Okemos Board of Education Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 27, 2025

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Buffett at 7:00 p.m.
Members Present: Tom Buffett, Jason Burns, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Administration: Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Director Elizabeth Lentz

The board recognized the following employees who have attained 24 years of service: Wanda Derochowski, Special Education Teacher at Okemos High School; Rolette Hancke, Food Service Worker; Brian Harrod, Business Teacher at Okemos High School; Margie McJames, Math Teacher at Okemos High School; and Laura Richter, Science Teacher at Okemos High School.

Childcare Coordinator Christina Alighire and Director Lara Slee presented an update regarding the reorganization of Community Education's Childcare programming. A brief historical perspective was provided, as well as described the current offerings and programming. The need to explore a possible restructuring due to staffing and financial challenges was explained. They described the vision and goals moving forward and provided proposed timelines. Dr. Slee forecasted regular assessment and reporting of the program and budget to the board. Administration reviewed how the district arrived at a $1.6 million deficit to start the 25-26 budget year.

Members discussed the following: how many families would be impacted; current rating and how long we have been working within that rating; funding subsidies besides Covid grants; programming to replace OPM enrichment; GSRP income requirements; enrollment issues; timelines and other options; proposed tuition increases; current cost and comparability with other daycare centers; transition of 2 year olds; resources for families; transportation from OPM; improvement from current rating; picture of pre-covid enrollment; how to prevent future similar situations; impact on staffing; competition in the area; and requested a breakdown of resident versus non-resident enrollment.

Erin Stockall, Viva Nsair, Mason Brunson, Mikhail Murshak, Elena Mapley, Bethany Freeman, Karly Pulford, Luke Bowman, Courtney Bowman, Rebecca Jones, Taylor Gast, Amanda Dernovshek, John Chen, Lindsey O'Brien, Patrick O'Brien, Jillian Lambert, Jordan Barany, and Tony Geara addressed the board regarding the Community Education childcare programming.

High School Representative reported on the following: recent final exams and start of 2nd semester; bathroom update; BPA's upcoming states competition; student council activities; athletic update including basketball and hockey; Okemos Fun Squad activities and intermural basketball league; upcoming 7th grade camp; upcoming Okemos Athletic Boosters Gala; and upcoming winter dance.

Members inquired about any other intermural sports; moving finals to before winter break; and a student council elections update.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: upcoming bond bid award recommendations; behavioral threat assessment update; upcoming negotiations update; calendar development and waiver approval.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following: Jennifer Muffett concerning a facility use conflict; Ami Van Antwerp with an invite to the Okemos Athletic Boosters Gala; Kendra Cheruvelil requesting the board’s commitment to safe and supportive schools for all students; Madisen Holtz requesting a form; Lori Mazzullo and OEA Leadership expressing appreciation for the early cold day notification; Dana Cogswell concerning ICE policy; and Dr. Viva Nsair, Tony Geara, Melissa Vachon, Matt Maiville, Matt and Amanda

Dernovshek, Jonathan and Cora Walby, Marissa Hoop, Emily Edger, John Chen, Kelsey Ellis, Catherine Gerrish, Bethany and Kara Freeman, Karly Pulford, Taylor Gast and Dorian Jones expressing support for the Edgewood Early Learning Center and childcare programming.

Members reported on the following: recent Ingham County school plan signing meeting; recent start times and sleep conversation with several area districts; Raising Resilient Wolves community presentation on January 28th at 7 p.m. at Kinawa; recent Okemos Archery Team competition; scheduling board retreat; district response and plans for ensuring a safe learning environment for all students; and thanked parents for their advocacy.

MOVED by Shulawn Doxie, SUPPORTED by Jason Burns that the board approve items 1 and 2 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 6, 2025; and Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 13, 2025.

AYE: 7 NAY:0 ABSENT 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board award the purchase of 2 buses to the Holland Bus Company, not to exceed $276,624 and to be funded through the 2022 bond.

AYE: 7 NAY:0 ABSENT 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board approve the amended 2024-2025 budget.

Roll Call

Tom Buffett	Yes	Andy Phelps	Yes
Jason Burns	Yes	Leeni Shrestha	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Jillian Winn	Yes
Shulawn Doxie	Yes		

AYE: 7 NAY:0 ABSENT 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the board approve the following new high school course to be offered beginning with the 2025-2026 school year: Sports Literature (Senior English elective).

AYE: 6 NAY:1 ABSENT 0 **MOTION CARRIED**
Jason Burns dissented.

MOVED by Shulawn Doxie, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn that the board accept the generous donation of $35,000 by an anonymous donor to support youth action research, scholarships, and suicide prevention.

AYE: 7 NAY:0 ABSENT 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

The board discussed potential School of Choice openings to be advertised (February 16th) for the PreK through 8th grade Montessori program. The numbers being proposed will reflect available seats while maintaining the district's ability to accommodate resident students.

Members inquired about shadow or tour opportunities, advertising, and success in filling spots.

The board discussed MASB's strategic planning proposal, sought input on selecting stakeholder representatives, and established possible strategic planning calendar dates. In addition the board considered the following: was the cost built into the budget; incorporating the equity plan into the strategic plan; flexibility for work sessions; diverse committee membership; reviewing the previous plan; duration; focus group membership

versus the main planning committee; equal representation from each school; diversity of thought and in every way; suggested inviting the recent board candidates to participate; possibly have childcare available; give the parent groups some parameters to work with; student involvement; and recommendations from club advisors for student members.

April 19th and April 26th were identified for a possible full day planning session.

The budget work session will be postponed to a yet-to-be-scheduled special meeting.

Karly Pulford and another community member who did not identify themselves addressed the board regarding childcare programming.

Negotiations team representatives will be selected at a future meeting.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 10:01 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary