

Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities

2606 Brady Lake Road

Ravenna, Ohio 44266

March 18, 2026

Regular Meeting

Via TEAMS *and open to in-person attendance*

Beverly J. Puleo Board Room

Happy Day Services Building

MINUTES

Tom Grist, Vice-President, called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Board Members and those in attendance

Board Members present by Roll Call:

Kelly Butler, Babette Cameron, Thomas Grist, Maureen Haska, Christina Krister, Michelle Sahr, excused, William Tarver

A quorum is present.

Administrative Staff Present

J. Vennetti, Supt., T. Beatty, J. Derthick, L. Leslie, G. Slapnicker, G. Gabriel, Vince Valerio, M. Dolensky

Staff/Guests: Jamie Miller, Tim Torch, Ashley Legg, DSP of the Month, Dean Baker

Please note: those noted *via teams* were identified through streaming through *TEAMS* as an attendee

Adopted a motion to excuse absent Board Member Michelle Sahr.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by W. Tarver

Motion carried by voice vote

Public Comment: none at this time

Michelle Dolensky introduced the March DSP of the Month, Ashley Legg, Hattie Larlham

Adopted a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held via 'Teams' and in-person February 18, 2026.

Motion by M. Haska

Second by W. Tarver

Motion carried by voice vote

Motioned to approve the agenda for March 18, 2026, Regular Meeting.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion for the Ratification of the February 2026 Invoice Payments and Financial Reports as authorized by the Superintendent.

Motion by C. Krister

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote.

Board committee report: HR/Finance Committee held a meeting prior to the Board meeting on 3/18/26. The Committee reviewed the Ohio Must Act to Protect Services for People with Developmental Disabilities and their Families. The 10 Steps are: 1. Protect Early Intervention for babies and toddlers; 2. Increase County Board Shared Services and Proactive Planning; 3. Ensure Fair and Adequate Funding for Waiver Services; 4. Establish Clear Standards for Intensive Supports; 5. Maximize Federal Funding Support and Reduce Paperwork; 6. Support Children with Complex Needs; 7. Establish Fair Waiver Funding Across Ohio; 8. Support People with the Most Complex Needs; 9. Pay Providers Fairly to Help People Achieve their Goals; 10. Establish Clear Responsibility for Supporting Children.

Motion to approval Resolution 26-03-01 Approval of Direct Services Contracts with the Following Individuals as Recommended by the Ethics Council per Approved Ethics Council Resolution EC26-03-01 with no Conflict of Interest for: Damon & Chelcey Davis for ID #207652; Kristoff & Kate Cunningham for ID #207712; Sabrina Wright for ID #203117; Nicole Gibson for ID #207360; Valerie Saro for ID #207558; Doug & Corinne Hayes for ID #206545; Toria Ferguson for ID #207665; Brittany Jajecvic for ID #207330; Tamera Andrews for ID #205306; Sarah Larkin for ID #207638; Carley Bryan for ID #207688

RESOLUTION 26-03-01

APPROVAL OF DIRECT SERVICES CONTRACTS WITH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE ETHICS COUNCIL PER APPROVED ETHICS COUNCIL RESOLUTION EC26-03-01 WITH NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR:

Damon & Chelcey Davis for ID #207652
Kristoff & Kate Cunningham for ID #207712
Sabrina Wright for ID #203117
Nicole Gibson for ID #207360
Valerie Saro for ID #207558

Doug & Corinne Hayes for ID #206545
Toria Ferguson for ID #207539
Sofia Montes for ID #207665
Brittany Jajecvic for ID #207330
Tamera Andrews for ID #205306
Sarah Larkin for ID #207638
Carley Bryan for ID #207688

WHEREAS, the Ethics Council has determined that direct services contracts with the aforementioned named individuals as a parent, guardian or family member meet the requirements of Ohio Revised Code section 5126.033; and

WHEREAS, the Ethics Council recommends the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities direct services contract with the aforementioned name individuals; and

WHEREAS, Ohio Revised Code Section 5126.032 requires that the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities shall not enter into any direct services contract that is not recommended by the Ethics Council; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities accepts the recommendation of the Ethics Council and approves direct services contracts with the aforementioned named individuals; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or his designee is hereby authorized to take any and all action to carry out these direct services contracts.

Submitted by: John Vennetti, Superintendent

The aforesaid resolution was moved by **Kelly Butler** seconded by **Babette Cameron**

It is found and determined that all formal actions of the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities concerning and relative to the adoption of this resolution were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The aforesaid resolution having been put to a roll call vote, the result of which is as follows:

Kelly Butler, aye
Thomas Grist, aye
Michelle Sahr, excused

Maureen Haska, aye

Babette Cameron, aye
Christina Krister, aye
William Tarver, aye

CERTIFICATION

I, Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities, do hereby certify that the aforesaid motion was duly adopted at a regular meeting held **March 18, 2026** and an accurate copy of said resolution will be located in the official minutes of the Board.

Jennifer Derthick

Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Motion to approval Resolution 26-03-02 Authorizing the execution and delivery of a master electric energy sales agreement between the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities through the Power4School's endorsed supplier, Engie resources LLC. Beginning March 19, 2026

RESOLUTION 26-03-02

**AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A MASTER ELECTRIC
ENERGY SALES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD
OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES THROUGH THE POWER4SCHOOL'S
ENDORSED SUPPLIER, ENGIE RESOURCES LLC**

WHEREAS, the Boards of Education of certain school districts located in northeastern Ohio established the Ohio Schools Council as a regional council of governments, pursuant to Revised Code Chapter 167 (the "Council"), for the purposes of carrying out cooperative purchase programs and promoting cooperative arrangements and agreements among its member school districts and government agencies or private persons; and

WHEREAS, the members of, and other participating public entities associated with, the Council desire to purchase retail electric power services from the supplier of such services, ENGIE Resources LLC through the Power4Schools Electric Program; and

WHEREAS, the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities (the "Board"), as a member of the Ohio Schools Council, which participates in the Power4Schools Electric Program, pursuant to this resolution desires to authorize the execution and delivery by the Superintendent of the Board of a retail power sales agreement between the Board and ENGIE Resources LLC, pursuant to which the Board will purchase electricity generation at a discount for its facilities for the period beginning March 19, 2026; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, by the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities, County of Portage, State of Ohio, as follows:

Section 1. The Board authorizes and directs the Superintendent to execute and deliver, in the name of the Program and on its behalf, the Master Electric Energy Sales Agreement (the "Agreement"), with any changes that are not inconsistent with this resolution and that may be acceptable to the Superintendent whose acceptance shall be conclusively evidenced by the execution of such document by the Superintendent.

Section 2. Monies adequate to pay amounts due under the Agreement for the current fiscal year are to be appropriated for that purpose.

Submitted by: John Vennetti, Superintendent and Tara Beatty, Director of Business Management

The resolution was moved by: **Maureen Haska** and seconded by **William Tarver**

It is found and determined that all formal actions of the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities concerning and relative to the adoption of this resolution were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The aforesaid resolution having been put to a roll call vote, the result of which is as follows:

Kelly Butler, aye
Maureen Haska, aye
Michelle Sahr, excused

Maureen Haska, aye
Christina Krister, aye
William Tarver, aye

Thomas Grist, aye

CERTIFICATION

I, Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities, do hereby certify that the aforesaid motion was duly adopted at a regular meeting held **March 18, 2026** and an accurate copy of said resolution will be located in the official minutes of the Board.

Jennifer Derthick

Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Motion to amend Policy 2.01 Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities of the Superintendent.

Motion by W. Tarver

Second by C. Krister

Motion carried by voice vote.

The following Management Reports were sent via e-mail to Board; no verbal reports were given at meeting. The reports are included herein:

Community and Provider Relations:

Manager: Michelle R. Dolensky

Department: CPR

Date: 3/18/2026

Board Report:

1. Provider Relations/Support:

- a. DD Awareness Month 2026. Limitless Art Show, Art will be installed starting 3/16 and on display through most of April. Art show 4/28 4:00pm-8pm. Bowling held at Spins Bowl on 3/1, Statehouse Watch Party held 3/4, Transition Fair held 3/7, Dance/Silent Disco held 3/10, Hike Club 3/23, 4/2 & 4/23, Movie Nights at Ravenna 7 on 3/12 & 4/6, Rally 3/27.
- b. Cardio Drumming held on 3/9, next session 4/13
- c. Advocacy: February meeting had 10 participants. Advocacy Talks at Home to You – 10 participants. PI, Inc. has expressed interest in an on-site meeting. No meeting in March. New location of Portage DD Board room starting in April due to change of library hours. Project STIR is being postponed to a later date due to lack of registrations from people outside of Portage County
- d. DSP-U: 48 students on track to graduate from the program this spring. Currently there are about 15 students gainfully employed in the community who are DSP-U grads.
- e. Increased nursing referrals and increase in applicants due to recruitment efforts.
- f. Portage DD Informational Series: First training scheduled in April, topics include ISP, Effective Communication, Health and Safety – nursing concerns
- g. Looking to start Growing Together Series. It is a program used in schools to educate students on persons with disabilities

2. Special Olympics:

- a. Indoor State Winter Games 2/20 & 2/21 at OSU. Athletes competing: Competitive Cheer-10, Basketball Skills – 2 and Swim – 4, delegation total=23
- b. Acme Community Cash back earned \$170.00
Cleveland Polar Plunge – 2 coaches, Local Coordinator and 2 Athletes plunged

3. Community Employment:

- a. 137 people employed in the community
- b. Continuing to distinguish Inclusion decals to businesses
- c. Tiffany attended MAP training and DODD Innovation Series
- d. Employment First Business Engagement Advisory group met
- e. Volunteer Fair April 9, Hiring Event April 30 and Transportation Fair May 7.

4. Nursing:

- a. Night to Shine over 35 people received formal wear this year, extra dresses have been donated to the County Clothing Center
Jen is certified as an IA and has started taking intake and being assigned to cases

Manager: George Gabriel

Department: Service & Support Administration

Date: 3/18/2026

Board Report:

- Individual meetings with SSA department staff continue in an effort to determine their opinions on the strengths within the department and ideas for improvement. Thirty-five meetings have been scheduled. Twenty-six meetings have been completed.
- SSA managers are discussing ways to maximize the services in our department due to the

increase in the requests and allocation of waivers. Discussions continue regarding a possible restructuring, but there is nothing definite at this time.

- SSA Intake continues to be very busy with referrals for services. This includes Redeterminations, County Transfers and Re-Opens. Several cases have been closed due to lack of follow-through from the families. Fifteen cases have been assigned to SSA's from 2/1 through 3/10/26.

- Our department continues to prepare for the change over from the legacy MSS system to the new system. Gary Smith and Rachel France are a vital part of this conversion. Additional assistance will be provided from another department. We are trying to make this changeover easy for our SSA's.

- The Youth Respite Facility program continues to do well and is a successful program. Many children are attending now and having wonderful experiences in the facility-based program.

- PCBDD continues to be a leader in the State for Remote Support and Assistive technology. Our SSAs, Envisage and our own Tech Department have done an amazing job with our Tech Home. We continue to get many tours and interest in Technology from our tours. A Tech Ambassador attended our staff meeting and presented information to our staff on 2/26/26 and toured our Tech home that same day.

- Continue to provide Provider Support for Billing issues and training. This service has proven to be invaluable for providers and the Board.

- Meetings continue with Portage County JFS and MHRB leadership to improve joint services we provide to Individuals and families.

- We continue to discuss with JFS a program to assist them with developing potential Therapeutic Foster Homes for children utilizing some of our DODD certified providers. We currently have two providers who are certified to provide services as a foster care provider and DODD provider.

- The SSA department is temporarily fully staffed. Just recently, Jim Bobek, SSA, submitted his retirement paperwork and the opening has been posted.

- SSA staff continue to cover cases until Jamie Miller is ready to assume a caseload. Jamie was given her first three cases for the start of her caseload. Additional cases will be assigned soon. Thank you to all SSA staff for their help and patience.

- InterRai is coming. This is a new assessment to determine funding levels for individuals on waivers. We have a SSA assigned to receive training in April and potentially do the pilot in May on assessing 12 individuals in our county. More to come.

- Conducting meetings to discuss having maintenance goals moved to other team members as opposed to ongoing PT services for them.

- SSA supervisors and I have been meeting regularly to "keep up with" the ongoing and frequent changes from DODD. Some include: switchover to the new MSS system, assistive tech/remote support tech rule, Overtime rule, 2:1 staffing, and more. SSA supervisors and Medicaid managers have been terrific.

- Developing department goals for 2026 to include: preparation for InterRai, preparation for 2027 Accreditation, preparation for the MSS changeover, ongoing discussions with Team members regarding Assessed needs vs. Wants, closer look at PA's, individual living situations, and overtime requests, 2:1 staffing, and increased communication.

- Blue Envelope program – if pulled over, provides information to law enforcement on an individual with a disability that is in that is in the car. Envelopes are available in Melissa Trautman's office and she is tracking who is taking an envelope and who it is for. So far we have had five requests for the Blue Envelopes. Tim Torch is assisting in sending out the information.
- Superintendent Vennetti and I continue to meet with Union members for the Labor Management Committee. Next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2026.
- Scheduling training for department staff: OISP outcomes, difficult conversations, ODDP, technology, Employment, Docuware, Behavior Support, and more. Lunch and learns are scheduled through June regarding services being offered by other agencies.
- No appeals at this time. The FSSP appeals were upheld in our favor. We were not successful with one waiver appeal and are awaiting the decision on the other.
- Participating in negotiations.
- Six staff in the SSA department are participating in the AI training.
- Participate in the Portal meetings, DSP recognition meetings, informational series meetings.

Department: Education & Child Development
Director: Vince Valerio
Date: 3/12/2026

Board Report:

School Outreach

- Second semester going well.
- Building utilization at an all time high
- Attempting Pilot Sib-Shop on 3/27 at Happy Day Services Building
- Multiple Handle With Care trainings have been implemented at Streetsboro, Field, South East and Aurora Schools

Transition

- Transition Fair was a success on 3/7 at Reed Memorial Library-over 50 families attended

Early Intervention

- Training for Rhythmic Movement in the works end of April 2026
- ADOS testing going well, schedules full

Department: Superintendent

Date: 3/18/2026

Board Report:

1. Sustainability- OACB and the Superintendents continue to meet on funding the future sustainability model for County Boards. We will meet on 3-13-26.
2. Unit B Negotiations (SSA Department)- They will start in April. April 20, 22, 24, and 29th. There will be no mediator involved at the beginning and we will meet at the Happy Day Services Building.
3. Appeals hearing- 2 appeals on waiver services. We lost one and are waiting to hear back on the other.
4. AI Training- We had our 2nd AI training on March 11th.
5. Board Trainings- April- 5-year projection at 4pm.
6. Summer Camp- We are set for year 16 to begin June 8th. Registration is now open as of 3-10-26.
7. [new rule 5123-4-04](#)-Resolution of complaints involving county boards of developmental disabilities and appeals of adverse action proposed or initiated by county boards of developmental disabilities (rule) has changed.
8. House Bill 359- Joshua's Law- This is to do an alert if someone with Autism goes missing. Testimony was done in Ohio Senate Health Committee.
9. House Bill 141- Expanding access to medically appropriate services for Ohio's youngest and most medically complex children. Testimony was done in Ohio Senate Health Committee.

Actions for February 2026:

As of February, there were 91 employees including six (6) intermittent positions and no vacancies

Positions Added/Abolished:**Job Postings/Vacancies:**

Substitute Lifeguard (Happy Day Services)

Substitute Vehicle Operator (Transportation), November 18, 2025 until filled, Vacant

Speech-Language Pathologist (Part-time_ 240 days, 21 hrs/week (Happy Day Services)

Service & Support Administrator, 240 days, 7.5 hours/day (Service & Support Administration)

Supplemental Positions:

All Supplemental Positions

New Hires:

Jamie Miller, Service & Support Administrator, 240 days, 7.5 hours/day (Service & Support Administration)

Promotions/Transfers:**Reclassifications:****Additional Assignments:****Supplemental Agreements:****Separations:****Retirements:**

February 2026 Enrollment Report with beginning enrollment of 1,372 and an ending enrollment of 1351, an increase of 18 and minus 33.

The Vice-President announced the next regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, starting at 5:00 p.m. with a Board In-service at 4:00 p.m.

At 5:35 pm, the Board entered Executive Session in the Board Room.

Motion by C. Krister

Second by W. Tarver

For the following identified reason: per ORC 121.22 (G)(1) and (G)(4)

- (x) To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual;
indicate reason: employment of public employee
- () To consider the purchase of public property or the sale of property at competitive bidding, if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest;
- () Conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or intimate court action;
- (X) Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment;
- () Matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or rules or state statutes.
- () Details relative to the security arrangements and emergency response protocols for a public body or a public office, if disclosure of the matters discussed could reasonably be expected to jeopardize the security of the public body of public office.

The aforesaid motion having been put to a roll call vote, the results of which were as follows:

NOT VOTING	PRESENT		BOARD MEMBERS
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	
()	(x)	()	KELLY BUTLER
()	(x)	()	BABETTE CAMERON
()	(X)	()	THOMAS GRIST

()	(x)	()	MAUREEN HASKA
()	(x)	()	CHRISTINA KRISTER
(X)	()	()	MICHELLE SAHR
()	(x)	()	WILLIAM TARVER

Motion to adjourn executive session at 6:15 p.m.

Motion by C. Krister

Second by K. Butler

Motion carried by roll call vote as follows: Kelly Butler, aye, Maureen Haska, aye, Tom Grist, aye, B. Cameron, aye, C. Krister, aye, Michelle Sahr, excused, William Tarver, aye.

Motion to return to open session 6:16 p.m.

Motion by C. Krister

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried.

The Vice-President asked if any other business needed to come before the Board. There being none, she called for a motion for adjournment at 6:16 pm.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by W. Tarver

Motion carried by voice vote.

I N F O R M A T I O N

Advocacy

L.E.A.P. Meeting 2nd Tuesday of the Month 10:00am – 11:00am

Location: Reed Memorial Library (Jenkins Room) – 167 East Main Street Ravenna, 44266

Fundraisers

Save the Date!

April 18, 2026 11:30 - 2:00pm Bowling Invitational Location: Spins Bowl Kent - 2245 OH-59, Kent, 44240

Fundraisers

Cleveland Polar Plunge - February 28, 2026

Visit <http://support.soooh.org/goto/portagethunderchill> to join our plunge team and/or donate.

Event Location: Edgewater Beach House -7600 Cleveland Memorial Shoreway Cleveland, 44102
Schedule of Events: 12:15 PM - Opening Ceremonies; fundraising awards and costume contest
~12:45 PM - Plunging Begins

Cardio Drumming

2026 schedule 2nd Monday of the month - 5:30pm Happy Day Services, 2500 Brady Lake Rd. Ravenna, 44266

Please RSVP by emailing events@portagedd.org

Check out the Portage DD Facebook page access for above events and for updates and other events!

<https://www.facebook.com/PortageSpecialOlympics>

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent



Michelle Sahr, President



Maureen Haska, Secretary