Okemos Board of Education Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING APRIL 14, 2025

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Buffett at 6:15 p.m.
Members Present: Tom Buffett, Jason Burns, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Administration: Superintendent John Hood; Director Elizabeth Lentz; Director Peter Trezise

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Section 8(c) of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations.
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**

The board adjourned to the executive session at 6:17 p.m.

The board reconvened at 7:26 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; Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz; Director Lara Slee; Director Peter Trezise

Representatives from Veridas, TowerPinkster and Christman provided an update regarding the 2022 bond, including bid packages #3 and 4 and an above ground storage fuel tank update. The team presented an update on the CMS construction progress, OHS pool upgrades, and underground storage tank status. The team also provided timelines and a reminder of the bond website for the community.

Members inquired about the following: preserving and incorporating the existing Chippewa building into the new build; transporting students to the temporary location; members expressed appreciation for the walk-through; confirmed we are on schedule and on budget.

Media & Technology Director Tom Isom provided information regarding technology purchases to be funded through the 2022 bond including firewall and data center upgrades, and phone systems. Director Isom explained the bid process, the scope of the bid, timelines and next steps.

Members inquired about possible cost savings or increased efficiency; actual cost versus budgeted; and lifespan.

No one addressed the board.

High School Representatives reported on the following: recent senior field trip; state assessments; upcoming Touch of Class fundraiser; senior academic and athletic award ceremony; upcoming Prom and post-prom events; senior service projects; recent NHS blood drive and induction ceremony; recent fine arts performance including at WMU's spring conference and MSU; upcoming musical production; and an athletics update.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: acknowledged Arab American Heritage Month; Autism

Acceptance Month; thanked OEA and Assistant Superintendent Bailey for work on updating the teacher evaluation tool; compostable materials used in school cafeterias; potential location change of Begindergarten program; 7th grade camp scheduling and change to 25-26 calendar; safety update; student success data dashboard; childcare programming update; and an update regarding the hiring process for a new HR Director.

Members inquired about the following: childcare tuition increases; childcare fill rates; state assessment scheduling; and the number and location of Begindergarten classrooms.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence on the following: Michael Callahan, Amanda and Matt Dernovshek regarding childcare programming; and Katie Atkins regarding district communications.

Members reported on the following: participation in the strategic planning surveys and focus groups; 360 degree evaluation status; board retreat planning; OEF Golf Outing; proposed advocacy letter to legislators to be discussed further at the next meeting.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn that the board approve items 1 through 6 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 10, 2025; Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of March 10, 2025: Item 3: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 17, 2025; Item 4: Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of March 17, 2025; Item 5: Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of April 1, 2025; and Item 6: That the board acknowledge receipt of the March financial statement and approve payment of bills for March.

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

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Shulawn Doxie that the board endorse the OHS Physics student trip to Cedar Point, scheduled for May 5, 2025 with the understanding the students will abide by all school policies and procedures.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board endorse the OHS BPA member trip to Orlando, Florida, scheduled for May 7th through May 11, 2025 with the understanding the students will abide by all school policies and procedures.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the board authorize the Superintendent to extend the existing contract with Grand Rapids Building Services (GRBS) for 2 additional years in accordance with Section 1.A. of the Custodial Services Agreement at an annual cost of $1,247,094.

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 Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Leeni Shrestha that the board approve the purchase of a mower to not to exceed $68,974.

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

MOVED by Jason Burns, SUPPORTED by Shulawn Doxie that the board waive the reading and establish the Educational Assistance Plan to provide eligible employees with educational assistance benefits under Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code.

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

Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey presented the new textbook recommendations for 2025-2026. It is not assumed that funds will be available in the general fund to purchase textbooks. Recommendations include: Creative Writing; Contemporary Literature; AP Statistics; French 1; Spanish I; and Algebra. Mrs. Bailey reviewed the replacement cycles; selection process; and community review opportunity.

Members inquired about the following: how do teachers prepare families regarding sensitive topics students will read about; OHS Press fundraising; expressed appreciation for format; process teachers use to decide which book; and the rigor of English class offerings.

The board continued its discussion regarding the development of the 2025-2026 budget. Finance Director Lentz provided information regarding an upcoming revision to the 2024-2025 budget and its carryforward impact. Updated assumptions for 25-26 were presented and include increased health insurance cost, increased retirement cost, special education funding, curriculum savings, and staffing. Impending items such as state aid and negotiations were described as well as timelines, upcoming communication and opportunities for staff to learn more.

Members sought clarification regarding cutting sections versus programs.

No one addressed the board.

A reminder of the April 26th Strategic Planning work session.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 9:33 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary