Okemos Board of Education Okemos,
Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 12, 2026

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Buffett at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present:	Tom Buffett, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Absent:	Jason Burns
Administration:	Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Executive Director of Finance Elizabeth Lentz; Director of Human Resources Jennifer Emmendorfer; Director of Operations Brian Lieber; Athletic Director Ken Hintze

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	Andrew Phelps	Yes
Jason Burns	Absent	Leeni Shrestha	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Jillian Winn	Yes
Shulawn Doxie	Yes		

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

The board adjourned to executive session at 6:32 p.m.

The board reconvened from executive session at 7:06 p.m.

Members Present:	Tom Buffett, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Members Absent:	Jason Burns
Administration:	Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Executive Director of Finance Elizabeth Lentz; Director of Human Resources Jennifer Emmendorfer; Director of Operations Brian Lieber; Athletic Director Ken Hintze

Superintendent Hood acknowledged that January is Board of Education Recognition month and thanked trustees for their contributions to Okemos Public Schools.

Trustees shared events happening around the district, including the Okemos Athletic Board's Gala coming up on January 31, 2026; Trustee-Teas meetups; recognition from the Michigan Waterways Stewards for a senior at Okemos High School.

The high school student representative reported on the following: final exams; the soft launch of the *Off and Away* cell phone policy, scheduled to officially begin January 20; selection of 7th Grade Camp counselors; activities including Dr. Kemsley's Reading Club, a door-decorating competition, and Love for Elders letter writing; updates on winter sports; and reflections on the holiday concert. In response to a Board question, he noted that the new cell phone policy is an adjustment with varying student opinions and presents challenges related to access to educational tools.

The organizational meeting was called to order at 7:18 p.m.

Superintendent Hood nominated himself as temporary chair. Superintendent Hood called a vote for acceptance of him as temporary chair.

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

Superintendent Hood nominated Trustee Shulawn Doxie as temporary secretary.

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

The board determined to utilize Robert's Rules of Order for conducting the organizational meeting. MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Tom Buffett.

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

Katie Cavanaugh nominated Tom Buffett as President; no other nominations were made, nominations were closed. Trustee Buffett accepted the nomination. MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh.

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

Shulawn Doxie nominated Andy Phelps as Vice President; no other nominations were made, nominations were closed. Trustee Phelps accepted the nomination. MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh. The board voted for Andy Phelps as Vice President.

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

Leeni Shrestha nominated Shulawn Doxie as Secretary; no other nominations were made, nominations were closed. Trustee Doxie accepted the nomination. MOVED Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn. The board voted for Shulawn Doxie as Secretary.

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

Vice President Phelps nominated Katie Cavanaugh as Treasurer; no other nominations were made, nominations were closed. Trustee Cavanaugh accepted the nomination. MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Shulawn Doxie. The board voted for Katie Cavanaugh as Treasurer.

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

President Buffett appointed Jason Burns as parliamentarian.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED Shulawn Doxie that the board confirm the dates for regular meetings of the board of education for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year to generally be the second and fourth Monday of each month, adjusted for Mondays with no school; the time of each meeting to begin at 7:00 p.m., with no new discussion after 10:00 p.m.; and the place of meetings to be the Community Conference Room at Central School.

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

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board continue to manage board

meetings according to its established policies, which are informed by Robert's Rules of Order.

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

President Buffett shared the committee members as follows:

Members Jason Burns, Leeni Shrestha, and Tom Buffett will serve on the Policy Committee.

Members Katie Cavanaugh and Jason Burns will serve on the Advocacy Committee.

Member Leeni Shrestha will represent the district on the Ingham County School Officers Association.

Members Leeni Shrestha and Tom Buffett will serve as representatives to the Okemos Education Foundation.

Members Andy Phelps, Katie Cavanaugh, and Jillian Winn will serve on the Ad Hoc Facilities Committee.

Members Katie Cavanaugh and Tom Buffett will finish out their work on the Ad Hoc Personnel Committee through Superintendent Hood's term but will transition that work to Trustees Jason Burns and Shulawn Doxie with the new superintendent. Tom Buffett will remain on the Personnel Committee with the new superintendent.

Members Tom Buffett and Katie Cavanaugh will serve on the Ad Hoc Finance Committee.

The board completed the organizational meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Superintendent Hood presented information regarding a potential donation of up to $750,000 to Okemos Public Schools for improvements to the Okemos High School baseball fields and introduced George and Lizette Poletes and their son, James, and their connection to Okemos and the baseball program. In accordance with Board Policy #3303, Gifts and Donations, the Board reviewed the proposed donation prior to district acceptance. Superintendent Hood outlined the parameters and stipulations of the proposed donation agreement. Directors Hintze and Lieber presented information on the planned use of the donation in conjunction with the 2022 Bond to improve the OHS baseball fields. Trustees showed appreciation to the Poletes family for considering Okemos Public Schools for their potential donation.

Director Lieber and Hiawatha Principal Joe Corr presented information on improvements to the Hiawatha playground.

President Buffett shared a "Year in Review" for 2025. Highlights include progress made in the board's three main responsibilities, Policy, Supervision, and Budget. Other accomplishments mentioned were in Strategic Planning, board member development via retreats and training, community engagement, and progress made in intiatives from the 2022 Bond.

Okemos Baseball Coach Raul Presas addressed the board to acknowledge and support appreciation to the Poletes family for the baseball field donation.

Superintendent Hood expressed the busy months ahead for board work in addition to the superintendent search. A board poll will be sent out for available dates in February to add a meeting to handle deadlines necessary for 2022 Bond work. Discussion regarding the high school parking lot lights and a plan to get them operating again was briefly discussed.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following; John Pork, regarding snow days; Theresa Rice-Olowolafe, regarding school start times; Sabrina Potterpin, regarding agenda posting; Carter L., regarding headphones and accessibility at Okemos High School.

Vice President Phelps discussed the updated Board Operating Procedures that have been in progress for the past few months. Trustees discussed edits and suggestions. Vice President Phelps and President Buffett will implement feedback and present a final revision by January 26, 2026.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board approve items 1-6 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 8, 2025; Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Executve Session Meeting of December 8, 2025; Item 3: Approval of hte Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 16, 2025; Item 4: Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 8, 2026; Item 5: Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting on January 8, 2026; and Item 6: Acknowledge receipt of the December financial statement and approve payment of bills for December.

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

Assistant Supertintendent Stacy Bailey and the board discussed five high school course proposals, which has been approved by the district's advisory committee: AP Business with Personal Finance, AP Microeconomics; AP Music Theory; Strength and Rest: Performance, Wellness, and Stress Management; Trigonometry Through Design: Modeling, Motion, and Measurement. The process for new courses was reviewed.

No one addressed the board.

President Buffett reiterated the February scheduling and that a poll will be sent out by Amanda Patton to address February, additional Trust-Teas events, and an August board retreat.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 8:54 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary