Okemos Board of Education Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by Vice President Phelps at 7:02 p.m.
Members Present: Jason Burns, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Members Absent: Tom Buffett
Administration: Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Director Elizabeth Lentz; and Interim HR Director Peter Trezise

Superintendent Hood reported on a walk-through at OPM during the celebration of International Day of Peace. He also reported that students were observed filming PBIS lessons to teach peers about appropriate hallway behavior and de-escalation strategies and praised the OPM sensory committee.
Member Phelps commended the Okemos and East Lansing athletic training staff for their swift and professional response during a recent football game.

Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz and Steve Piesko, CPA, with Manor Coster Co., presented the 2024-2025 audit. The district received a clean and unmodified opinion, which is the best opinion the district can receive. Mr. Piesko reported the following findings: The district utilized $1.7 million of its fund balance, as planned. The ending fund balance was $9,225,000, representing 12.8% of current year expenditures, which falls within the desired 12% to 15% range. The district amended its planned use of fund balance to $1.73 million and the actual use was $1.70 million, resulting in a favorable 0.04% variance. The district holds $158.3 million in capital assets with $93.3 million in long-term debt, indicating that debt is being paid down faster than assets are depreciating. Pension liability and enrollment were also reviewed. The audit is currently in draft form because the federal compliance supplement has not yet been issued. The food service fund balance is over the maximum allowed. Director Lentz will provide an update in October regarding a plan to spend down the excess, partly by purchasing food service equipment for Chippewa.

Superintendent Hood emphasized that sinking fund dollars and 2023 Capital Projects bond funds are legally restricted and cannot be spent on staffing, textbooks, or raises.

Members inquired about the following: timelines for addressing the on-site review and management note; food service spend down plan; unfunded liability; and guidance on ideal fund balance.

High School Representatives reported on the following: homecoming activities; provided a club update; athletic update; and a reminder there is no school on Tuesday.

Interim HR Director Peter Trezise introduced administrative and teacher new hires for the 2025-2026 school year.

Finance Director Lentz provided an overview of the tax levy and bond draw schedule including: a reminder of the current tax levy; timelines for the next bond series sale and issuance; future planning for district needs such as student devices, facilities, infrastructure and buses. The board will hold a work session in October to discuss long-term funding strategies, which could include a larger sinking fund millage or another bond.

Members inquired about the following: can bond debt be refinanced; bond versus millage; possible second sinking fund; how does the property tax increase impact the bond; process for determining what would be included in the next bond; and developing a list of items to address later.

Superintendent John Hood and Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey presented an overview of board level data

sources to be used to illustrate progress towards the strategic plan's five-year goals. The board's focus is on high-level data, such as graduation rates, student achievement trends, and district-wide climate surveys, rather than individual classroom scores. Examples were provided in the goal areas of academics, learning environment and culture, personnel and leadership; communications and engagement, operations and facilities, and include perception surveys and data, absenteeism, employee retention, and graduation rate. Next steps were also described.

Members discussed the following: what happens if the funding for assessments is eliminated; year-to-year turnover as an indicator; subgroups; compensation compared to cohort; demographic breakdown for perception data; complications with using attendance and absentee data.

No one addressed the board.

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: upcoming Edgewood and childcare update; state budget status; transportation update; and an anonymous donation for clubs, scholarships and research projects.

Member Doxie asked where to go for bussing information.

Vice President Phelps acknowledged correspondence from the following: Noelle Burak concerning the proposed NSI schedule; Raquel Shepherd regarding a phone number; and Theresa Rice-Olowolafe regarding call phones.

Members reported on the following: advocacy committee update and letter for families to use; recent Parent Council meeting; recent ISOA meeting; homecoming parade; potential norms for operating procedures; and an invite to the National merit Recipient Reception.

MOVED by Shulawn Doxie, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn that the board approve items 1 through 4 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 8, 2025; Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of September 8, 2025; Item 3: that the board accept the generous donation from an anonymous donor to fund clubs and scholarships; and Item 4: authorize the superintendent and athletic director to execute the MHSAA application to form a cooperative gymnastics team.

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

MOVED by Leeni Shrestha, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board waive the reading and adopt first reading of board policies 2504-O Public Participation at Board Meetings; 3110 Data Breach Response; 3115 Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Non-Retaliation; 3115A Definitions for 3115 Series; 3118 Title IX Sexual Harassment; 3201 Accounting; 3211 Post-Issuance Tax Compliance; 3212 Post-Issuance Disclosure Compliance; 3301-O Purchasing and Procurement; 3301A Purchasing and Procurement with Federal Funds; 3307 Construction Administration; 3402 Drills, Plans, and Reports; 3407 Asbestos Management; 3408 Firearms and Weapons; 4101 Non-Discrimination; 4103 Whistleblowers Protection; 4105B Religious Workplace Accommodations for Employees and Applicants; 4407 Discipline; 5104 Age of Majority; 5401-O Parent Involvement in Education; 5411 Student Promotion, Retention, and Placement; 5420 Sex Education; 5421 Work-Based Learning Experience; 5603 Section 504; 5701 Abuse and Neglect; 5707-O School Wellness Policy; 5712 Concussion Awareness.

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

MOVED by Jason Burns, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board certify the following winter tax rates for collection on behalf of Okemos Public Schools from Meridian Township, Alaiedon Township, and the City of Lansing of 9 mills non-homestead, 3.5 mills debt, and .4925 sinking fund mills; and from Williamstown

Township of 18 mills non-homestead, 7 mills debt, and .9850 sinking fund mills.
Roll Call

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

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

There was no public comment.

There were no other matters.

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Jason Burns that the board adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of discussing the superintendent evaluation.
Roll Call

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

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

The board adjourned to executive session at 9:12 p.m.

The board reconvened from executive session at 9:33 p.m.

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

Vice President Phelps adjourned the regular meeting at 9:34 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary