

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 14, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Jason Corte; Matthew Decort; 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 was Troy Eppley.

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

There are currently no policies for public reading.

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **June 11, 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 Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

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

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

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

REPORTS

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that the students at the vo-tech have completed NOCTI certifications with very high scores. On May 22, the senior ceremony will be held. The vo-tech was awarded a \$450,000 smart grant.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** reported on the new graduation spectator procedures that will alleviate seating issues from prior years. Twenty-three students participated in the NOCTI certifications and 17 of those students scored advanced which is a great testament to the instructors and curriculum at the vo tech. The Credits for Kids program currently has about \$8,000 to \$10,000 to offset the cost of earning college credits in high school.

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** was absent.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** provided an update to spring sports including Bode Layo going to states in track and field. He noted that students were participating in Keystone exams. The art show was held as well as jazz in the park. He also related to the board upcoming senior events in advance of graduation.

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Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that assessments have been completed and thanks Kelly Mignogna, Ryan Clouse and Craig Castel for the work they did to insure the success of PSSA testing, including the PSSA pep rally themed “try your best; don’t stress”. She informed the board of upcoming field trips, SFU Rock assembly and the spring concerts. Kindergarten graduation will be June 3.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** noted discussions concerning the solar array and noted that the McClure Company is professional and good to work with.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** provided his report during the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

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

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(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
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L. Investments/Pledged Collateral Report	Page 11

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B.	
General Fund Invoices	\$1,533,079.84
Cafeteria Fund Invoices	\$105,169.38
Capital Reserve Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Capital Projects Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Total Invoices paid	\$1,638,249.22

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)	\$55,444.84
Total Taxes	\$55,444.84

TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR 2025-2026

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The proposed budget should be adopted tentatively so it can be advertised according to Section 687 of the Public School Code. The amount of expenditures is **\$16,309,489.06**. This is an anticipated increase in spending of \$860,445.48 over the prior year budgeted amount of **\$15,449,043.58**. Consideration for final adoption will be at the regular meeting held on June 11, 2025.

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TAX STRUCTURE FOR 2025-2026 BUDGET

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration proposes no tax increase for the 2025-2026 school year. Taxes shall remain at the current levels as follows:

	<u>2024-2025</u>	<u>2025-2026</u>
School Real Estate	56.64 Mills	56.64 Mills
School Per Capital-Section 679/Act 511	\$10.00	\$10.00
School Occupational Privilege	\$5.00	\$5.00
School Earned Income	.5%	.5%
School Realty Transfer	.5%	.5%

PERMISSION TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration and the Federal Program Coordinator request permission to apply for federal and state funds and submit applications to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Estimated allocations for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows:

Title 1	\$244,619	Assisting all students
Title II, Part A	\$ 34,358	Class size reduction for primary grades
IDEA	\$195,111	Services provided to students with disabilities
State Contingency (Recurring)	Unknown	Extra-ordinary special education cost reimbursement
ACCESS	\$ 25,000	PA Medical Assistance student's cost reimbursement.
Ready to Learn Block & Adequacy	\$544,062	Main focus is on developing and Maintaining preschool and kindergarten

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programs Classroom reduction,
Reading Instruction, etc.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS FOR 2025-2026

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The administration recommends the following appointments for the 2025-2026 school year.

- A. Secretary. (Under authority of Section 621 of the School Code.) Matthew Decort serves as board secretary until June 30, 2025.
- B. Solicitor. Attorney Dennis McGlynn presently serves as solicitor at an annual retainer of \$8,000 plus legal charges when necessary.
- C. School Physician. Mark J. Ratchford, D.O. presently serves as school physician at an annual fee of \$500.
- D. Depository. 1st Summit Bank presently serves as depository.
- E. School Dentist. Dr. Nicole Oravec presently serves as school dentist at the fee of \$2.00 per student.
- F. Depositories for Investments. 1st Summit Bank; PA Local Government Investment Trust; PA School District Liquid Asset Funds.
- G. Collectors for Act 511 Per Capita Tax of \$5 and Occupational Tax of \$5. Elected tax collectors are currently collecting these taxes.

APPOINTING SCHOOL BOARD TREASURER

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Board moves to appoint John Jubina to serve a one-year term as school board treasurer beginning June 1, 2025. John Jubina currently serves.

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APPOINTING SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY

Motion Corte Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Board moves to appoint Matthew Decort to serve a four-year term as school board treasurer beginning July 1, 2025. Matthew Decort currently serves.

**APPROVING COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCHOOL
PHYSICIAN AND CRNP**

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Collaborative Agreement between Mark Ratchford, DO and Brady Ratovsky, CRNP which outlines the terms and responsibilities for the collaborative working relationship between the Physician and the CRNP in providing healthcare services to the district's students. The fee for this Agreement will be an annual payment to Dr. Ratchford in the amount of \$500 and an annual payment to Mr. Ratovsky of \$3,000.

APPROVING AGREEMENT WITH RAPTOR TECHNOLOGIES

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving a Purchase and Subscription Services Agreement with Raptor Technologies to provide security services for both buildings. This technology will screen visitors before they are granted access to either building. The total amount of this Agreement is \$4,617.99 which breaks down to a one-time cost of \$2,928.99 with annual recurring costs of \$1,689.

