Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 19, 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, Jason Burns, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Andy Phelps, Leeni Shrestha and Jillian Winn
Members Absent:	None
Administration:	Superintendent John Hood

No one addressed the board.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Jillian Winn, that the board adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Section 8(c) and 8(e) of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and attorney-client privileged communication..

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**

The board adjourned to Executive Session at 6:34 p.m.

The board reconvened from Executive Session at 8:16 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

Trustee Doxie shared congratulations to Okemos students involved with Red Cedar Basketball, the 7th Grade Gold Team placed 2nd in the tournament and finished the season undefeated. The team will be advancing to the state tournament.

Human Resources Director Emmendorfer shared the names of new hires to Okemos Public Schools: Alyssa Ash, social worker for Bennett Woods; Eve Bracken, print shop employee; Laura Brandt, executive assistant to the superintendent and the Board of Education; Kerry Shadbolt, art teacher for Okemos Public Montessori.

Executive Director of Finance Lentz presented a financial update, highlighting key variables that impact the district's budget each year. The presentation distinguished between budget factors within the district's control and those determined by external factors. It was also noted that the Okemos budget timeline occurs earlier than the State's budget timeline, creating challenges for the district to adopt a budget before we know what the revenues are. Director Lentz also included the current status of the governor's

2026-2027 budget proposal, and explained how if approved it would impact the Okemos Schools budget. It was explained that while teachers are operating under an expired contract, Okemos Schools is still paying for steps per the expired contract. Director Lentz shared a preliminary forecast of the 2026-2027 budget, noting that several variables remain unknown at this time and could significantly impact the final projections. Trustees discussed Special Education services in Okemos and how the budget cuts have impacted services Okemos is able to provide to our students. It was emphasized that while Okemos is experiencing a major decrease in Special Education funding, our students have not had a change in services provided.

No one addressed the board.

Superintendent Hood summarized a memo that Assistant Superintendent Bailey shared with trustees regarding summer programming and funding transitions. Due to expiration of several state grant cycles, some Okemos summer programs will not be offered this year. Assistant Superintendent Bailey explained how this information will be communicated to families and noted that extended school year services are always available for students who have demonstrated needs as determined by their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following; Sunmee Han, Hannah Joy Burrack, Geneva Vanlerberg, Kelly Burzych, Rebecca Gulbransen, Lindsey and Russell LaForte, Brenda Leung, Sabrina Potterpin, Laura Bishop, Rachel Ruddock, Maryam Thompson, Ashley Diener, Aung Moe, Ralph Pyle, Michael Pemble, Lynette Pemble, Everett Thompson, Bill Pemble, Christine Smith, Craig and Ann Newell, Nicole Guerrero and Julio Benitez Lopez, Jodie Emerson, and Ashley Latinen, regarding teacher contracts. President Buffett stressed that the board hears the concerns from the community and cares about our teaching staff.

Trustee Cavanaugh updated on the Finance Committee, which met earlier today to discuss how it will organize its meetings and support the superintendent and the superintendent's team. Trustee Shrestha and President Buffett gave a brief update on the Policy Committee, which consists of them,Trustee Burns and the superintendent.

Superintendent Hood gave a presentation on the director-level evaluation process for the 2026-2027 school year. The components of the evaluation will include goal setting, a mid-year review for progress monitoring, evidence collection, a summative evaluation conference, and a performance rating based on rubric descriptors. This process is intended to establish best practices for both performance expectations and a consistent evaluation process. The goal is to implement this process in the 2026-2027 school year, including director-level contracts and renewals, which are currently not in place.

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, 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 February 9, 2026; Item 2: Approval of the employment of Kerry Shadbolt, Alyssa Ash, Eve Bracken, and Laura Brandt to the Okemos Public Schools.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Shulawn Doxie, that the board approve the purchase of two new school buses at a cost not to exceed $303,794.00 and funded by the 2022 Bond.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Leeni Shrestha, that the board authorize the superintendent to amend Bid Pack #8 GMP from the 2022 Bond in an amount not to exceed $300,000 for identified additional kitchen scope and funded by the 2022 Bond.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board waive the reading and adopt the resolution that authorizes the third series bond sale for the 2022 Bond.

Superintendent Hood noted that the bond sale was very successful, and is in part due to the district's credit rating and good standing with the fiscal management of the district.

President Buffett asked for a Roll Call vote.

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**

Superintendent Hood shared a presentation on an administrative furniture purchase as funded by the 2022 Bond. The information was prepared by Assistant Superintendent Bailey and Operations Director Lieber and they discussed the details for changes for the Business/HR Office.

No one addressed the board.

Superintendent Hood reminded the board that Bid Pack 7 information will be sent out to the board members next week in advance of the March 9 meeting due to regular board meeting schedule changes to accommodate the superintendent interviews. President Buffett reminded everyone about the superintendent interviews taking place on February 23 - 25 at the Okemos High School Library Media Center, starting at 5:30 p.m. each day.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh, 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	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 9:20 p.m.

The board reconvened from Executive Session at 10:29 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

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 10:30 p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary