

Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities

2606 Brady Lake Road

Ravenna, Ohio 44266

June 17, 2026

Regular Meeting

Via TEAMS and open to in-person attendance

Beverly J. Puleo Board Room

Happy Day Services Building

MINUTES

Thomas 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, absent, G. Gabriel, Vince Valerio, M. Dolensky

Staff/Guests: Shannon Tack, Assistant Director Akron Rotary Camp, DSP of the Month, Eric Larsen, Tim Torch, Tiffany Jones, Christina West, Danny Campbell and various other attendees

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

Public Comment: none at this time

Motion to excuse absent Board Member Michelle Sahr.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote.

Michelle Dolensky, Director Community and Provider Relations, and Eric Larsen, Advocacy and Community Resource Assistant introduced the June DSP of the Month, Shannon Tack, Assistant, Akron Rotary Camp, Portage County Special Olympics Swim Coach, Swim Lesson Instructor..

John Venetti, Superintendent, introduced Danny Campbell, Service and Support Administrator.

Adopted a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held via 'Teams' and in-person May 20, 2026.

Motion by W. Tarver

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote

Motioned to approve the agenda for June 17, 2026, Regular Meeting.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by B. Cameron

Motion carried by voice vote.

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

Motion by B. Cameron

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote.

Board committee report: There were no committee meetings held.

Motion to approval Resolution 26-06-01 approval of direct services contracts with the following individuals as recommended by the Ethics Council per approved Ethics Council Resolution EC26-06-01 with no conflict of interest for

RESOLUTION 26-06-01

**APPROVAL OF DIRECT SERVICES CONTRACTS WITH THE FOLLOWING
INDIVIDUALS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE ETHICS COUNCIL PER APPROVED
ETHICS COUNCIL RESOLUTION EC26-06-01 WITH NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR:**

Kerrilee Anderson for ID #207310; Pete & Tiffany Donofrio for ID #206913; Tonya Wilson for ID #206931; Jaime Mollohan for ID #207520; Christina Yeager for ID #207531; Andre & Daniele Martin for ID #207393; Dustin & Amanda Brink for ID #207777; Adam & Brittin French for ID #207760; Jessica Verh for ID #207683; Kendrick Pittman & Shawnterra Donald for ID #206815; Justin & Carl Harvey for ID #207160; Savannah Crosland for ID #207642

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 to 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 **Maureen Haska** seconded by **Kelly Butler**

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:

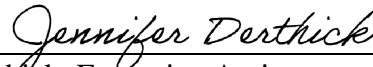
Kelly Butler, aye
Thomas Grist, aye
Michelle Sahr, excused

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

Maureen Haska, 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 **June 17, 2026** and an accurate copy of said resolution will be located in the official minutes of the Board.



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Motion to approval Resolution 26-06-02 Approval of Ohio School Plan Insurance Renewal for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 in an amount not to exceed fifty two thousand eight hundred thirty seven dollars (\$52,837.00)

RESOLUTION 26-06-02

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, MEMORIALS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2026

WHEREAS, the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities has received, gifts, memorials, grants and donations during the month of MAY 2026

To:	From:	
Board of DD	Various Art Show Donations	\$185.00
	Total	\$185.00

WHEREAS, Board Policy 1.17 requires that all gifts, memorials and donations valued at more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) be reported to the Board at each regular meeting; and

WHEREAS, Policy 1.17 further requires the Board to accept or reject such gifts, memorials, donations, and grants by resolution with a roll call; now; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities accepts with appreciation the aforementioned named gifts, memorials, grants and donations

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

The resolution was moved by **William Tarver** and seconded by **Christina Krister**

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

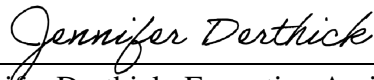
Maureen Haska, aye

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

CERTIFICATION

I, Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, for the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities, do hereby certify that the aforesaid motion was duly adopted at a regular meeting held on **June 17, 2026** and an accurate copy of said resolution may be located in the official

minutes of the Board.



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Motion to amend Policy 9.00 Medicaid Targeted Case Management Services

Motion by K. Butler

Second by M. Haska

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: 6/17/2026

Board Report:

1. Provider Relations/Support:

- a. Portage DD Informational Series: Second module training held on 5/12 with topics of Positive Behavior Support, Empathy Based and Trauma Informed Care and incident reporting and the MUI process. 7 people attended.
- b. DSP Appreciation Event scheduled for 9/10.
- c. Effective May 14, 2026, Ohio implemented a temporary moratorium on certain new Medicaid provider enrollments. The moratorium is currently scheduled to remain in effect through at least November 14, 2026. This impacts DODD agency and independent providers.
- d. DSP-U: 48 students graduated between Kent and Ravenna programs. Starting in the Fall, students will come to Happy Day for instruction. Kent Juniors will complete basic curriculum at HDS then choose if they want to continue to complete the full program in their Senior year. Plan to open to other schools in addition to Kent/Ravenna as well as offer modules to current DSPs to use towards the Competency Add-On rate required courses which allows them to earn additional pay.
- e. Growing Together Series - working out details with Ravenna and Waterloo for a Fall 2026 start. Katrina will be interviewed by Lighthouse Cove for their podcast on how we are starting this program.
- f. Recruitment – planning an internship/hiring event in August. Assisting DSP-U graduates with job searches.
- g. Hike Club held on 5/7 at Berlin Lake Trail & 5/18 at Jesse Smith. June Session on 6/4 and 6/18. Cardio Drumming held on 5/11 – 22 people attended. June session on 6/8.

2. Advocacy:

- a. Meeting May 12th with 19 individuals. Advocacy Talks at Home To You with 9 individuals. June meeting 6/9. Topic Summer Strong: Staying Safe, Cool and Fresh. Breaking down fun, essential tips for staying healthy in the heat: protecting from the sun, staying hydrated, and keeping up with daily health routines.
- b. Project STIR Reunion held on May 1st, 6 Project STIR graduates and 3 allies attended to network and share with other graduates from across the state.
- c. My Life. My Story. – Story Telling Workshop. Two advocates attended, plan to host 6-week workshop in Portage. State Showcase on 9/11.
- d. Will be doing a modified version of May's Social Media Talk on 6/30 with URR.

3. Special Olympics:

- a. Spring Sports: May 14th -Tuscarawas Invite Bocce, 8 Athletes competed. May 16th Tuscarawas Invite for Athletics, 10 Athletes competed.
- b. Knights of Columbus Cash Bonanza – 355 tickets sold. Top three Athlete Sellers: Liddy – 62, Natalie – 61 and Anthony – 60. Portage Thunder will receive \$4 of every ticket sold
- c. Summer State Games May 29th & May 30th: Athlete Leader from Portage, Adam emceed and Thunder Athletics Coach Ashleigh Lawrence recited the Coach's Oath. Athletics-5 Athletes, Bocce – 6 Athletes, Bowling – 3 Athletes. Healthy Athlete program – 11 Athletes completed at least 3 health screenings, 4 Athletes received new glasses and 6 female Athletes participated in EmpowerHer and received some care products and a sports bra

d. 4.Community Employment:

- a. 132 people employed in the community
- b. Planning a collaborative event with SHRM and other employment collaboratives
- c. Tiffany will be providing training for employment staff in Ohio in August
- d. Tiffany is participating in planning the APSE State Conference

5. Nursing:

In May: completed 3 QARN reviews, reviewed 7 eligibility cases, 7 days of intake for IA and completed 2 IA cases.

Department: Education & Child Development

Director: Vince Valerio

Date: 6/10/2026

Board Report:

School Outreach

- All classes are done for the year
- Satisfaction Surveys have all been collected. 100% positive feedback received!
We will work on schedule drafts for next year over the summer, as well as reorganizing the Lending Library inventory
- Handle With Care training has been completed for camp staff. Camp is officially underway!

Transition

- Explorers After School Club had a successful year. End of year picnic was on 6/1.
- Portage County Transition team had their final meeting of the year on 5/13.

Early Intervention

- Groovy Garfoose will resume in September
- The next EI Family Fun Day will be in October

Manager: George Gabriel

Department: Service & Support Administration

Date: 6/17/2026

Board Report:

- SSA supervisors and I continue to discuss and make changes in the department (SSA only staff changes, reworking SSA caseloads). We have moved an SSA only staff member to a waiver SSA. A follow-up meeting with SSA only staff took place earlier this month to assess how they are doing with the changes. Additional changes may occur in the future.
- SSA Intake continues to be very busy with referrals for services. This includes Redeterminations, County Transfers and Re-Opens.
- SSA department continues to prepare for the changeover from the legacy MSS system to the new system. Gary Smith, Rachel France, and Jasmine Golden are hard at work to have all individuals and sites transitioned soon. Gary and Rachel met with SSA staff earlier this month to provide an update and answer questions. SSA supervisors are working on a spreadsheet to assist staff with schedules and unit calculations.
- 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 will be moving its' tech home to the Coble maintenance facility effective 7/1/26. Items from the current tech home have been removed and placed in the new location. Tours will start again in July/August.
- 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 youth and their 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. Additional providers will be pursued.
- The SSA department is fully staffed. Danny Campbell is going through our onboarding process and has a full caseload. Jamie Miller now has a full caseload and continues to learn about the SSA position.
- InterRai assessments are being completed. This new assessment will determine funding levels for individuals on waivers. Nicole Williams is our InterRai assessor and has completed assessments on most of the nine individuals to begin the pilot in our county. She will do an additional 196 assessments by the end of the year and additional assessments by the summer of 2027. Information has gone out to families and Nicole received all the training on the assessment.

- SSA supervisors and I continue to meet weekly to “keep up with” the ongoing and frequent changes. Some include switchover to the new MSS system, assistive tech/remote support tech rule, Overtime rule, 2:1 staffing, change notices, and more. SSA supervisors and Medicaid managers have been terrific.
- Superintendent Vennetti and I will continue to meet with Union members for the Labor Management Committee as needed.
- Scheduling training for department staff: Technology, Employment, Behavior Support, and more. Lunch and learn sessions are scheduled through July regarding services being offered by other agencies.
- Waiver appeal took place on 5/27/26. We were successful with this appeal. Eligibility appeal was held on 6/8/26.
- Participating in negotiations. Five sessions held so far. Another session is scheduled for 7/9/26.
- Targeted Case Management- discussions will be held to review more comprehensive ways to calculate how time is spent daily by SSA's. This is a Statewide effort.
- Participated in various meetings: Portal, DSP recognition, informational series, NEON, Ottavo Health, MBS, and Brittco usage.
- Working with staff and supervisors to develop a new Onboarding process.
- Utilization Review Committee- This committee will meet on 7/17/26 to review the services that five individuals are receiving and their assessed need for those services.
- MEORC-Scheduled to review 13 files in August. This is necessary to prepare for accreditation in 2027. This is also necessary due to the large number of changes required by DODD. A big change coming 7/1/26 is the new SSA rule requiring changes in monitoring frequency and the use of a person-centered template.
- Attended the required trainings and staff appreciation luncheon on 5/28/26. Great job by all that put it together.
- DODD staff came to our county on 5/21/26 and 6/11/26 to do a two-part training on behavior support. DODD staff did a great job with their presentation and were impressed with the questions asked by our staff.

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Department: Superintendent

Director: John Vennetti

Date: 6/17/2026

Board Report:

1. Unit B Negotiations (SSA Department)- 5 sessions completed. The next one is scheduled for July 9th. One session was cancelled by Unit B for personal reasons.

2. Board Trainings- Sept- AI Training at 4pm.
3. Mandate for change/Funding the future- [House Bill 939](#) The first county board-led bill to emerge from the association's Funding the Future initiative, received a first hearing for sponsor testimony on Tuesday. Joint sponsors State Reps. Andrea White (R-Montgomery) and Mike Odioso (R-Hamilton) provided testimony on the bill, which would mandate certain Early Intervention (EI) services be provided by county boards and that the state contribute at least 50% of the cost. Each highlighted the importance of EI in the lives of children with developmental disabilities. HB 939 would require county boards to provide certain Early Intervention services, while offsetting some of the costs incurred through a state contribution. State Reps. White and Odioso detailed the importance of EI services in the lives of children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. The sponsors of the bill testified on the need to mandate these services, so children do not lose access to critical support in times of local fiscal hardship. Future passages of legislation would help protect these vital services provided by county boards, adding a state funding contribution and shared commitment.
4. Fraud alert- HB 795- introduced by Representative Josh Williams, is formally titled the Safeguarding Healthcare Integrity through Electronic Location Data (SHIELD) Act. The bill seeks to enhance oversight of Ohio's Medicaid program, particularly for home and community-based services (HCBS) and nonemergency medical transportation, by requiring electronic verification systems to track service delivery and provider locations using GPS and other technologies. There have been multiple hearings in the House Committee. They initially had a provision not to allow family caregivers to be paid. That has since been removed. They then moved the changes over to HB 315 and were approved in both chambers and now are waiting for the governor's signature. Families and providers provided testimony.
5. [House Bill 359](#), known as *Joshua's Alert*, passed the full Senate on Wednesday by a vote of 31 to 0. Sponsored by **State Reps. Cecil Thomas** (D-Hamilton) and **Jennifer Gross** (R-Butler), the bill expands Ohio's Missing Persons Alert system to include immediate alerts for missing children with autism or developmental disabilities. It is awaiting the governor's signature.
6. [Senate Bill 35](#), legislation that would establish a formal supported decision-making process in Ohio. The bill received a hearing before the House Children and Human Services Committee. The bill, introduced by State Sens. Jerry Cirino (R-Cuyahoga, Lake) and Michele Reynolds (R-Franklin), presumes that adults with developmental disabilities can make their own decisions and allows them to appoint one or more supporters to assist in the decision-making process instead of requiring guardianship. It was passed by the Senate on October 15, 2025.

Actions for May 2026:

As of May, there were 88 employees including seven (7) intermittent positions and no vacancies

Positions Added/Abolished:

Part-Time Clerical (Service & Support Administration)
Custodian, 260 days, 8 hours/day (Facilities/Transportation)

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)

Supplemental Positions:

All Supplemental Positions

New Hires:

Oliver Boyden, Sub Lifeguard (Happy Day Services)

Ryan Schultz, Tech Mentee Part-Time (Administration)

Promotions/Transfers:

Reclassifications:

Additional Assignments:

Supplemental Agreements:

Separations:

Darlene Petty, Part-Time Clerical (Service & Support Administration)

Retirements:

James Bobek, Service & Support Administrator, 240 days, 7.5 hrs/day (Service & Support Administration)

Robert Ferguson, Custodian, 260 days, 8 hrs/day (Facilities/Transportation)

May 2026 Enrollment Report with beginning enrollment of 1,358 and an ending enrollment of 1355, an increase of 26 and minus 29.

The Vice-President announced the next regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, starting at 5:00 p.m..

At 5:20 pm, the Board entered Executive Session in the Board Room.

Motion by Christina Krister

Second by M. Haska

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

(X) Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment;

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 6:00 p.m.

Motion by C. Krister

Second by M. Haska

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 6:02 p.m.

Motion by M. Haska

Second by C. Krister

Motion carried.

The President asked if any other business needed to come before the Board. There being none, she called for a motion for adjournment at 6:02 pm.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote.

INFORMATION

L.E.A.P Self-Advocacy Group 2nd Tuesday of the Month 10:00am – 11:00am

Location: Happy Day Services Building, Beverly J. Puleo Board Room, 2500 Brady Lake Rd. Ravenna

Special Olympics

Bowling

Athletics (Track & Field)

Bocce

Powerlifting

Hike Club

Cardio Drumming

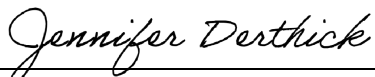
2026 schedule 2nd Monday of the month - 5:30pm Happy Day Services, 2500 Brady Lake Rd. Ravenna, 44266

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>

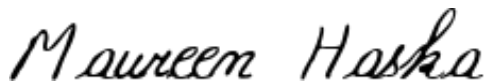
Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent



Michelle Sahr, President



Maureen Haska, Secretary