Center
- City of Portage
- Community Healing Center
- Ministry With Community
- SPCA
- Kids Hope-Southridge Church
- American Cancer Society
- Salvation Army
- Michigan Blood
- Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes
- March of Dimes
- Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
- Countless Students

**Conclusion Statement**

The organization met expectations.