

AGREEMENT

Between

The Porter County Education Services

and

The Special Education Teachers' Association

on

Salary, Wages, and Salary & Wage Related

Fringe Benefits

for a period

Beginning July 1, 2025

and Ending June 30, 2026

750 Ransom Road

Valparaiso, Indiana

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ARTICLE I: RECOGNITION AND APPLICATION

- A. The Porter County Education Services, hereinafter "Interlocal," hereby recognizes the Porter County Special Education Teachers' Association, an affiliate of the Indiana State Teachers' Association and the National Education Association, hereinafter "Association," as the exclusive representative of the teachers.
- B. The term "Teacher" when used in this Agreement shall refer to all certified personnel employed as teachers as defined by I.C. 20-18-2-22 and employed by the Porter County Education Services through a temporary or regular contract and is assigned within the Special Education Division or the Vocational Division, except the Executive Director and the Administrators of the Special Education or Vocational Divisions.

ARTICLE II: FRINGE BENEFITS

A. Insurance

1. The Superintendents of the member districts of the Porter County Education Services, hereinafter "Interlocal Board," shall provide a group life insurance protection plan for full time teachers which shall pay the teacher's designated beneficiary the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in the event of death and one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in the event of an accidental death. The Interlocal Board shall pay all premiums except one dollar (\$1.00), which shall be paid by the teacher. If the life insurance company allows the teacher to purchase additional life insurance, the teacher may use payroll deduction to pay the additional premium. For any teacher who leaves the employ of the Interlocal, life insurance coverage will end the last day of the month in which the teacher's resignation becomes valid. Teachers who do not have a contract are not eligible for life insurance. Teachers who have a contract shall be eligible for coverage pursuant to the life insurance policy requirements.
2. Health and Dental insurance will be provided through the Porter County School Employees' Insurance Trust. The Association shall be represented on the Health Insurance Trust's Board of Trustees whose purpose is to improve benefits and/or the cost of insurance.
 - a. The Interlocal Board shall offer a health insurance plan for all teachers who have a full year assignment and who meet the minimum work requirements of the Porter County Schools Employees' Insurance Trust.
 - b. Teachers shall become eligible for group health coverage pursuant to the policy requirements.
 - c. The teacher shall pay twenty percent (20%) of the single plan premium or twenty percent (20%) of the family plan premium depending on which plan the teacher elects.
 - d. For any contracted teacher who leaves the employ of the Interlocal and who has worked 120 days or more in the current school year, the Interlocal shall continue to pay its portion of the premium to provide coverage through September 30 of that calendar year. The teacher's 20% share of the premium shall be paid through September 30. The teacher shall thereafter have any and all rights to continue coverage pursuant to federal statute. For any contracted teacher who leaves the employ of the Interlocal with less than 120 working days, health insurance shall

end the last day of the month in which the teacher's last working day occurs. The teacher shall thereafter have any and all rights to continue coverage pursuant to federal statute.

- e. Teachers who do not have a contract are not eligible for health insurance.
 - f. Bargaining unit members retiring from the Interlocal shall have the right to remain on the group health and/or dental plan until age 65, provided they remit the full monthly insurance premium to the Interlocal each month by the date specified by the Interlocal.
- 3. The Interlocal Board shall provide a dental insurance program for all teachers who have a full year assignment and who meet the minimum work requirements of the Porter County Schools Employees' Insurance Trust provided the teacher pays twenty percent (20%) of the single plan or twenty percent (20%) of the family plan depending upon which plan the teacher elects. Teachers shall become eligible for coverage pursuant to the insurance policy requirements.
 - 4. After FMLA Leave has been exhausted, teachers may continue to participate in the Group Health/Dental Insurance program subject to COBRA laws and regulations.
 - 5. The Interlocal Board shall provide a long term disability insurance protection plan for full time teachers as outlined in Section 2 paragraphs (d) and (e). The Interlocal Board shall pay all premiums except one dollar (\$1.00); which shall be paid by the teacher.
 - 6. Section 125
 - a. The Interlocal Board shall provide a Section 125 plan for eligible employees electing to participate in such a plan. Monthly service charges for all participating employees will be paid using excess funds from the account. If there are no excess funds available, this cost will be paid by the Interlocal Board up to \$3.75/month. Additional cost will be paid by the employee. Employees may elect to participate in any generation(s) of the plan. There will be a cap of \$4,000 over premium.

ARTICLE III: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- A. -The Association and Administration agree that attempts will be made to resolve all concerns outside the grievance process. An Association Representative may attend this/these meeting(s) at the request of the teacher. It is understood that this/these meeting(s) do not constitute Level I of the grievance procedure.

A claim by a teacher that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of any policy, approved rules or regulations, or agreements of the Special Education and/or Vocational Division may be processed as a formal grievance at the discretion of grievant. The grievant shall have thirty (30) school days from the time the alleged violation occurs to initiate the informal process. The time line begins to accrue on the date that the violation is made known or should have been known to the grievant. A meeting with the Teacher and Administration shall occur within ten (10) school days of the initiation of the informal complaint process.

B. If, in the judgment of the Association, the grievance affects a group or class of employees, the Association may submit such grievances, in writing, to the Executive Director of the Porter County Education Services, hereinafter "Executive Director," or designee directly, and the processing of such grievances shall commence at Level I of the formal grievance procedure.

C. The grievance procedure is:

Level I

If a grievance still exists after the informal discussion with the Supervisor, the grievant may submit within ten (10) school days of the informal discussion meeting a completed Grievance Report Form (appendix B, attached) to the direct supervisor.

Within five (5) school days of the receipt of the Grievance Report Form, Level I, the Supervisor shall meet with the grievant in an effort to resolve the grievance. Within five (5) school days of the meeting, the Supervisor will indicate in writing his or her disposition of the grievance and the reasons therefore.

All attempts should be made to resolve at this level.

Level II

If the grievant is not satisfied with the disposition made by the Supervisor or if no disposition has been made within five (5) school days of the meeting with the Supervisor, the grievant shall within ten (10) school days complete the Grievance Report Form, Level II, and submit the grievance to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall meet with the grievant in an effort to resolve the grievance. This meeting will be held within five (5) school days of the filing. The disposition of the Executive Director shall be made in writing within five (5) school days of the meeting and shall set forth the reasons for the Executive Director's action.

Level III

If the grievant is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance, a copy of the written grievance submitted to the Executive Director may be forwarded to the Interlocal Board.

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the Grievance Report Form, Level III, the grievant shall appear before the Interlocal Board in Executive Session.

The Interlocal Board shall indicate its disposition of the grievance in writing within five (5) school days of such meeting and shall furnish a copy thereof to the teacher and to the representative of the Association.

D. The time limits provided in the Article shall be strictly observed but may be extended by written agreement between the parties.

1. The failure of the grievant to act within the time limits set forth shall preclude further appeal of the grievance.

2. The failure of the Administration to act within the time limits set forth shall allow the grievant to proceed to the next step of the procedure.
3. In the event a grievance is filed after May 15th of any year, the Board and Association shall cooperate in processing such grievance prior to the end of the school year whenever possible.

Notwithstanding the expiration of the Contract, any claim or grievance arising thereunder may be processed through the grievance procedure to resolution. All documents, communications, and records dealing with the processing of a grievance shall be filed in the personnel files of the participants. An employee engaged during the school day in the investigation, preparation, or presentation of a grievance, or who is a witness for same, may use Association leave as approved by the SETA President or apply for personal leave. (See appropriate leave sections)

ARTICLE IV: LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Absence Procedure. All teachers shall report all absences using the Interlocal's current absence report system. In addition, all bargaining unit members assigned to a district must notify his/her assigned building administration.

Authority to Approve Leaves. All action regarding leaves (Article XI) will be by the Executive Director.

Correlation of Leaves with FMLA. Leaves of Absence are subject to the rules and regulations of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Regarding a leave requiring Executive Director approval, the teacher will receive notification of acceptance or denial via email attachment or fax within five school days (using the SELF calendar) of receipt of a complete form with all appropriate supporting documentation/information. Regarding a leave requiring Board approval, the teacher will receive notification of acceptance or denial via email attachment or fax within three (3) school days (using the SELF calendar) following the Board meeting.

If a leave of absence was denied for any reason other than the form was submitted five (5) school days or more after the leave was taken, the following appeal process applies. The teacher must begin his/her appeal process within ten (10) school days of receiving notice that a leave was denied.

1. The teacher will submit a written request for reconsideration of the denial to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will mail his/her final decision within ten (10) school days after receiving the teacher's request for reconsideration.
2. If the teacher disagrees with the final decision of the Executive Director, the teacher will submit a written request to the Interlocal Board for further consideration of the leave request. The written request must be submitted to the Interlocal Board at the Executive Director's office within ten (10) school days after the Executive Director's final decision is mailed to the teacher. The teacher may meet with the Interlocal Board in Executive Session within twenty (20) school days of the request. The Interlocal Board shall meet in Executive Session to consider the teacher's request.

A. Paid Sick Leave

Unused Paid Sick Days

Unused sick leave days may be accumulated with no limit over the course of the teacher's employment in the Interlocal.

1. Paid Sick Days

Each teacher shall be entitled to be absent on account of injury, illness, quarantine, or family illness for the following:

a. First contractual day is any day first semester.

(1) Full time – First year in the Interlocal, twelve (12) full days (equivalent twenty-four (24) half days); succeeding years, ten (10) full days (equivalent twenty (20) half days)

(2) Half time – First year in Interlocal, six (6) full days (equivalent (12) half days); succeeding years, five (5) full days (equivalent ten (10) half days)

(3) Less than half-time – First year in Interlocal, three (3) full days (equivalent six (6) half days); succeeding years, two and one half (2 ½) full days (equivalent five (5) half days)

b. First contractual day is any day second semester.

(1) Full time – six (6) full days (equivalent twelve (12) half days)

(2) Half time – three (3) full days (equivalent six (6) half days)

(3) Less than half-time – one and one half (1½) full days (equivalent three (3) half days)

2. Assault Leave

If, during the course of performing those duties assigned to the teacher by the Interlocal, the teacher is physically injured by a student or student's caregiver, the teacher's doctor-ordered absence from work will not be charged against his/her accumulated sick days. A written verification from a physician that the teacher is unable to work must be on file in the Finance Office. Assault leave shall terminate when the teacher becomes eligible for Long Term Disability.

3. Absence of Five Consecutive Days

a. If a teacher is absent from work five (5) or more consecutive school days the Executive Director may require a statement from a doctor regarding the teacher's absence and/or ability to perform the essential job functions.

b. Those teachers who will not consult a physician due to religious convictions shall provide a written statement regarding this conviction when they first become employed in the Interlocal or upon change in their conviction.

4. Prior Accumulated Paid Sick Days

The transfer of sick days shall be in accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana. Accounting of these days shall be provided to the teacher in a timely fashion upon receipt of information from previous schools. In the event a teacher has accumulated one (1) or more days of paid sick leave in a prior school corporation of the State of Indiana, starting in the second year and in each succeeding year of employment in the Interlocal, these previously accumulated sick days shall be added to the sick days provided under this Agreement, at the rate of up to three (3) days of sick leave per year. The previously accumulated sick days are added, as set forth above, until the number of accumulated sick days to which the teacher was entitled in the last place of employment are exhausted.

5. Accounting of Accumulated Sick Days

A teacher shall be given a written accounting by the first contract day of each school year of his/her sick days accumulated as of the first day of the current contract.

6. Accumulation of Sick Days While on Following Leaves: Disability and Child Care

a. Any teacher on one of the stated leaves which extends into the beginning of a new school year, and who is using previously accumulated sick days for that leave, shall accumulate the new year's sick days on the 1st contract day.

b. Any teacher who is on one of the stated leaves which extends into the beginning of a new school year, and has no previously accumulated sick days for that leave, shall accumulate paid sick days for the new school year upon his/her return to work as per Article IV, Section A, subsection 1(a) or (b), as applicable.

c. Sick days must be used consecutively during leaves. Teachers may choose to save a specific number of sick days for use the following school year. Saving sick days does not satisfy requirements to gain the next school year's allotment of days. Return to active status is required to receive the next year's allotment of sick days.

B. Paid Personal Leave

1. Upon application, each teacher shall be entitled to be absent, with pay, in each school year for the transaction of personal business and/or to conduct personal or civic affairs.

- a. First contractual day is any day first semester
- (1) Full time – 3 days (equivalent 6 half days)
 - (2) Half time – 1.5 days (equivalent 3 half days)
 - (3) Less than half-time – 1 day (equivalent 2 half days)

b. First contractual day is any day second semester

- (1) Full time staff – 1.5 days (equivalent 3 half days)
- (2) Half time staff – 1.0 day (equivalent 2 half days)
- (3) Less than half-time staff – .5 day

2. When possible, application shall be submitted in advance of the requested leave. Any application for paid personal leave must be submitted to the Finance Office within five (5) school days after the leave has been taken or the leave shall be denied. As a part of the application, the teacher must include a written statement describing the reason and necessity for the absence, as required under the Indiana Code.

3. Unused paid personal leave days shall accumulate to a maximum of four (4) days. Teachers may use four (4) personal days in a single year once every three (3) years. Any accumulated personal leave days beyond the four (4) accumulated days shall be added to the teacher's accumulated sick leave at the end of each school year.

C. Sick Leave Bank

The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank is to provide additional sick leave for teachers who have exhausted their accumulated sick leave and paid personal leave days. The Sick Leave Bank is not designed to provide unlimited sick leave to teachers.

1. Eligibility and Conditions

a. Any teacher employed by the Interlocal is eligible to participate in the bank. A contribution of one (1) sick day is required to join the bank.

b. The bank will be open for voluntary contributions from September 1 through October 1 of each school year, and on a one-time basis, a two (2) week period for enrollment will be offered prior to December 15, 2023. Teachers who have become employed after the October 1 enrollment deadline will have thirty (30) calendar days from their first contractual day to enroll. Enrollment forms will be available in the finance office or via the website before September 1 or on the date of hire for employees hired after September 1.

c. An additional assessment of all sick bank members will be made when the sick bank falls below fifty (50) days. Participants will be notified by the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee, hereinafter "PR&R Committee," of an impending assessment via paychecks or via the website.

(1) Members who voluntarily withdraw from the sick bank by not donating at a reassessment period must wait until the next assessment period and/or reenrollment to donate a day and rejoin.

(2) Members who have no sick or personal day to contribute at the time of the assessment may remain a member, but will automatically be assessed one (1) day at the beginning of the following school year.

(3) Teachers who are using sick leave bank days at the time of the additional assessment will not be required to donate a sick day to remain a member.

d. All sick leave days donated to the bank are considered a permanent donation and lose their identity.

2. Criteria for Use of Bank

(Sick Leave Bank days may only be used for applicant illness or injury.)

a. Applicant must be a member of the sick bank.

b. Applicant shall have exhausted all sick and personal days.

c. Applicant may not be eligible for long term disability.

d. Applicant shall request withdrawal by submitting to the PR&R Committee and a copy to the Executive Director the appropriate form and doctor statement using the FMLA certification form providing the nature of the disabling condition, period of requested leave, and prognosis for the disability/condition supporting the need for the leave.

e. The PR&R Committee will render its decision in writing to both the Executive Director and the applicant.

f. The decision of the PR&R is final.

g. Applicant may request days within the following guidelines:

<u>Consecutive Years with Interlocal</u>	<u>Range of Days Granted</u>
0 – 5	1 – 20
6 – 15	1 – 46
16+	1 – 61

h. Teachers on leave due to child care will not be eligible to withdraw days from the bank, but may access days in the event of major complications during pregnancy.

i. Days granted may not be used for the period of disability when monies are paid to the employee under Worker's Compensation.

j. A teacher who has received less than the maximum number of Sick Leave Bank days available based on the teacher's years with the Interlocal at the time of the request, may re-apply for additional Sick Leave Bank days, but may not be awarded more days than were available to the teacher when the first request was made. Once the teacher has borrowed the maximum number of days for which he/she was eligible when the first request was made, all days must be repaid before applying to withdraw additional days.

3. Repayment of Days to Sick Bank

- a. A recipient who remains a teacher of the Interlocal shall repay the days borrowed at the rate of at least two (2) sick days per school year until the loan has been repaid. A recipient may pay back more than two (2) days by notifying both the Finance Office and the PR&R Committee, in writing, by June 10.
- b. A recipient who leaves the Interlocal before he/she has repaid days owed to the sick bank shall repay the value of the remaining days at the current substitute rate through any funds available to the teacher. This rate shall be the rate in-effect at the time the teacher leaves and not the rate at the time the days were borrowed.
- c. A recipient who dies or retires under teacher's retirement before repaying days owed the sick bank shall be forgiven said debt.
- d. Teachers who retire under teacher's retirement, and who were members of the sick leave bank, may donate up to 15% of their accumulated sick leave days to the sick leave bank.

F. Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave days do not have to be taken consecutively provided that, within two (2) school days of the death, the teacher provides notice to the applicable Executive Director or designee of the death, relationship to the teacher, and intended schedule of use of the leave days within one (1) calendar year of the date of death. Unused bereavement leave days are not compensable after separation of employment for any reason. Bereavement leave days shall not be charged against accumulated sick leave. Upon application:

1. In the case of a death in the teacher's immediate family, a teacher shall receive up to five (5) school days as paid bereavement leave. For purposes of this bereavement leave section, "immediate family" shall include father, mother, stepparents, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, spouse, child, stepchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, foster child, grandchild, or any relative who at the time of death is living in the household of the teacher.
2. A teacher shall receive up to three (3) school days of paid bereavement leave at the time of the death of a grandparent.
3. A teacher may be granted up to three (3) school days of paid bereavement leave at the time of the death of a person living in the household of the teacher.
4. A teacher shall receive up to two (2) school days of paid bereavement leave at the time of the death of a brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, or the grandparent of a spouse.
5. A teacher shall receive up to one (1) school day of paid bereavement leave at the time of the death of an uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, or first cousin.
6. A teacher who is asked to serve as a pallbearer shall receive one (1) school day of paid leave to perform this service.

7. In the case of the death of a student, the Executive Director may select a group of teachers to attend the funeral without loss of compensation.

8. In the case of the death of an Interlocal staff member, the Executive Director may select a group of teachers to represent the Interlocal at the funeral, without any loss of compensation.

9. A teacher will receive up to five (5) consecutive school days as paid bereavement leave in the event the teacher, the teacher's spouse, or the teacher's partner, who lives in the teacher's household, suffers a medically documented miscarriage or stillbirth. The first day of this bereavement leave must be taken within two (2) school days after the miscarriage/stillbirth.

-G. Disability Leave

This provision applies to all instances where a teacher is unable to perform his/her duties because of a disability which is substantial in nature or duration. Such disability shall include, but not be limited to, disability arising from major surgery, physical illness, mental illness, severe emotional disturbance, or injury.

A teacher is eligible to use all or any portion of his/her accumulated sick days during the period of disability. Accumulated sick days may not be used during a disability leave of absence at any time the teacher's physician has certified that the teacher is able to work, pursuant to Indiana law.

A request for disability leave must be made to the Executive Director as soon as possible after learning of the need for the leave but no later than fifteen (15) calendar days after learning of the need for the leave. The request must include the expected beginning and ending dates of the leave and a physician certification using the FMLA certification form providing the nature of the disabling condition, period of requested leave, and prognosis for the disability/condition supporting the need for the leave. Where the teacher is unable to complete this task, a representative of the teacher shall do so on his/her behalf.

1. If, because of the disability, the physician determines that the teacher is no longer able to perform the essential job functions and the executive Director determines no reasonable accommodations can be made, the teacher shall be considered to be disabled.

2. The Executive Director shall then notify the Interlocal Board of the Disability.

3. The Interlocal Board shall determine whether to grant or deny the teacher's application for unpaid disability leave which would extend beyond the teacher's FMLA allotment.

4. The Interlocal Board, at its discretion, may require an evaluation/examination of the teacher's medical status in the process of evaluating the teacher's application. The physician who will perform the examination shall be chosen by the teacher from a panel of three (3) doctors named by the Interlocal Board. The examination shall be at the Interlocal Board's expense.

5. A teacher who is disabled beyond the expiration of his/her current contract, and who has requested a continuation of his/her disability leave of absence, may be granted this continuation, which shall not exceed one (1) school year from the expiration of his/her current contract.

6. A teacher who wishes to stop performing his/her duties prior to the time that he/she qualifies as disabled may request an appropriate leave of absence. The request for a leave of absence may be granted for a period not to exceed one (1) year. Teachers who do not wish to return to their duties after they no longer qualify for disability leave must request an appropriate leave.

7. During the term of any disability leave, the teacher and the Interlocal shall execute a regular teacher's contract for each school year in which any part of the leave of absence is granted.

8. A doctor's statement indicating that the teacher is fit to return to work and perform essential job functions is required upon return from a disability leave.

9. If the leave extends beyond the teacher's FMLA allotment, then the return to work date shall coincide with the beginning of a semester or the beginning of a school year.

H. Legal Duty Leave

Upon application, a teacher shall be granted leave, with pay, when he/she is required by law to serve on a jury or attend court proceedings for which the teacher has been subpoenaed, unless the teacher is a party in litigation whose interest is adverse to PCES or officials of PCES.

1. Any application for paid jury duty leave must be submitted to the Finance Office within fifteen (15) school days after the leave has been taken. A document which verifies the dates of the teacher's service on the jury, and which was issued by the court in which the teacher served on the jury, shall be attached to the application.

2. All money received as juror fees or subpoena attendance fees by a teacher who has taken paid legal leave shall be turned over to the Finance Office.

I. Association Leave

1. Upon application, the President of the Association shall be granted ten (10) days of leave with pay in each school year to conduct union business. In addition, five (5) additional days with pay will be granted if the Association pays the cost if a substitute is required. At the discretion of the Association's President, any or all of these leave days may be transferred to other Association members for the purpose of conducting business for the Association.

2. Applications for Association leave shall be submitted to the Finance Office by the President, on behalf of the teacher seeking to take the leave, no later than fifteen (15) school days after the leave is taken. When possible, application shall be submitted in advance of the requested leave. Any application which is submitted more than fifteen (15) school days after the leave is taken shall be automatically denied.

J. Sabbatical Leave

1. Upon application and at the discretion of the Interlocal Board, a teacher may be granted up to one (1) year of paid sabbatical leave.
2. The Executive Director shall make a recommendation to the Interlocal Board regarding the teacher's application. The Interlocal Board will decide whether to grant or deny the teacher's application.
3. Paid sabbatical leave for fulfillment of scholastic requirements toward an additional degree in the area of Special or Vocational Education may be granted by the Interlocal Board to teachers who have completed ten (10) consecutive years of service in the Porter County Education Services. The granting of a sabbatical leave shall be subject to the following conditions:
 - a. A maximum of one (1) eligible teacher per school year shall be granted sabbatical leave.
 - b. Eligible teachers who wish to apply must submit a written application outlining leave plans on or before February 15th of the preceding school year.
 - c. Paid sabbatical leaves shall be for one (1) full school year.
 - d. A teacher shall not be eligible for a paid sabbatical leave more than once every ten (10) years.
4. Payment for sabbatical leave shall be thirty (30%) percent of the teacher's regular salary, based on the salary schedule in effect at the time the teacher is on leave. Payment shall be made in one of the following ways, at the teacher's option:
 - a. Fifty (50%) percent of payment shall be added to the first regular school contract following the teacher's return from sabbatical leave, and the remaining fifty (50%) percent of payment shall be added to the second regular school contract following the teacher's return from sabbatical leave; or,
 - b. The entire payment shall be made on the second pay in September or the second pay in January of the school year the teacher is on sabbatical leave, provided that the teacher has signed a secured promissory note for the payment amount, which note shall become due if the teacher does not complete two (2) years of service with the Interlocal under regular contract immediately following the sabbatical leave of absence.
5. A teacher on sabbatical leave must complete twelve (12) semester hours toward an additional degree, or eighteen (18) quarter hours per semester toward an additional degree to be eligible for payment as stipulated above. Transcripts or other supporting data must be received in the Finance Office on or before November 1.

6. During the sabbatical leave, if a teacher completes with passing grades twenty (20) semester hours, or thirty (30) term (quarter) hours, credit towards retirement may be granted by Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Fund pursuant to the statute. Evidence of the leave and a transcript of credits must be sent to the Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Fund office to claim any possible credit.

7. The teacher's return to work date shall coincide with the beginning of a semester or the beginning of a school year.

K. Family and Medical Leave Act

Teachers will be eligible for leave pursuant to the terms and conditions for Family and Medical Leave as currently set forth in the PCES FMLA policy. This provision will be automatically deleted from the collective bargaining agreement should the Family and Medical Leave Act be repealed or held to be not applicable to public employers such as the Porter County Education Services.

ARTICLE V: PROFESSIONAL DAYS

A. Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee

1. The PR&R Committee will review teacher-initiated applications for professional leaves and for use of the Sick Leave Bank (See Article IV, Section C).

2. Intentionally Omitted.

3. Requests for professional leave are processed through Frontline. The requesting teacher must obtain his/her supervisor's acknowledgment and comment(s) regarding the requested leave prior to submission of the request to the Committee. In addition to any notification available through Frontline, the Committee will notify the teacher and the teacher's supervisor of its decision by email.

4. If a teacher disagrees with the PR&R Committee's decision and wishes further consideration regarding his/her application for professional leave the teacher will submit a request to the PR&R Committee to reconsider its decision within five (5) days of the Committee's decision. The Committee's final decision may be appealed to the applicable Executive Director by email within ten (10) school days after the PR&R Committee's decision to deny the application for professional leave is entered in Frontline.

Any portions of this Section A unrelated to wages and/or wage related benefits are PCES policy, not bargained and included for informational purposes only.

B. Paid Professional Leave (Submit Application to PR&R Committee)

1. In each school year, upon application, a teacher shall be granted at least one (1) day of professional leave, without loss of compensation, for the purpose of:

a. attending and/or participating in educational conferences, workshops, and meetings of local, state and national educational organizations and of colleges, universities, or governmental agencies concerned with public school education; or

- b. visiting other schools or educational institutions for the purpose of observing instructional techniques.
2. Paid professional leave days shall be taken only during the term of the teacher's contract.
3. The PR&R Committee shall have a budget, established in each school year, for the purpose of reimbursing teachers for expenses associated with approved paid professional leave, including registration costs. The budget for approved paid professional leave expenses shall be \$4,000.00 each calendar year. Paid professional leave may be approved without reimbursement of expenses. Any balance remaining at the end of the School year in the PR&R Committee's budget for this item shall be carried over into the next school year's budget for this same budget item; except that the amount necessary to fund the stipend provided in Appendix A, Section D(1)(d) (inclusive of all related employer payroll taxes and benefits) shall be withdrawn from the cumulative account.

Any portions of this Section B unrelated to wages and/or wage related benefits are PCES policy, not bargained and included for informational purposes only.

C. Administratively Initiated Paid Professional Leave

1. An Executive Director and/or Interlocal Administration may request that a teacher participate in a paid professional leave activity during the term of the teacher's contract.
2. Professional leave may be granted for purposes such as visitation to other classrooms or schools, visits to other educational institutions, mentoring/in-service activities, or attendance of seminars/ conventions/ workshops.
3. Any expenses associated with an administratively initiated leave shall not be charged against the PR&R Committee's budget, discussed in Section A above. Any expenses which may be payable by the Interlocal must be approved by the applicable Executive Director in advance.

ARTICLE VI: ADMINISTRATION OF COMPENSATION PLAN

- A. Staff members who are required by their supervisor to participate in due process preparation or testimony outside the contracted workday will be paid at the staff member's normal hourly rate. Any portions of this provision unrelated to wages are PCES policy, not bargained and included for informational purposes only.
- B. Summer school employees issued a Supplemental Service Teacher's Contract shall be paid at an hourly rate based on their Regular Teacher's Contract base salary. Their compensation shall be the same as the preceding school year. The hourly rate shall be computed by using the State Board of Accounts' prescribed procedure. [Notation for information purposes only].
- C. Diagnostic employees performing evaluations during the summer shall be paid by claim at an hourly rate based on their Regular Teachers' Contract base salary. Their compensation shall be the same as the preceding school year. The hourly rate shall be computed by using the State Board of Accounts' prescribed procedure.

D. Each teacher who must write IEPs will be given a total of seven (7) days to prepare IEPs and/or conduct case conferences.

E. Ancillary Duty Rates:

1. A teacher participating in PCES supervisor initiated program development activities outside the contracted workday will be paid at the teacher's normal hourly rate.
2. A teacher participating in PCES supervisor initiated professional development outside the contracted workday will be paid \$30.00 per hour.
3. A teacher performing PCES supervisor initiated homebound instruction outside the contracted workday will be paid at the teacher's normal hourly rate.
4. A teacher performing PCES supervisor initiated mentor duties for will be paid a \$400.00 stipend per semester, payable at the end of the semester.
5. A teacher performing PCES supervisor initiated supervision of a student during participation in an extra-curricular activity held outside the contracted workday will be paid at the teacher's normal hourly rate.
6. CTE teachers that teach dual credit courses will receive an annual stipend of \$400.00 for each unique course, payable at the end of the academic year.

Any portions of the provisions in this Section E unrelated to wages are PCES policy, not bargained and included for informational purposes only.

F. The Interlocal will continue to contribute an amount equal to 2% of the teacher's regular school year contract base salary into the teacher's 401(a) plan.

G. The Interlocal will pay for statutorily required periodic background checks on bargaining unit employees every five (5) years.

H. Upon submission of proof of payment, the Interlocal will reimburse the annual ASHA membership fee (up to \$275) for an SLP whose services are Medicaid billed for PCES.

I. The compensation plan is attached as Appendix A.

ARTICLE VII: RATIFICATION

This contract shall be effective as of July 1, 2025 and shall continue in effect through June 30, 2026.

This contract is made and entered into at Valparaiso, Indiana on this 29th day of December, 2025 by and between Porter County Education Services and the Special Education Teachers' Association, and applies to the Special Education and Vocational Divisions of the Porter County Education Services.

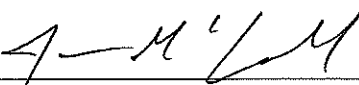
ATTESTATION:

A. A public hearing was held on September 2, 2025 in compliance with I.C. 20-29-6-1(b), and electronic participation from the parties and/or public was not permitted; and

B. A public meeting was held on December 23, 2025 in compliance with I.C. 20-29-6-19 to discuss the tentative agreement and electronic participation from the governing body and/or the public was not permitted.

This Agreement is so attested to by the parties whose signatures appear below:

Porter County Education Services

By: 
Dr. Jim McCall, President

Date of Board Approval: December 29, 2025

By: Jeff Brooks
Jeff Brooks, Secretary

By: Erin Hawkins
Dr. Erin Hawkins, Executive Director - Special Education

By: Audra Peterson
Audra Peterson, Executive Director - Career and Technical Education

Porter County Special Education Teachers' Association

Danielle Zecevic
Danielle Zecevic, President

Date of Ratification: December 18, 2025

Liz Barnes
Clay
AKP

Appendix A:
COMPENSATION PLAN BETWEEN
PORTER COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICES &
THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

A. Salary Range. The salary range for the 2025-2026 school year will be \$52,000- \$88,178, exclusive of increases provided herein.

B. New Hire Salary. Base salary will be no less than \$52,500 for new teachers employed full time (100%) beginning with the 2025-2026 contract year. The Executive Director shall evaluate the experience and training of all teachers new to the Interlocal to determine their initial salary within the above salary range.

C. Pro-rata Salary. For teachers that are not contracted on a full-time basis, compensation will be prorated to reflect the percentage of time which they are employed.

D. 2025-2026 Compensation Plan

1. Factors and Increase: The compensation plan will utilize the following factors to determine compensation increase.

a. Evaluation: Each teacher who receives a performance evaluation rating from the Interlocal for the immediately preceding school year of highly effective or effective will receive a base salary increase of \$750.

b. Academic Needs of Students: In order to retain teachers important to the Interlocal to ensure educational continuity, each teacher will receive a base salary increase of \$750.

c. Instructional Leadership: Each teacher who obtains a literacy endorsement on or before May 1, 2026 will receive a base salary increase of \$250 (on a pro rata basis).

[Total amount of available increase to base is \$1750; academic needs is at 42% and evaluation is 42%.]

d. Experience: Each eligible teacher who worked 120 or more days for the Interlocal in the prior school year will receive a one time stipend of \$515.

APPENDIX B: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

PCES Grievance Report Form

Step I
SUPERVISOR

Specify the date of the alleged violation of the Master Contract, the nature of the violation, the specific section(s) of the Master Contract which were violated, and how you would like the grievance resolved.

(If additional space is needed, attach an additional sheet)

Printed Name of Grievant _____

Date _____ Grievant Signature _____



Date Received _____ Conference Date _____

Names of Parties in Attendance _____



Decision

(If additional space is needed, attach an additional sheet)

Date of Decision _____ Principal Signature _____

PCES Grievance Report Form

Step II
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Specify those issues which you maintain have not been resolved to your satisfaction at the previous level, and your reason for same.

(If additional space is needed, attach an additional sheet)

Printed Name of Grievant _____

Date Grievance Filed at Step I _____

Date _____ Grievant Signature _____



Date Received _____ Conference Date _____

Names of Parties in Attendance _____

Decision _____

(If additional space is needed, attach an additional sheet)

Date of Decision _____ Superintendent Designee Signature _____

Please attach copies of Step I filing and principal's decision

PCES Grievance Report Form

Step III
INTERLOCAL BOARD

Specify those issues which you maintain have not been resolved to your satisfaction at the previous level, and your reason for same.

(If additional space is needed, attach an additional sheet)

Printed Name of Grievant _____

Date Grievance Filed at Step II _____

Date _____ Grievant Signature _____

.....

Date Received _____ Conference Date _____

Names of Parties in Attendance _____

Decision _____

(If additional space is needed, attach an additional sheet)

Date of Decision _____ Superintendent Signature _____

Please attach copies of Step I and Step II filings and prior decisions