Okemos Board of Education Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 24, 2025

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Buffett at 6:35 p.m.

Members Present:	Tom Buffett, Jason Burns, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andrew Phelps and Jillian Winn
Member(s) Absent:	Leeni Shrestha
Administration:	Superintendent John Hood

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Andrew Phelps that the board adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of reviewing attorney-client privileged communications and discussing contract negotiations.

Roll Call	Tom Buffett	Yes	Andrew Phelps	Yes
	Jason Burns	Yes	Leeni Shrestha	Absent
	Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Jillian Winn	Yes
	Shulawn Doxie	Yes		

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

The board adjourned to executive session at 6:35 p.m.

The board reconvened from executive session at 7:10 p.m.

Members Present:	Tom Buffett, Jason Burns, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andrew Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Administration:	Superintendent John Hood

Members highlighted recent events and activities including: participation in the OEF Awards Banquet with recognition to Mary Weir and Nathan Brown for their work organizing the event; an MASB learning session attended by Trustee Phelps, and appreciation for strong student engagement in supporting district perception surveys.

Community Education Coordinator Christina Alighire presented an update on enrollment, programming and financial progress at the Edgewood Early Childhood Center. Information included current classroom capacities, anticipated full-year enrollment trends, staffing challenges early in the school year and subsequent stabilization, parent engagement efforts, licensing status, star-rating updates, expansion of universal preschool classrooms and the addition of facility dog Lulu. A financial update indicated the program is on track for sustainability. Members inquired about registration practices for infants, enrollment timelines, waitlists, recruitment strategies, program ratios, and Before/After Care participation. Edgewood has been working with the Communications team on branding to help promote their programs.

High School Representatives reported on the following: the NHS bottle drive, the Crunch the Hunger food drive, fundraising for Santa's First Responders, Action Club bake sale, (FYF) Financial Youth Foundation is leading financial literacy lessons at Cornell Elementary, club updates and senior photo submissions. Trustees thanked the students for their leadership.

Superintendent Hood provided an overview of long-range planning considerations related to future bond or sinking fund needs, including facility replacement priorities, student device replacement, and site reuse planning. Current partners (Veritus, Christman, Tower Pinkster) were reviewed along with considerations for continuing versus bidding out pre-bond

services. Trustees discussed continuity, cost comparisons, scope determination, community engagement and timing related to the superintendent transition. Action will be brought forward in December.

The Personnel Committee presented a recommendation for selecting the Michigan Leadership Institute (MLI) as the superintendent search firm. Trustees discussed proposal differences, reference feedback and facilitation style.

No one addressed the board.

Superintendent Hood expressed thanks to the board of education, the administrative team and all of the employees of the Okemos Schools for all the work they do to help meet the needs of kids in the district. Gratitude to Dr. Burns and the strategic planning group, especially Shannon Beckiewicz for getting out the first round of perception surveys to students. Superintendent Hood affirmed confidentiality and voluntary participation in the perception surveys and encouraged all parts of the community to participate. Additionally, he recognized Amanda Patton for preparing board materials, noted the creation of a district PTO events calendar, and shared that he wrote a letter of support was submitted for Meridian Township Police accreditation.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following: Geoffrey Laumet regarding school start times; Diana Bonaccorsi regarding OPM crosswalks; Melissa Samluk regarding the Okemos Cares! Holiday gift drive; and Teresa Rice-Olowolafe regarding playground accessibility.

Trustee Shrestha reported on concerns raised at the District Parent Council meeting including reduced parent engagement opportunities at the elementary level, traffic during drop-off and pickup, and aging playground equipment. Trustee Cavanaugh commented on the district safety forum; trustees discussed upcoming community engagement events.

MOVED by Andrew Phelps, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn that the board approve items 1 and 2 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 10, 2025; Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of November 10, 2025.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 MOTION CARRIED

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Leeni Shrestha that the board waive policy 2503A requirements and take action on whether to select a superintendent search firm.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 MOTION CARRIED

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Andrew Phelps that the board waive the reading of the contract and appoint the Michigan Leadership Institute as the search firm for the superintendent of the Okemos Public Schools.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 MOTION CARRIED

MOVED by Katie Cavanugh, SUPPORTED by Jason Burns that the board approve the amended 2025-2026 budget.

Roll Call				
	Tom Buffett	YES	Andrew 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 Andrew Phelps that the board approve the furniture purchase for Chippewa and all Okemos elementary schools for the 2026-2027 school year in an amount not to exceed $5.59 million dollars to be funded through the 2022 bond.

Roll Call	Tom Buffett	YES	Andrew 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 Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Jason Burns that the board waive the reading and adopt the resolution authorizing the district to join the nationwide PowerSchool data breach litigation.

Roll Call	Tom Buffett	NO	Andrew Phelps	YES
	Jason Burns	YES	Leeni Shrestha	YES
	Katie Cavanaugh	YES	Jillian Winn	YES
	Shulawn Doxie	YES		

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board waive the reading and adopt the resolution allowing the district to participate in Section 31A safety and security funding without waiving any privileges until the legal challenge is resolved.

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

Superintendent Hood presented an updated memorandum of understanding with Meridian Township regarding the Senior Center. The agreement outlines each party's responsibilities, explains how funds flow from the township to the district and back to the program and addresses property considerations until a permanent township location is identified. Action will return on December 8.

No one addressed the board.

The board engaged in a work session to discuss the superintendent search process with Andrew Ingall from the Michigan Leadership Institute (MLI). Information about MLI was shared along with initial introductory information on sample timelines and other details about the planning and preparation stage of the superintendent search process. The recommendation is to get a position announcement out as soon as possible, and action on this will return on December 8.

There were no other matters.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 9:57 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary