

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 9, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Branden Miller; Jacob Myers; Nancy Sherbine; Brian Shope; Pete Noel, Superintendent of Schools; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Troy Eppley, Director of Special Education; Jeremy Burkett, Junior Senior High School Principal; Jennifer Pisarski, Elementary School Principal; Dennis McGlynn, Esquire and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary. Absent were Matthew Decort and Jason Corte.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

NOTICE TO PERSONNEL

There may be reductions and/or reassignments of personnel due to fiscal circumstances.

DISTRICT POLICIES

Third Reading - 815.1 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **May 14, 2025**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium, 84 Mountain Avenue, Portage, PA with the Regular Meeting immediately following.

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APPROVING THE MINUTES

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving the March meeting minutes. A copy of the minutes was distributed with the advance agenda.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Board moves to approve the written agenda with any noted additions, deletions or corrections as discussed.

Personnel Matters, Item 5, CORRECT employee's last name.

REPORTS

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** was absent.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** reported that he met with the PAEA over some recent concerns and hopefully those have been taken care of. Mr. Noel also noted that quotes from DirecTec and Raptor for security upgrades will be on the May agenda. He met with Mr. Holyfield and Mrs. Geer concerning the May 2026 band trip to Florida and reported that they are well organized and prepared. The federal Department of Education is in transition and most of issues being raised for schools is really unknown at this time. IDEA, Title and nutrition are the areas that our school could be affected by funding and program cuts. Mr. Noel also discussed school vouchers, recent SCOTUS cases especially two dealing with whether eRate funding is unconstitutional and charter schools. He further addressed a concern from a teacher that the playground needs some maintenance and noted that it is prepped over the summer and maintained throughout the year. The district will evaluate the condition of the playground and all repairs and maintenance will be made. He further discussed the suggestion that a shade area be installed and noted that it will be considered but that generally when the weather is too hot, the students aren't outside for recess.

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Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** reported that the people from PATTAN have provided training and other support to our learning support classrooms which is very beneficial to our teachers and paraprofessionals. The district is promoting academic success to our students through Occupational Vocational Rehabilitation services for post-high school training. Staff members took a non-violent crisis intervention refresher course as well as verbal deescalation techniques training recently.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** reported that spring sports are at the halfway mark. He thanked Travis Kargo for 25 years as the head varsity boys basketball coach noting that he was a fierce competitor. He reported that the high had a send off for Isaac Geer and Nathan Phillips as they head off to state band competition. The robotics team will be competing on Friday in the Heritage Conference. Up coming events include the spring fling, PSSA testing, Earth Day clean up at the park, the Mock Crash, the spring concert and the prom.

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that currently there are 43 students signed up for kindergarten for the upcoming school year. The the third marking period incentive, the students will get to use the jumpies. The Milton Hershey dinner was a great event with nice attendance. The Cartwheel program is up and running in the elementary. There will be a PSSA pep rally to kick off testing. Title will hold a spring drive through to provide snacks and small prizes to students. And the spring concert will be upcoming in May.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** noted that there was the usual business with the items as listed on the agenda and it had generally been a quiet month.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported that he will bring the preliminary budget for the 2025-2026 school year to the board in May for consideration. He estimates that the district will face a \$400,000 deficit incurring from increases in health care costs and cyber school tuition. There will be no tax increase this year as our local effort is mostly in line. The current administration may make changes to the CEP program which provides free breakfast and lunch to students and if so, it could sharply decrease the number of students eligible to participate. That could

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pose a hardship for families. In addition, this program provided us the funding to upgrade, repair and replace equipment in both cafeterias.

REPORTS: A. FINANCIAL, B. INVOICES (GENERAL FUND, CAFETERIA FUND AND ATHLETIC FUND), C. TAX COLLECTORS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

A. Treasurers' Reports

A. General Fund	Page 2
B. Cafeteria Report	Page 3
D. Elementary School Activity Fund	Page 5
E. Junior / Senior High School Activity Fund	Page 6
H. Athletics	Page 9
I. General Fund	Page 10
J. Capital Reserve Fund	Page 10.1
K. Capital Projects Fund	Page 10.2
L. Investments/Pledged Collateral Report	Page 11

B.	
General Fund Invoices	\$1,211,333.87
Cafeteria Fund Invoices	\$82,839.18
Capital Reserve Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Capital Projects Fund Invoices	\$562,459.00
Total Invoices paid	\$1,856,632.05

C.	
Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro –	
Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mr. Layo - Portage Boro –	
Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mrs. Molnar Portage Township –	
Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Berkheimer Tax Administrators	
PASD – EIT (Current)	\$38,122.68
Total Taxes	\$38,122.68

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APPROVING AMBULANCE COVERAGE AGREEMENT

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving an Agreement with Forest Hills Area Ambulance Association to cover home varsity football games at the following rates:

2025	\$400.00 per event
2026	\$425.00 per event
2027	\$450.00 per event

APPROVING VO-TECH BUDGET

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Admiral Peary AVTS Preliminary Budget for the 2025-2026 school year in the amount of \$6,322,499, which is a 5.3% increase over last year's budget. The estimated cost per student will be \$6,315.

RENEWING AGREEMENT WITH IGNITE EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends renewing its Agreement with Ignite to manage the Highway to Success classroom at GJCTC for the 2025-2026 school year. The total cost for the year is \$115,839.13 which will be billed in four installments of \$28,959.78.

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REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to advertise for bids for milk for the 2025-2026 school year.

APPROVING ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT WITH IU8

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving Articles of Agreement with Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 ESL Consortium for the 2025-2026 school year at a cost of \$5,000.

APPROVING PROPOSAL FOR SECURITY UPGRADES

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Proposal from Glass Erectors in the amount of \$51,692 for security upgrades in the high school and elementary school. This project will be funded by the school security grant.

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APPROVING PURCHASES FOR CAFETERIA ITEMS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the following cafeteria items:

Portage Area Elementary School - Purchases thru KPN (Alto Hartley)			
Item	Qty	Cost	Total Cost
Pass-Thru Refrigerator	2	\$9,889.00	\$19,778.00
Reach- In Refrigerator	2	\$5,332.00	\$10,664.00
All Purpose Counter	2	\$6,889.00	\$13,778.00
Pass-Thru Mobile Heated Cabinet	4	\$6,665.00	\$26,660.00
Installation cost	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Total Cost			\$76,880.00

Portage Area Elementary School - Purchases thru KPN (Hertz Furniture)			
Item	Qty	Cost	Total Cost
Cafeteria Tables	24	\$2,365.92	\$56,782.04
Total Cost			\$56,782.04

Portage Area Junior Senior High - Purchases thru KPN (Alto Hartley)			
Item	Qty	Cost	Total Cost
Reach-In Refrigerator	2	\$5,661.00	\$11,322.00
Installation Cost	1	\$1,495.00	\$1,495.00
Total Cost			\$11,322.00

PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR VACANT POSITIONS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to advertise for any vacant positions which may occur for the 2025-2026 school year.

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APPROVING AGREEMENT FOR NETWORKING SERVICES

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to allow the district to maintain network and wifi services for the period May 6, 2025 to May 5, 2026 at a cost of \$26,194.

APPROVING AGREEMENT WITH EXTENDED FAMILY PROGRAMS, INC.

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving the 2025-2026 Service Agreement with Extended Family Programs to provide counseling and assessment/support services for any district students enrolled in the program. The district would only incur a fee if a student is enrolled in the program.

APPROVING IDEA FUNDING DISTRIBUTION, COORDINATED EARLY INTERVENING SERVICES AND NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF LEA POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND USE OF FUNDS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving Funding Distribution, Coordinated Early Intervening Services, and Notice of Adoption of Approved LEA Policies, Procedures and Use of Funds by School District for the 2025-2026 school year.

APPROVING DUAL ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving a Dual Enrollment Agreement with Pennsylvania Highlands Community College to provide district students with the opportunity to earn college credits.

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APPROVING AGREEMENT FOR SCHOOL-AGE EDUCATION SERVICES

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving an Agreement for School-Age Services with Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 for the 2025-2026 school year. The district would not be charged for services unless a student is placed into one of the programs.

APPROVING DISTRICT POLICY REVISIONS

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving revisions to the following policies which were recommended by the PSBA Policy Review Service:

- 103 Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Students
- 103.1 Nondiscrimination – Qualified Students with Disabilities
- 104 Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Staff
- 146.1 Trauma-Informed Approach
- 218 Student Discipline
- 218.1 Weapons
- 218.2 Terroristic Threats
- 801 Public Records
- 803 School Calendar
- 805 Emergency Preparedness and Response
- 805.1 Relations With Law Enforcement Agencies
- 805.2 School Security Personnel
- 806 Child Abuse
- 904 Public Attendance at School Events
- 909 Municipal Government Relations

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REVISING 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends revising the 2024-2025 school year calendar to accommodate the four snow days that occurred. The last day of school for students and graduation will be June 3, 2025.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Morgan Long's letter of resignation as an elementary school teacher. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Travis Kargo's letter of resignation as the boys' varsity basketball head coach, a position he's held for 25 years. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Emma Duttry as a paraprofessional effective April 4, 2025.

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HIRING SECONDARY MATH TEACHER

THIS MOTION WAS TABLED

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Robert Sekerak as a full time, permanent secondary math teacher beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be Step 7, with benefits, based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA.

HIRING PARAPROFESSIONAL

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Danielle Henry as a paraprofessional in the autistic support classroom. Salary will be based on the current salary scale for paraprofessionals.

REQUEST FOR DAY OFF WITHOUT PAY

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

In accordance with the district's procedure on employee requests for uncompensated days, the board moves to deny a staff member's request for March 13, 2025 as a half day off without pay.

REQUEST FOR DAY OFF WITHOUT PAY

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

In accordance with the district's procedure on employee requests for uncompensated days, the board moves to grant a staff member's request for March 19, March 31 and April 1, 2025 as three full days off without pay.

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REQUEST FOR DAY OFF WITHOUT PAY

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

In accordance with the district's procedure on employee requests for uncompensated days, the board moves to grant a staff member's request for March 26, 2025 as a full day off without pay.

APPROVING REQUEST FOR FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving a staff member request for a Family Medical Leave of Absence for the period April 21, 2025 and extending to June 3, 2025.

BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Travel:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Mary Boland, Cafeteria Manager	Food Show, Riverside Lands Event Center, Pittsburgh	April 11, 2025	\$0.00	N/A

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Sara Erzal	Math 24 Competition at St. Francis University	May 16, 2025	\$250.00	Yes
Kristen Gribbin	Artistry from Scratch, Ebensburg, PA for end of year incentive for yearbook staff	May 7, 2025	\$255.92	Yes

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Dennis Link	CPA Youth Summit with the Cambria County Drug Coalition, Harrisburg, PA	April 30, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by Cambria County Drug Coalition)	N/A
Tobi Burkett	Gifted program trip to Cambria County Humane Society	May 7, 2025	\$0.00	N/A
Ashley Myers	JrHi Activity Club Fieldtrip to a Curve Game	May 14, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by Club)	N/A
Mary Kenny	Enviro Club to Disaster's Edge for Cambria County Envirothon	May 1, 2025	\$265.92	Yes
Sara Erzal	Second Grade field trip to Living Treasures Animal Petting Zoo	May 2, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by PTO)	N/A
Addison Holyfield	Marching band trip to Disney World, Orlando Florida to perform	March 2-8, 2026	\$420.00 (Substitutes)	Yes
Tyler Johnson	Junior Class Trip to Flight 93 Memorial and Johnstown Flood Memorial	May 12, 2025	\$410.40 (\$450 paid by a donation)	Yes
Gayle Price	Forensic Science classes to Mount Aloysius to visit the Forensic Science program	April 15, 2025	\$330.92	Yes
Mary Kenny and Gayle Price	Field trip to Thousand Hill Dairy	May 21, 2025	\$330.92	Yes
Phillip Miller	Physics trip to Kennywood for Physics Day	May 16, 2025	\$105.00 (Students paying admission and any food)	Yes

Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Kelly Mignogna	Title I Spring Drive-Thru	Elementary Parking Lot	April 15, 2025	No Charge
Portage Stallions Football	Youth Football Camp	Track and Field	May 16, 2025 6:00 – 8:00 pm	No Charge
Portage Boys Basketball Boosters	Seniors vs. Faculty Fundraising Game	Len Chappell Gymnasium	March 19, 2025 6:30 – 8:30 pm	No Charge
PASD Track & Field Boosters	5k fundraiser for the track & field team	Football Stadium	April 19, 2025 6:00 am- 12:00 pm	No Charge

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PAYA (Jeremy Shuniak)	Pony League Baseball games and practices	Jr Hi Baseball Field	May – July TBD with Athletic Office	No Charge
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MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Shope Second Jubina Vote 7-0

Time: 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary