Okemos Board of Education Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING February 9, 2026

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, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Members Absent:	None
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; Director of Transportation Corrinne Karpinski; Director of Food Services Brian Kremkow.

Trustee Winn discussed the 7th Grade Camp that happened at Chippewa; President Buffett mentioned OEF and Apple Awards that had been ordered for staff throughout the district; President Buffett also expressed gratitude to the Okemos community members that care about what is happening in our schools and show up to help the board do their jobs to improve our school district.

No one addressed the board.

The OHS student representative shared highlights including participation in 7th Grade Camp, a recent school closing day due to icy road conditions, and a Diversity Assembly featuring performances from nine cultural groups. Teachers hosted a Valentine's Day "post office" allowing students to write notes to staff. Love For Our Elders is hosting a flower sale to support a Senior Prom at Burcham Hills. The Black Student Union will hold a Mardi Gras celebration on February 19. The representative also noted last week's athletic signing day for five senior athletes, upcoming boys wrestling playoffs, Coaches vs. Cancer fundraising efforts totaling nearly $1,500, and ongoing ACTION student efforts to help tidy the OHS campus.

Superintendent Hood reminded trustees of the Policy Committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow and requested input. He shared that a letter was sent to the Meridian Township Board on behalf of the district honoring former township supervisor Dr. Patricia Jackson, recognizing her longstanding support of Okemos Schools and her legacy following her passing last month.

Superintendent Hood addressed feedback regarding sidewalk clearing, noting that sidewalks under district jurisdiction have been cleared by Operations, while remaining areas fall under township responsibility. He also shared that a special board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, to approve the bond sale and thanked Secretary Doxie for her assistance with required paperwork. There are no MASB elections this year.

Looking ahead, Superintendent Hood shared plans for March is Reading Month and noted his intention to visit each school to read with students. The Cornell Bid Package will be shared on February 23. Trustee Doxie inquired about trustee participation in classroom reading activities; Superintendent Hood will follow up on that possibility.

In response to a question from President Buffett, Superintendent Hood reported that Director of Operations Lieber is working on a temporary repair for the OHS parking lot lights, expected to be implemented within the next two weeks ahead of a permanent summer fix.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following: Hanne Hoffmann, regarding

sidewalk accessibility; Jennifer New, regarding a student applicant for superintendent; Penelope Tsernoglou, *State Representative*, regarding Board of Education Recognition Month; Enrique Garza, regarding student behavioral support; and Ken Rose, regarding access to an online learning platform.

President Buffett reported on the February Trust-Teas event, which was attended by several community members, including a student. He thanked Trustee Winn for her leadership on last year's Policy Committee and for supporting a smooth transition to the new committee.

Vice President Phelps shared that the Facilities Committee held its first meeting last Thursday, noting it was a successful introductory session. Treasurer Cavanaugh reported on the Personnel Committee meeting and thanked board members for their input on superintendent interview questions.

President Buffett also shared that the Finance Committee met for the first time with Superintendent Hood, Executive Director of Finance Lentz, and Assistant Superintendent Bailey for norm-setting and initial discussions. He noted that the purpose of the new committee structure is to provide greater stability and support for district operations during a year of transition.

Additionally, President Buffett reported that State Senator Sarah Anthony convened a meeting regarding Section 31aa funding. While 24% of districts statewide accepted the funding, no Ingham County districts in attendance elected to do so.

Director of Transportation Karpinski reported on the bid to replace two buses this year and outlined a long-range plan for three additional purchases in 2028–2029 and 2030–2031. She noted that older buses will be retained due to uncertain route needs related to the Cornell move and that resale values vary. All district buses received an "Outstanding" rating in their most recent inspection. Trustee Cavanaugh thanked the Transportation Department for its winter operations.

Superintendent Hood reviewed Bid Package 8, outlining priority needs at OHS including completion of the 2019 Bond music expansion, lighting upgrades, bathroom renovations, kitchen and servery improvements, and greenhouse exterior work. Administration is requesting an amendment to include replacement of the OHS walk-in cooler/freezer, which has exceeded its useful life.

Superintendent Hood shared some information on future bond planning. Representatives from The Veridus Group, TowerPinkster, and Christman were present to discuss timelines and potential financial parameters in developing a future bond.

Superintendent Hood presented an overview of the district's Strategic Planning process and guided the Board through the Okemos website to demonstrate where related data and progress updates are housed. He thanked the Communications team for their work in maintaining the site and preparing the associated data reports. Superintendent Hood also navigated to the OPS Survey Results page on the Okemos site. Trustee Burns expanded on the data interpretation and what was statistically significant based on response rates and participation in the survey. Data outliers were discussed. Trustees thanked Trustee Burns for his work in analyzing the data and presenting the data as it plays a key role in guiding decision-making in the district.

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Andrew Phelps, 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 January 26, 2026; Item 2: that the board acknowledge receipt of the January financial statement and approve payment of bills for January.

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

MOVED by Shulawn Doxie, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn that the board approve the following recommended number of PPK-8 Public Montessori School-of-Choice openings for potential enrollment: Kindergarten - 3 openings; Grades 1 and 2 - 4 openings, Grades 3 and 4 - 1 opening, Grade 7 - 15 openings.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board approves the Cornell Abatement project and award the contract to GFL and not to exceed $36,500, funded by the 2022 bond.

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

No one addressed the board.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 8:43 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary