Okemos Board of Education Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING MAY 19, 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, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Members Absent:	Shulawn Doxie
Administration:	Superintendent John Hood Assistant; Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz

The board reviewed the Ingham Intermediate School District proposed 2025-2026 General Fund Budget as required by Michigan law to determine its action at the next meeting to support or not support the budget. Ingham Intermediate School District Superintendent Mr. Jason Mellema presented the budget information including a brief overview of the ISD's general fund budget; programs and services supported by the ISD; substitute teacher cost; GSRP funding; required math support; and mental health initiatives. Mr. Mellema addressed questions regarding property taxes and the portion from Okemos residents, shared services, and the revision process for the special education funding formula. Next steps and responsibilities were also provided.

Julie Keller, Chad DeKatch, Cori Akers addressed the board concerning proposed budget reductions.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: Sock Out Suicide event; thanked Consumers, Meridian Township and OPS staff for their response during the power outage; prom and post prom events.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence on the following: Luke Bowman regarding the district's budget development; Shannon Beczkiewicz, Amanda DeKatch, Michelle Zimmerman, Julie Keller, Molly Carney and Christena Sinila concerning proposed budget reductions; and Jen Muffett concerning the district's cell phone policy.

Members discussed the following: strategic planning sub-committee work and goals; exit interviews for employees who resign or retire; additional information from Director Slee regarding the DEI annual report; and postponed board retreat conversation to next meeting.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Jason Burns that the board direct the superintendent to authorize the granting of the easements with Meridian Township for the projects on Bennett Woods Elementary property.
Roll Call

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

AYE: 6 NAY:0 ABSENT 1 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board award the fiber upgrades project to Challenger Technologies for a total cost not to exceed $141,441.19 and to be funded through the 2022 bond.

AYE: 6 NAY:0 ABSENT 1 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Jason Burns, SUPPORTED by Leeni Shrestha that the board waive the reading and adopt the resolution designating Andy Phelps as its representative and Tom Buffett as alternate, to the electoral body for the June 2, 2025 Ingham Intermediate School District election of board members and instruct Member Phelps

concerning the board's choice of Joel Gerring and Erin Schor to fill two vacant six-year terms, and Caitlyn Salow to fill the partial two-year term of office on the Ingham ISD board of education.

Roll Call

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

AYE: 6 NAY:0 ABSENT 1 **MOTION CARRIED**

The board entered into a work session for the purpose of developing the 2025-2026 budget. Finance Director Lentz reviewed 2024-2025 proposed budget revisions including updated information on utilities, legal fees, staffing, grants, interest income etc. Time was given to Operations Director Brian Lieber to explain the increased expenses in the Operations department including HVAC, contracted services, infrastructure upgrades, equipment replacements, and utility cost. He also addressed proactive measures and replacement cycles.

Members inquired about the following: how to be prepared for surprise, one-time expenses; encouraged advocacy with state and federal legislators; and what is included in the all other line item.

Director Lentz explained the impact that the 24-25 budget has on the 25-26 budget, as well as updated assumptions for interpreter services and staffing cost. Impending items and timelines were reviewed. Superintendent Hood explained the district's conservative approach to budgeting and unknown factors that can impact the budget significantly.

The board took a 5-minute recess at 8:34 p.m. and reconvened at 8:39 p.m.

The board then reviewed proposed budget reductions and revenue enhancements one-by-one, and discussed the impact, savings or revenue and challenges associated with each. The board's homework was explained.

Members discussed the following: number of students impacted by each option; what is the process if the state budget comes in better than expected; and process for prioritizing options.

No one addressed the board.

The board discussed rescheduling the June 23rd meeting to June 16th.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 10:59 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary