

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
ORONO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 278

HELD ON APRIL 27, 2026

ORONO DISTRICT OFFICE - ASSEMBLY ROOM | 685 N OLD CRYSTAL BAY RD, LONG LAKE MN

Present: Sarah Borchers, Wendy Lundsgaard, Gavin Tempero, Laura Wallander, Tim Usset, Kristine Flesher. Todd Madson arrived during Item 5: Superintendent's Report on Excellence.

Absent:

Before the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, board chair Borchers, along with board members Wallander and Madson, hosted Coffee & Conversation with community members.

1. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Orono Independent School District No. 278 was held on Monday, April 27, 2026, and called to order by Board Chair Sarah Borchers at 7:09 PM.

2. - Pledge of Allegiance

3. - Consideration of the Agenda

4. - Consent Agenda

- Approved Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on April 13, 2026
- Approved the appointment of Craig Lachowitz, full-time Social Studies Teacher at Orono High School for the 2026-2027 School Year, effective August 20, 2026, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Rachel Gustafson, full-time Science Teacher at Orono Middle School for the 2026-27 School Year, effective August 20, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Jessie Jensen, full-time School Psychologist at Orono Intermediate School and Orono Schumann Elementary School for the 2026-27 School Year, effective August 20, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Joseph Huber, full-time Business Teacher at Orono High School, effective June 5, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Mary Jordan, full-time Class I Custodian at Orono Schumann Elementary School and Orono Intermediate School, effective April 20, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Sarah Olson, full-time Special Education Paraeducator at Orono High School, effective June 5, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Hannah Pelegano, Earling Learning Student & Program Support Specialist at Orono Discovery Center, effective April 20, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Mason Prest, Boys Tennis JV Coach, effective April 21, 2026, for the 2026 Spring Season.
- Approved the resignation of Sandra Acevedo, part-time SPARKS Coordinator for Orono Community Education and part-time Spartan Kids Teacher, effective April 15, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Mason Kraimer, part-time Orono Activities Center Monitor, effective April 13, 2027.

- Accepted Donations Totaling \$18,775.30
- Approved Treasurer's Report for March 2026
- Approved Electronic Fund Transfers for March 2026
- Approved Bill Vouchers:324540-324656, EP Register: 903381-903395, EFT Vouchers:324, 6688 and Capital One: 53642-53657

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda: Wallander

Second: Lundsgaard

Vote: APPROVED - 5 in favor, 0 against, Vice Chair Madson was absent from the vote.

5. – Superintendent's Report on Excellence

Superintendent Dr. Kristine Flesher provided a comprehensive update on district accomplishments:

Academics: AP enrollment continues to grow, with 620 students scheduled to take 1,150 exams starting May 4. Seventh-grade History Day students were recognized for state-level success, including Nathan Baird (4th place, Junior Paper) and several honorable mentions .

Activities:

- o The Speech Team was crowned Section 2 AA Champions for the first time in program history and placed 5th overall at the State Tournament.
- o Visual arts students received superior honors at the MSHSL Art Show .
- o DECA: 17 students are currently competing at the International Career Development Conference in Atlanta.
- o Student Senate: Earned a National Gold Council Excellence Certification; Ella Palm was elected President of the Minnesota Association of Honor Societies.

Athletics: Dr. Flesher highlighted strong starts for spring sports, including Girls Flag Football (2-0), Baseball (6-1 and ranked #4), and a new school record in pole vault by Luke Withrow (14' 3").

Community Support: The Polar Plunge involved 183 students and raised over \$18,079 for unified programs and Special Olympics Minnesota.

6. – Board Members' Questions and Comments

Todd Madson (Finance/Facilities): Reported a balanced preliminary budget for the next fiscal

year with a 1% growth target and a projected pathway to increase the fund balance.

Laura Wallander (Meet & Confer): Discussed a new proposal for teacher leadership salary schedule, summer construction communication, and shared space coordination with community education.

Wendy Lundsgaard (Legislative Update): Shared concerns regarding potential state cuts to special education funding and discussed the status of compensatory revenue and one-time safety grants.

Sarah Borchers: Commended the high school production of *Blithe Spirit* and noted open leadership positions within the Spartan Parent Association.

7. – Old Business

7. A – Policy Review

No significant changes since the policies were presented for their first reading on Monday, April 13, 2026. Policies were presented for approval. Policy 508 presented for removal.

7.A.1. Policy 521: Student Disability Nondiscrimination

7.A.2. Policy 532: Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to Remove Students with IEPs from School Grounds

7.A.3. Policy 533: Wellness

7.A.4. Policy 534: School Meals

7.A.5. Policy 508: School-Sponsored Curriculum and Non-Curriculum Related Student Groups and Activities

Motion to approve policy changes as presented: Madson

Second: Usset

Vote: APPROVED - 6 in favor, 0 against.

7.B. Other Old Business as Necessary

No other old business was brought forward.

8. – New Business

8.A. - Termination and Non-Renewal of Probationary Teaching Contracts

RESOLUTION NON-RENEWING PROBATIONARY TEACHING CONTRACTS

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes section 122A.40, subdivision 5, states that the first three consecutive years of a teacher's first teaching experience in Minnesota in a single district is deemed to be a probationary period of employment, and that the probationary period in each district in which the teacher is thereafter employed is one year; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes section 122A.40, subdivision 5, further states that any annual contract with a probationary teacher may or may not be renewed as the school board shall see fit, provided that the board gives the teacher written notice of the nonrenewal before July 1;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of Independent School District No. 278, Orono, as follows:

1. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 122A.40, subdivision 5, the School Board hereby declines to renew the annual teaching contract of the following probationary teacher(s) effective at the end of this school year:

Mary Madsen

Joseph Dokken
Kari Heitke
Adara Kamarainen
Robin Zgutowicz
Amanda Morton

2. As a result of this Resolution, the District's employment relationship with the above-named probationary teachers will terminate effective June 30, 2026.

3. The School Board has reviewed and hereby approves the written notice of nonrenewal for each affected probationary teacher. Each teacher may make a written request that the Board of Education state its reasons for the non-renewal of her/his teaching contract. Such a request must be made, however, within ten (10) days after receiving notice of School Board action.

The School Board Clerk is directed to sign the written notices on behalf of the School Board. The reasons for non-renewal are classified as private personnel data under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, unless the non-renewal represents the final disposition of disciplinary action.

4. The Executive Director of Human Resources, or a designee, is directed to serve the affected teachers with a copy of this Resolution and the approved written notice for that teacher before July 1. If possible, the notice(s) should be hand-delivered.

NOTICE OF NON-RENEWAL

Dear [INSERT NAME],

At a meeting held on April 27, 2026, the School Board of Independent School District No. 278 adopted a resolution non-renewing your annual teaching contract and terminating your employment effective at the end of this school year. The School Board took this action pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 122A.40, subdivision 5. A copy of the School Board's resolution is enclosed for your review.

You may make a written request that the Board of Education state its reasons for the non-renewal of your teaching contract. Such a request must be made, however, within ten (10) days after receiving this notice.

Appropriate supervision was furnished to you during your probationary employment in the form of direct supervision by a licensed administrator and/or your participation in the teacher evaluation process. This supervision provided the District with a sufficient opportunity to evaluate your performance.

The School Board wishes you well in future endeavors.

Sincerely,

School Board Clerk
Independent School District No. 278

Motion to approve Resolution Non-Renewing Probationary Teaching Contract for Mary

Madsen: Wallander

Second: Usset

Roll Call Vote - APPROVED: Usset-Aye, Wallander-Aye, Borchers-Aye, Madson-Aye, Lundsgaard-Aye, Tempero-Aye.

Motion to approve Resolution Non-Renewing Probationary Teaching Contract for Joseph

Dokken: Wallander

Second: Usset

Roll Call Vote - APPROVED: Usset-Aye, Wallander-Aye, Borchers-Aye, Madson-Aye, Lundsgaard-Aye, Tempero-Aye.

Motion to approve Resolution Non-Renewing Probationary Teaching Contract for Kari Heitke:

Wallander

Second: Usset

Roll Call Vote - APPROVED: Usset-Aye, Wallander-Aye, Borchers-Aye, Madson-Aye, Lundsgaard-Aye, Tempero-Aye.

Motion to approve Resolution Non-Renewing Probationary Teaching Contract for Adara

Kamarainen: Wallander

Second: Lundsgaard

Roll Call Vote - APPROVED: Usset-Aye, Wallander-Aye, Borchers-Aye, Madson-Aye, Lundsgaard-Aye, Tempero-Aye.

Motion to approve Resolution Non-Renewing Probationary Teaching Contract for Robin

Zgutowicz: Wallander

Second: Usset

Roll Call Vote - APPROVED: Usset-Aye, Wallander-Aye, Borchers-Aye, Madson-Aye, Lundsgaard-Aye, Tempero-Aye.

Motion to approve Resolution Non-Renewing Probationary Teaching Contract for Amanda Morton: Wallander

Second: Usset

Roll Call Vote - APPROVED: Usset-Aye, Wallander-Aye, Borchers-Aye, Madson-Aye, Lundsgaard-Aye, Tempero-Aye.

8.B – Financial Mid-Year Update

Director of Business Service, Nick Taintor, presented the 2025-26 mid-year budget revisions. Highlights included stable enrollment, 76% of budget allocation toward classroom instruction, and an unassigned fund balance projection of 6.53%.

Motion to approve Revised Budget 2025-26 for all funds of the District: Usset

Second: Madson

Vote: APPROVED - 6 in favor, 0 against.

8. C - Policy Review (First Reading)

Dr. Ruhland, Executive Director of Learning and Accountability, presented proposed changes in the following policies:

8.C.1. Policy 601: School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals

8.C.2. Policy 602: Organization of School Calendar and School Day

8.C.3. Policy 603: Curriculum Development

8.C.4. Policy 604: Instructional Curriculum

8.C.5. Policy 605: Alternative Educational Services

8.C.6. Policy 606: Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Policies will be presented for a second reading and vote at the May 11, 2026, meeting.

8D. – Other New Business as Necessary

No other new business was brought forward.

The next Regular School Board Meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 7:00 PM in the District Office Assembly Room.

The meeting was adjourned to a work session for a presentation by Ali Chorley, The Orono Coalition, at 7:56 PM.

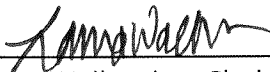
Motion to adjourn: Wallander

Second: Usset

Vote: APPROVED - 6 in favor, 0 against.



Sarah Borchers, *Chair*



Laura Wallander, *Clerk*