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APPROVING SUBSTITUTE TEACHER AGREEMENT

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Substitute Teacher Agreement with Ignite Education Solutions for the 2025-2026 school year. Ignite will provide substitute teachers, nurses and aides on an as needed basis.

APPROVING BIDS FOR MILK

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving Vale Wood Farms' bid in the amount of \$66,194.50 for milk for the 2025-2026 school year.

Galiker's Dairy	\$66,194.50
Vale Wood Farms	\$66,194.50

APPROVING PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT REPLACEMENT SYSTEM

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving DirecTec's proposal in the amount of \$201,711.97 for the replacement of PA and mass notification systems in the junior-senior high school and elementary school.

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APPROVING PURCHASE OF LAPTOPS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends purchasing 120 laptops for student use from the CTI Group in the amount of \$47,180.

APPROVING MOU WITH APPALACHIAN YOUTH SERVICE

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving a Memorandum of Understanding with Appalachian Youth Service for the 2025-2026 school year to provide service to eligible students. The district will only incur a fee if it places eligible students in the facility.

APPROVING STUDENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving the following student teacher assignments for the fall of the 2025-2026 school year:

<u>Student</u>	<u>Cooperating Teacher</u>	<u>College</u>
Lyndsey Kitchen	Mary Walls	UPJ
Ashlyn Hamera	Aileen Miller	UPJ
Isak Kudlawiec	Josh Burkett	UPJ

APPROVING AGREEMENT FOR POLICE PROTECTION

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving an Agreement for Police Protection to provide police coverage on all district properties for the period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

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ADOPTING DISTRICT POLICY

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends adopting Policy 815.1 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Education.

APPROVING DISTRICT POLICY REVISIONS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

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

807 Opening Exercises/Moment of Silence/Flag Displays

REVISING 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends revising the 2024-2025 school year calendar to accommodate the school closing due to lack of power on Wednesday, April 30, 2025. The last day of school for students and graduation will be June 4, 2025.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Kelli Swire's letter of resignation due to retirement as an elementary school teacher effective the last day of the 2024-2025 school year. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

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ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Melissa Rakar's letter of resignation as a member of the cafeteria staff effective April 23, 2025. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, the resignation of Kirstin Chappell as a member of the cafeteria staff effective April 10, 2025. The administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Kathleen T. Bodenschatz's letter of resignation as the elementary reading competition advisor.

HIRING SECONDARY MATH TEACHER

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(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.

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HIRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Kara Jarvie as a permanent, full-time elementary school teacher beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be Step 3, with benefits pursuant to the current contract with the PAEA.

HIRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Brittany Crain as a permanent, full-time elementary school teacher beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be Step 13, with benefits pursuant to the current contract with the PAEA.

HIRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Courtney Harabaugh as a permanent, full-time elementary school teacher beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be Step 2, with benefits pursuant to the current contract with the PAEA.

HIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Megan Hamilton as a permanent, full-time special education teacher beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be Step 2, with benefits pursuant to the current contract with the PAEA.

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HIRING CO-ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Jeremy Hill and Craig Castel as co-athletic directors beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. The stipend for each will be \$5,000 for a total cost of \$10,000.

HIRING BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL HEAD COACH

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Jade Zatek as the boys varsity basketball head coach beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities. The district requests permission to advertise for a junior high head boys basketball coach which Mr. Zatak will vacate as he assumes this position.

HIRING BAND FRONT COACH

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Kelsey Baumgardner as a Band Front Coach beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities.

REQUEST FOR DAY OFF WITHOUT PAY

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

In accordance with the district's procedure on employee requests for uncompensated days, the board moves to grant a staff member's request for April 8, 9 and May 2, 2025 as three full days off without pay.

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APPROVING REVISION TO FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving a revision to a staff member's request for a Family Medical Leave of Absence to adjust the period to May 12, 2025 and extending to June 4, 2025.

APPROVING A FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving a staff member's request for a Family Medical Leave of Absence for a period to begin May 12, 2025 and extend intermittently as provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Lisa Stivers	Grade 3-6 Discipline Incentive Millrats Baseball	May 28, 2025	\$0.00	N/A
Sixth Grade Teachers	End of Year Picnic at Crichton McCormick Park	May 29, 2025	\$0.00	N/A
Third Grade Teachers	Field trip to Home Depot (technical career opportunities) and lunch at the 1889 Park.	May 29, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid through Grant)	N/A
Christina Franey	Portage Bus Tour	May 8, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by the Historical Society)	

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Tina Lutz, Senior Class Advisor	Senior trip to Hershey Park, PA	May 27, 2025	\$420 (Substitutes)	Yes
Tara Williams	Art students to Allied Artist Student Show, Community Arts Center of Cambria County	May 22, 2025	\$105.00 (Substitutes)	Yes
Fifth Grade Teachers	Field trip to the Altoona Railroad Museum and ride the train from Johnstown to Altoona	May 21, 2025	\$0.00 (Paid by the Historical Society)	N/A

Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Mike Hudak, Johnstown Old Timers	National AAABA Tournament	Baseball Field	August 4, 5, 6, 2025	No Charge
Mary Ann George	Strengthening Families Program	HS Library, Cafeteria and Classrooms 120 & 121	June 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 2025	No Charge

MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Decort Second Shope Vote 9-0

Time: 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary