

Manistee Area Public Schools
Contract of Employment – Superintendent

Pursuant to Section 1229(1) of the Revised School Code and in accordance with the action found in the September 9, 2026, meeting minutes of the **Board of Education** ("Board") of the **Manistee Area Public Schools** ("School District"), the Board employs **Ronald J. Stoneman** ("Superintendent") for a five-year period beginning July 1, 2026 and ending on June 30, 2031, according to the terms and conditions of this Contract of Employment as specifically described below.

1. ***Duties.*** Ronald J. Stoneman shall faithfully and diligently perform the duties of Superintendent as required by law and as prescribed by the Board, as well as those duties that may be further established, modified, or amended from time to time by the Board.

- A. The Superintendent acknowledges the ultimate authority of the Board as to his duties and agrees to faithfully perform those duties and to diligently implement the Board's policies, regulations, rules, directives, and education programs.
- B. The Superintendent is subject to assignment and transfer to another position of administrative employment in the School District at the Board's discretion.

2. ***Qualifications.*** The Superintendent represents that he possesses and will maintain all certificates, credentials, and qualifications required by law, including, but not limited to, Revised School Code Sections 1246 and 1536, applicable administrative regulations, and those required by the Board to serve in the position assigned, including, but not limited to Board Policy.

- A. As a condition of continued employment, the Superintendent also agrees to meet all certification and continuing education requirements for the position assigned, as may be required by law, including applicable administrative regulations.
- B. If at any time the Superintendent fails to maintain all certificates, credentials, continuing education requirements, or qualifications for the assigned administrative position, this Contract shall automatically terminate and the Board shall have no further obligation.

3. ***Performance.*** The Superintendent will devote his talents, skills, efforts, and abilities toward competently and proficiently performing all duties and responsibilities of the position assigned, including compliance with the directives of the Board to carry out its policies and educational programs.

- A. The Superintendent will comply with and fulfill all responsibilities and tasks for which he is responsible as required by state and federal law and regulation, as well as by the Board through its policies, regulations, and directives.
- B. The Superintendent will use his best efforts to maintain and improve the quality of School District operations and to constantly promote efficiency in all areas of his responsibility.

- C. The Superintendent will diligently and competently discharge his duties on behalf of the School District to enhance its operations and will use his best efforts to maintain and improve the quality of the School District's programs and services.

4. ***Performance Evaluation.*** The Superintendent's job performance shall be evaluated by the Board in writing and at least annually and no later than December 31 of each Contract year. The evaluation shall comply with Section 1249b of the Revised School Code (or its successor provisions). See MCL 380.1249b. The Superintendent shall annually provide a written reminder to the Board of its evaluation obligation.

5. ***Contract Extension.*** This Contract may be extended either by Board option or operation of law as follows:

- A. The Board shall review this Contract annually, and shall determine whether to extend the Contract for an additional year no later than March 30 of each Contract year. If the Board fails to act by this date, the Contract shall be deemed to have been extended for an additional Contract year.
- B. Unless the Board gives written notice of nonrenewal of this Contract at least ninety (90) days before the Contract's termination, this Contract will automatically renew for an additional one (1) year period as provided in Section 1229(1) of the Revised School Code. MCL 380.1229(1).

6. ***No Tenure in Position.*** In accordance with the Teachers' Tenure Act, the Superintendent agrees is not granted tenure in the position of Superintendent or to any other administrative position in the School District to which he may be assigned, other than that of a classroom teacher, should the probationary period required for tenure as a teacher be fulfilled by virtue of this Contract or any employment assignment requiring certification with the School District.

7. ***Compensation.*** The Superintendent shall be paid at an annual (12-month) base salary rate of not less than One Hundred Forty-Six Thousand Six Hundred Ninety-Seven Dollars (\$146,697.00) for the 2026-2027 Contract in consideration of his performance of the duties and responsibilities of the position assigned in conformance with the requirements and expectations of the Board and as scheduled by the Board. The Superintendent shall receive a step increase each year in the amount of 3%. The annual base salary shall be paid in 26 substantially equal installments, beginning with the commencement of the Contract year (July 1 - June 30).

- A. ***Tax-Deferred Annuity.*** The Board shall contribute ten percent (10%) of the Superintendent's base salary per Contract year as a non-elective contribution to a 403b annuity designated by the Superintendent from a list of eligible programs available through the District's 403b Plan. For each year the Superintendent has served in his capacity as Superintendent of Manistee Area Public Schools, the Board will pay an additional 1% of base salary into the Board-paid annuity. Thus, for the 2026-2027 Contract year, the contribution shall total twenty-two percent (22%) of the Superintendent's base salary. This Board-paid contribution shall be

made in twenty-six (26) substantially equal pays during the Contract year and shall conform to the requirements of Internal Revenue Code Section 403b.

- B. *Longevity Supplement.* As further compensation for services performed pursuant to this Contract, the Board shall, during June of each Contract year, pay to the Superintendent one percent (1%) of his base salary for every year of service the Superintendent has credited in the School District. For example, five (5) years of credited service to the School District equals a payment of five percent (5%) of the Superintendent's base salary for that Contract year.
- C. *Extra Duty - Virtual Academy.* As further compensation for the additional assignment of the position of Manager of the Manistee Virtual Academy, the Board shall pay to the Superintendent five percent (5%) of his base salary for that Contract year. This extra-duty compensation shall be paid in 26 substantially equal installments throughout the Contract year. The Board will evaluate the Superintendent's performance as Manager of the Manistee Virtual Academy on the same date as the Superintendent's annual evaluation; however, the Virtual Academy evaluation will be a separate instrument. If the Superintendent's performance evaluation as Manager of the Manistee Virtual Academy is less than effective, the Board has the sole discretion to rescind this extra-duty assignment to the Superintendent.
- D. *Retention Bonus.* Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the Superintendent shall be eligible for a retention bonus of Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000) for each of the 2026-2027, 2027-2028, and 2028-2029 school years, for a total bonus of Thirty-Six Thousand Dollars (\$36,000.00). This bonus is only available if the Superintendent completes service through June 30, 2029, and receives an overall annual evaluation rating of "Effective" or higher for each year of the current and immediately preceding contract terms, in which case the Board shall make a one-time, non-elective employer contribution of \$36,000 to the Superintendent's account under the District's 403(b) plan. The Superintendent shall have no option to receive the contribution as cash, salary, or any other form of compensation. The contribution shall be subject to the District's 403(b) plan document and all applicable tax-law contribution limits. No cash substitute shall be paid for any amount that cannot be contributed. This benefit is personal to the current Superintendent and does not create a precedent, expectation, or obligation for future superintendent contracts or any other District employee.
- E. The Superintendent's contractual remuneration reflected in Paragraph 7 and its subparts constitutes the total compensation to be paid to the Superintendent for his services, regardless of the hours of service required to perform the job, and no overtime or additional compensation will be paid for such services except as otherwise specifically provided in this Contract.
- F. If the Superintendent receives remuneration under this Contract and leaves the School District's employment, the Superintendent will reimburse the School

District for all wages received for which no work was performed.

G. The Board retains the right to open the contract on an annual basis to adjust the Superintendent's annual salary and other compensation during the term of this Contract. Any such adjustment shall not reduce the annual salary or other compensation below the amounts stated in this Contract unless otherwise mutually agreed by the Administrator. Any adjustment in salary or other compensation made during the term of this Contract shall be in the form of a written amendment and, when executed by the Superintendent and the Board, shall become a part of this Contract. Unless expressly stated in writing, any such adjustment amendment for salary or other compensation shall not be considered a new Contract or an extension of the Contract's termination date.

H. *MPSERS Reimbursement.* The Board and the Superintendent agree that all items listed in Paragraph 7 (Compensation) and its subparts are direct compensation in consideration of the contractual duties performed by the Superintendent as well as additional compensation for extra duties as identified by the Contract. Accordingly, the District will pay all applicable MPSERS costs for that compensation as required by law. If, at any time, ORS reimburses the District for any contribution made for contractual compensation, the District will remit that reimbursement amount to the Superintendent through a 403(b) plan with no cash option.

9. *Technology Allowance.* The Board shall provide the Superintendent with a mobile phone and related service plan, as well as a laptop computer. Those devices are considered District property for the Superintendent's exclusive use.

10. *Vehicle Allowance.* The Superintendent shall receive a monthly vehicle allowance of Eight Hundred Dollars (\$800), beginning July 1, 2026. This payment shall be made in twenty-six (26) substantially equal pays during the Contract year.

11. *Reimbursed Expenses.* Consistent with Board Policy, the School District shall reimburse the Superintendent for all reasonable expenses resulting from the performance of his duties as Superintendent, including travel, meals, and lodging in accordance with the School District's per diem expense and reimbursement procedures.

12. *Professional Dues.* The School District shall pay the Superintendent's association dues for membership in the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA), and the MASA region in which the School District is located. Subject to prior approval by the Board President, the School District will pay the Superintendent's costs of memberships in other appropriate professional organizations.

13. *Professional Development.* The School District shall pay for the Superintendent to attend MASA professional meetings at local and state levels, the expenses of which shall be paid pursuant to Board policy for related registration fees, tuition, travel, lodging, and reasonable meal expense. Other state or national professional development activities or continuing education expenses require approval by the Board President and consistent with

Board policy. The Superintendent's time away from the District and his administrative responsibilities shall be limited and reasonable as determined by the Board.

14. **Insurance Programs.** Upon proper application and acceptance for enrollment by the appropriate insurance underwriter, policyholder, or third-party administrator, the Board shall make premium payments on behalf of the Superintendent and his eligible dependents for the same insurance benefits (including long-term disability insurance) or cash in lieu of insurance as provided by the School District to full-time, professional administrative staff on the same basis as is available to those staff members in accord with Board policy and subject to change on the same basis as changed for full-time, professional administrative staff. Despite the foregoing, irrespective of other staff members, the Superintendent's cash in lieu of insurance will not be less than the current annual amount, which is \$16,245.23.

- A. Consistent with the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act, MCL 15.561 et seq., the Board is limited to the amount which it may pay for the above-referenced insurance programs. The Board will notify the Superintendent of the amount for which he is responsible in excess of the Board-paid benefit plan cost contributions. The Superintendent agrees that the amount of benefit plan cost contributions designated by the Board as the Superintendent's responsibility shall be payroll-deducted from the Superintendent's compensation.
- B. The Board shall provide term life insurance in the amount of three (3) times the Superintendent's base salary in Paragraph 7.

15. **Insurance Contracts.** The Board reserves the right to change the identity of the insurance carrier, policyholder, or third-party administrator for any of the coverage for the plans and programs identified in Paragraph 14, provided that comparable coverage (as determined by the Board) is maintained during the term of this Contract. Additionally, the Board reserves the right to self-fund any of the benefits listed in Paragraph 14.

- A. The Board shall not be required to remit premiums for any insurance coverage for the Superintendent and his eligible dependents if enrollment or coverage is denied by the insurance underwriter, policyholder, or third-party administrator.
- B. The terms of any contract or policy issued by any insurance company or third-party administrator shall be controlling as to all matters concerning benefits, eligibility, coverage, termination of coverage, and other related matters.
- C. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring the completion of all forms and documents needed to receive the above-described insurance coverage.
- D. The Board, by remitting the premium payments required to provide the above-described insurance coverage(s), shall be relieved from all liability with respect to insurance benefits.

16. **Errors and Omissions Insurance.** The Board shall pay the premium amount for errors and omissions insurance coverage which includes the Superintendent while engaged in the performance of a governmental function and while the Superintendent is acting within the

scope of his employment authority.

- A. The terms of the errors and omissions insurance policy shall control the Superintendent's defense and indemnity. The Board's sole obligation shall be limited to the payment of premium amounts for the above errors and omissions coverage.
- B. If such insurance coverage cannot be purchased at a reasonable premium rate, the Board has the right to discontinue said coverage and will notify the Superintendent. In that event, the Board agrees on a case-by-case basis to consider providing legal defense or indemnification to the Superintendent as authorized under MCL 691.1408 and MCL 380.11a(3)(d).

17. **Vacation.** The Superintendent is employed on the basis of fifty-two (52) weeks of work per contract year (July 1 - June 30), as scheduled by the Board. The Superintendent shall be granted vacation time of thirty (30) days per Contract year, in addition to the holidays recognized by the School District and identified in Paragraph 18 below.

- A. The Superintendent shall schedule use of vacation days in a manner to minimize interference with the School District's business and orderly operation. The Superintendent shall not schedule his vacation during a time at which his presence and leadership are critical to the District as determined by the Board President.
- B. Vacation days must be used within the Contract year for which they are made available and shall not accumulate beyond the Contract year. The Superintendent may carry over up to ten (10) unused vacation days into the next Contract year without Board approval. Additional carryover vacation days beyond ten (10) require Board approval.
- C. No compensation will be paid to the Superintendent for any unused vacation days upon his separation from employment with the District.

18. **Holidays.** Consistent with the School District's calendar, the Superintendent is entitled to the following holidays for which no service to the School District is required: New Year's Eve Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Friday before Labor Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas.

19. **Personal Leave Days.** The Superintendent shall be granted personal leave of twelve (12) days per Contract year. Unused paid leave days shall accumulate to a maximum of ninety (90) days for use for absence due to personal illness only. The Superintendent shall schedule use of personal leave in a manner to minimize interference with the School District's business and orderly operation.

20. **Disability Leave.** In the event of the Superintendent's mental or physical incapacity to perform his duties, he shall be granted an initial leave of ninety (90) work days for purpose of recovery. The Superintendent shall first exhaust any accumulated personal leave and accrued vacation time, with the balance of the ninety (90) work-day period to be

unpaid. Health plan premium payments shall be made on behalf of the Superintendent during this interval to the extent required by law. Upon using leave under this provision, the Superintendent shall furnish medical certification to the Board (or its designee) as to the necessity for the leave.

- A. If the Board (or designee) has reason to doubt the validity of the medical certification supplied by the Superintendent, a second opinion may be requested, at Board expense.
- B. The Superintendent may request a ninety (90) work-day unpaid leave extension in the event of his physical or mental inability to return to work at the expiration of the initial leave interval, as described above, provided that there is a verified prognosis that the Superintendent will be able to resume his duties at the end of the extended leave interval. Medical certification shall be supplied by the Superintendent as a condition to any leave extension. Any leave extension for this purpose shall be at the Board's discretion.
- C. If the Superintendent is unable to or does not resume work at the conclusion of a leave taken under this paragraph (or any leave extension), his employment and this Contract may be terminated at the Board's option. However, no such termination shall occur when restoration after leave is required by the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- D. Before any resumption of duty after an unpaid leave of absence for a serious health condition, the Superintendent shall provide to the Board a fitness-for-duty certification from the Superintendent's health care provider. A second opinion may be required by the Board, at its expense, unless the securing of the second opinion is precluded by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

21. ***Medical Examination.*** The Superintendent shall submit to such medical examinations (including drug or alcohol tests, as well as psychological or psychiatric evaluation), supply such information, and execute such documents as may be required by any underwriter, policyholder, or third-party administrator providing insurance programs specified under this Contract, or as may be directed by the Board to determine the Superintendent's ability to perform the essential job functions required by his assignment, with or without reasonable job accommodation(s).

- A. As a condition precedent to fulfilling the duties and obligations under the Contract, the Superintendent agrees to undergo a comprehensive medical examination and to provide the Board with a physician's verification of his physical ability to perform the essential job functions of his assignment.
- B. Thereafter, upon the Board's request, the Superintendent agrees to undergo an appropriate medical or psychological examination and shall authorize the release of medical information necessary to determine if the Superintendent is able to perform the essential job functions required by his assignment, with or without reasonable job accommodation(s).

- C. Any medical or psychological examination or disclosure of such information required of the Superintendent by the Board shall be job-related and consistent with business necessity.
- D. Any medical or psychological examination under this section shall be at Board expense and shall be conducted by appropriate medical personnel of the Board's choice.
- E. Any information obtained from medical examinations or inquiries shall be confidential. The Superintendent may receive the results of Board-ordered tests and examinations upon written request.

22. ***Nonrenewal.*** The Board's decision to discontinue or non-renew the Superintendent's employment for any subsequent period in any capacity (other than as a classroom teacher as may be required by the Michigan Teachers' Tenure Act), shall not be deemed a breach of this Contract or a discharge or demotion pursuant to the Michigan Teachers' Tenure Act.

23. ***Termination by Board.*** The Board is entitled to terminate the Superintendent's employment at any time during the term of this Contract for reasonable and just cause.

- A. The foregoing standard for termination of this Contract during its term does not apply to nonrenewal of this Contract at the expiration of its term, which decision is discretionary with the Board and shall be governed by Section 1229 of the Revised School Code, MCL 380.1229.
- B. If the Board undertakes to dismiss the Superintendent during the term of this Contract, he shall be entitled to written notice of charges and an opportunity for a hearing before the Board. The Superintendent may be accompanied by legal counsel at the hearing, and the cost of such counsel shall be paid by the Superintendent.
- C. If the Board terminates the Superintendent's employment during the term of this Contract, this Contract shall automatically terminate and the Board shall have no further contractual obligation to the Superintendent.

24. ***Arbitration.*** If a dispute relating to the Superintendent's termination arises during the term of this Contract, the parties agree to submit such dispute to binding arbitration. Selection of the arbitrator and the arbitration proceedings shall be conducted under the National Rules for the Resolution of Employment Disputes of, and administered by, the American Arbitration Association, and shall comply with the Michigan Uniform Arbitration Act, MCL 691.1681 et seq.

- A. The parties intend that this process of dispute resolution shall include all contract and statutory claims advanced by the Superintendent arising from his termination during the term of this Contract, including (but not limited to) claims of unlawful discrimination and all claims for damages or other relief. However, this agreement to arbitrate does not restrict the Superintendent from filing a claim or charge with

any state or federal agency (such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the Michigan Department of Civil Rights), and does not apply to any claims for unemployment compensation or workers' compensation which may be brought by the Superintendent. Instead, this agreement to arbitrate claims applies to those matters which would otherwise be subject to state or federal court proceedings.

- B. This agreement to arbitrate means that the Superintendent is waiving his right to adjudicate discrimination claims in a judicial forum and is instead opting to arbitrate those claims. In any such arbitration proceeding, the Superintendent has the right to representation by counsel of his choice and at his expense, the right to appointment of a neutral arbitrator, the right to reasonable discovery, and the right to a fair hearing. However, the Superintendent, through this agreement to arbitrate such claims, does not waive any statutory rights or remedies in the context of such arbitration proceedings.
- C. The arbitrator's fee and the costs imposed by the American Arbitration Association shall be shared equally by the Board and the Superintendent, subject to the Superintendent's right to seek to tax such fees as costs against the Board.
- D. Any claim for arbitration under this provision must be filed with the American Arbitration Association, in writing, and served on the Board within one hundred eighty (180) days of the effective date of the Superintendent's termination during the term of this Contract. The arbitrator's decision and award shall be final and binding on the parties. Judgment thereon may be entered in the Manistee County Circuit Court pursuant to MCL 691.1681.

25. **Limitations.** The Superintendent agrees that any claim or suit for breach of this Contract or otherwise arising out of his employment with the Board must be filed no more than twelve (12) months after the date of the employment action that is the subject of the claim or suit. The Superintendent understands that the statute of limitations for claims arising out of an employment action may be longer than twelve (12) months, but agrees to be bound by this contractual twelve (12) month limitations period and waives any statute of limitations to the contrary. Should a court of competent jurisdiction determine that this provision allows an unreasonably short period of time to commence a lawsuit, it is the parties' intent that the court will enforce this provision to the extent possible and declare the lawsuit barred unless it was brought within the minimum reasonable time within which the suit should have been commenced.

26. **Entire Agreement.** This Contract contains the entire agreement and understanding between the Board and the Superintendent about the Superintendent's employment. Prior or concurrent representations, promises, contracts, or understandings (written or oral) not contained in this Contract have no effect.

- A. Any prior agreement (written or oral) pertaining to the terms of this Contract is cancelled and superseded by this Contract, provided, however, that this Contract is voidable under the Revised School Code's provisions pertaining to criminal history

and records checks.

- B. No change or modification of this Contract shall be valid or binding unless it is in writing, approved by official action of the Board as reflected in its minutes, and signed by the Superintendent and the President and Secretary of the Board.
- C. No valid waiver of any provision of this Contract, at any time, shall be deemed a waiver of any other provisions of this Contract at such time or at any other time.

27. ***Separability.*** Whenever possible, this Contract shall be interpreted in a manner to be effective and valid according to Michigan law. If any provision of this Contract becomes or is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal, unenforceable, or void, this Contract shall continue in full force and effect without said provision(s).

28. ***Governing Law.*** This Contract is governed by and shall be interpreted in accord with the laws of the State of Michigan.

29. ***Jurisdiction/Venue.*** The proper jurisdiction and venue for any action to enforce this Contract or interpret its terms is the Manistee County Circuit Court, State of Michigan (except as the parties have otherwise agreed to arbitration in 24).

30. ***Authorization.*** This Contract is executed on behalf of the School District pursuant to the authority contained in the Board resolution adopted on September 9, 2026, the same to be incorporated by reference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Contract to be executed on the date noted.

Manistee Area Public Schools
Board of Education

Jim A. Thompson

By: Jim A. Thompson
Its: President

Superintendent

Ronald Stoneman

Ronald J. Stoneman

Shelley Johnson

By: Shelley Johnson
Its: Secretary

Signature: 
[Jim A. Thompson \(Sep 17, 2026 07:34:27 EDT\)](#)
Email: jathompson@manistee.org

Signature: 
[Shelley Johnson \(Sep 17, 2026 07:45:34 EDT\)](#)
Email: sljohnson@manistee.org

Signature: 
[Ronald Stoneman \(Sep 17, 2026 11:28:13 EDT\)](#)
Email: rstoneman@manistee.org

Superintendent Contract of Employment

Final Audit Report

2026-09-17

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-  Document created by Traci Joseph (tjoseph@manistee.org)
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-  Signer sljohnson@manistee.org entered name at signing as Shelley Johnson
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Signer rstoneman@manistee.org entered name at signing as Ronald Stoneman

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Document e-signed by Ronald Stoneman (rstoneman@manistee.org)

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Agreement completed.

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