

**Port Allegany School District**

**BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
*Committee of the Whole Meeting***

September 8, 2025  
High School Library  
7:00 p.m.

**Minutes**

Vice President Mr. Jason Stake called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library with a moment of silence and the flag salute. Ms. Plumstead called the roll.

Board Present: Mr. Nathan Burgett, Mr. Eric Button, Mr. Christopher Ernst, Mrs. Erica Petruzzi, Mr. Jason Stake, Mr. Donald Tanner, Mr. Nicholas Valentine, and Mrs. Paula Newell.

Board Absent: Mrs. Elizabeth Stauffer & Mrs. Ink Young

Others Present: High School Principal Marc Budd, Elementary Principal Gregory Oliver, Business Manager Adam Moate, Chelsea Caden, Crystal Drew, Andrew Krellner & Bethany Mealy

**Superintendent Remarks**

Mrs. Newell presented the board with a presentation introducing our most recently hired employees and their positions. She mentioned that during this Friday night's football game they will hold their annual Senior night. Lastly, Mrs. Newell informed the board that she has received a verbal release from the University of Florida that our uniforms can be worn for the next 3 years, until the next uniform cycle. This agreement is based on the predicate that PASD will immediately cease using the logo, font, and mascot identified as copyrighted by the University of Florida.

**Public Comment**

No public comment

**Committee Reports**

Christopher Ernst, Intermediate Unit Nine Board of Directors provided the board with a handout. The board discussed policies on pre-employment drug testing and employee use of electronic devices. Concerns about student phone usage were also raised. The board has asked for the drug testing and the use of electronic devices policies to be reviewed for PASD.

Ink Young, Seneca Highlands CTC General Advisory Board was absent from the meeting so

there was nothing to report.

Nicholas Valentine, PSBA Legislative Representative reported that the state budget still has yet to be approved.

### Minutes of Preceding Meetings

Approved the Minutes of the August 4, 2025 Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting. Motion: E.Button; Second: E.Petruzzi. Also approved were the minutes of the August 11, 2025 regular meeting. Motion: E.Button; Second: D.Tanner. The motion was carried unanimously.

### Superintendent's Report

Mrs.Newell stated she received a community request for school purchase of an AED by the tennis courts for community pickle ball members. However, there were concerns on how this device would be stored in an uncontrolled environment due to our summer and winter temperatures. This topic was tabled until our next meeting when Mrs. Stauffer would be able to elaborate more on the request.

The board reviewed images provided by Schneider Electric showing where they would place finn tubing and radiant panels in classrooms to improve heating. Concerns were raised about the efficiency and potential fire hazards of the radiant panels and their impact on classroom space as well. Mrs. Newell stated she has a telephone call with Schneider set for later this week where she will try to gather more information regarding these heating units. The board has also requested pictures of previous units that Schneider has installed.

Mr. James Ladlee has been chosen to be the Facilitator for the Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Newell plans to meet with Mr. Ladlee on Thursday, September 11, 2025 and set dates for the Comprehensive Plan meetings. Mr.Tanner provided some background on Mr.Ladlee's experience and qualifications for this role.

PAES Open House will be held this Wednesday, September 10, 2025. Reception begins at 4pm with classroom visits taking place from 5-7pm.

Next topic for discussion was the renewal of the PASD Support Association MOU: Leave with-out pay. Mrs. Newell explains that this allows members to take up to three days of unpaid leave during the school year. It was noted that this MOU has had a positive impact on reducing the amount of unpaid leave.

The last topic for discussion under the Superintendents report was the Pre-K Counts MOU with PASD Professional Association's recommendation. Professional staff have asked that the Pre-K teaching position be transitioned to a Support position. Mrs. Newell received a letter of agreement today from the school's solicitor, which she stated did go to union leadership. The board discussed that we currently have one teacher in this position as well as one opening at this time.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Finance

The board discussed renewing the Drivers Education Vehicle Contract. This would be a 1-year extension. Our driver's education teacher, Mr. Palmer provided us with the information that this vehicle gets used an average of 3x per week. The board stated this is a great program for the students.

Mr. Moate notified the board that the Annual BWB Audit will take place next Monday, September 15th through Friday, September 19th. The audit team will be onsite for a visit, Tuesday, September 16, 2025.

### Personnel

The Personnel Action Report (PAR) was approved. Motion: N. Valentine; Second: E.Button. The motion was carried unanimously.

There will be a new employee Meet & Greet Monday, October 6, 2025 at 6 pm prior to the Committee of the Whole meeting. Mrs. Newell stated there will be snacks and refreshments offered.

Mrs. Newell addressed the current substitute staffing shortage and proposed increasing the pay rate for substitutes. Mrs. Newell also provided the board with current competitive substitute pay rates from all over within the IU9 district. The board compared and discussed pay rates and the need for a significant increase. \$15.00 per hour was suggested to attract and retain substitute staff.

### Transportation

None

### Buildings & Grounds

The board discussed approving the quote from Johnson Controls for fire alarm maintenance, inspection and monitoring at both the elementary school and the high school at a cost of \$5,331.00 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Next the board was provided and discussed two different quotes from both Berkshire Systems Group, Inc and the recommended quote from the Seneca Highlands Intermediate Unit 9 to upgrade the schools PA system. Administration noted that the IU9 recently installed the schools Verkada system, they are local and they come in at the lower rate. The importance of upgrading the PA system to improve communication during emergencies was discussed.

After recently completing some blacktop work at the elementary school there is now a need to have a land survey done. Mr. Moate mentions he had contacted 5-6 different Land Surveyors in the area and was able to provide the board with quotes from two companies: Cox Surveying and the recommended quote from E & M Engineers & Surveyors, P.C. as they are local and the

lower rate between the two. Mr. Ernst clarified that the school administration did reach out to him requesting their services.

Mrs. Newell explained the annual renewal of the EMS tax resolution, recommended by the solicitor for a few potential changes. Mr. Burgett discussed the incentives impact on retention rather than recruitment, encouraging more participation from existing volunteers.

The PASD Music Boosters have requested a way to properly ventilate the fryer and grill area at the concession stand. The board discussed how there is potentially a plan in place for new construction for the concession stand but at this time they were unsure how much time and money can be put into this type of project. Mr. Budd stated there are currently 3 home football games remaining this season. Mrs. Newell stated she would have our maintenance staff take a look at the concession stand and see if anything can be done for the remainder of the year.

Before moving onto curriculum, Mr. Ernst mentioned that some paving work will be getting completed on East Mill St from now until October 31, 2025. There will also be work done on the sidewalks and curbs making them ADA accessible.

### Curriculum

Mrs. Newell discussed Dibels, the literacy assessment that has been being used. She stated instead of using paper, the mClass is their online suite that actually makes its functionality faster for the interventionists to do their assessments. She reminded the board this is funded through the Rural and Low Income Grant.

Mr. Oliver discussed the HMH Writable curriculum for the elementary that is also funded through the Rural and Low Income Grant. He states this provides the teachers with thousands of writing props to choose from. It also has tools and features that gives students pretty timely feedback in their writing, which he stated did go through a writing curriculum review. Mr. Oliver also stated the advantage of having that to help with our PSSA writing component.

The board discussed renewing the Virtual Learning Option agreement through the Warren County School District. The cost of this is per student.

Core Project Student Leadership: Part 2 of 2 from approval in October 2024. (Ready to Learn Grant)

Mrs. Newell explained the need to replace iPads due to their outdated operating system which is no longer supported. She stated the iPads are essential for touch fluency tests, which are a critical component of the interventionists assessments. The cost to replace 9 iPads at \$329.00 each gives us a total of \$2,961.00. The board is considering funding this through the Title One grant and agrees to move forward with the iPad replacement to ensure the continuity of intervention assessments.

### Board

The board was provided an electronic folder containing information about the candidates running to be a PSBA board member. The folder included interview information and videos.

The board agreed to review the candidates and prepare for the September 15th meeting to cast their votes. Mrs. Newell and School Board Secretary, Ms. Plumstead will be providing a ballot for voting.

Mrs. Newell thanked the Board Policy Ad Hoc Committee of Mr. Tanner, Mrs. Stauffer, and Mr. Ernst for their work on policies 816 & 320. Mr. Ernst, on behalf of the committee presented the updated social media policy, recommending the removal of public comments to avoid potential issues. The board discussed the pros and cons of allowing public comments, with some members expressing concerns about bullying and inappropriate comments. The solicitor's recommendation to follow the new policy is supported, noting that other school districts have been faced with similar challenges. The board agreed to implement the new social media policy, focusing on transparency and avoiding public comment sections. Regarding the Freedom of Speech by Employee Policy, the committee understands the origin from the precipitating court case for the included, and solicitor recommended language. However, they are uncomfortable with the wording and believe point 4 is inclusive for any concerns. They recommend the approval of the policy with the redline changes.

#### Executive Session

The PASD Board of Directors met in executive session at 8:45 pm in reference to a personnel matter for Employee 2025-26:A. Entered into executive session at 8:45pm, Motion: N.Burgett; Second: E.Button. Executive session adjourned at 9:00pm: Motion N.Burgett; Second: E.Petruzzi.

#### Board

The Board reconvened in public session and voted to provide a Medical Sabbatical for employee 2025-2026:A with a waiver of insurance payments to the district until the end of the 2025-2026 academic school year. Motion: N.Burgett; Second: E.Button; Abstention: D.Tanner.

#### Adjournment:

9:02pm Motion: N.Valentine; Second: D.Tanner

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Plumstead  
Secretary to the Board of School Directors

Next Scheduled Meeting  
September 15, 2025 - Regular Meeting