Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING June 8, 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, Andy Phelps, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Leeni Shrestha, Jason Burns, and Jillian Winn
Members Absent:	None
Administration:	Superintendent Matt Olson, Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey, Executive Director of Finance Elizabeth Lentz, Director of Human Resources Jennifer Emmendorfer

Superintendent Olson presented the 2025-26 Okemos High School Athletics Annual Report submitted by Athletic Director Ken Hintze. An update was given on both Chippewa Middle School and Cornell Elementary. Superintendent Olson thanked staff who have been moving their classrooms while finishing up end of year requirements. Superintendent Olson attended his first meeting with the Student Advisory Council at Okemos High School. Students talked about what the purpose of the meeting should be and how to hear the student voice. Lastly, budget updates out of the state have not been forthcoming. We are staying tuned in to the state level, but there are not a lot of updates other than what we already know.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following: Katie Shahinian regarding repurposing Cornell furniture; Michael Gawecki regarding driver's education partnerships and student cost differences; Karen Hanzek and Mike Schram regarding journalism program; Carolyn Sekedat regarding teacher contract and proposed budget cuts; Nanette Naser regarding potential cut of clerk positions; Molly Turner regarding proposed 2026-27 budget reductions and broader financial direction of the district; Karen Sanders regarding OHS administration and information for staff before summer break; Emily Edger, Laura Bell, Kristi Howart, and Heather Paris regarding potential counselor reductions; Jennifer Thompson, Erin Johnson, and Heather Paris regarding proposed but to building substitutes; Theresa Rice-Olowolafe regarding later start time for students; Erin Kanitz regarding packing up Cornell Elementary; Jody Noble recognizing and celebrating the incredible work of the Chippewa Middle School staff as they prepare to move into a new building; Rob Rapson regarding use of athletic facilities; Catherine Gerrish, Amanda Dernovshek, Lin Family, Rachel Guttridge, Paul Vallin, Lea Yam, Grace Chapman, Leslie Pico, Jaclyn Green, Michael Green, Hailee Ridge, Trent Henry, Shawn Albrecht, Halie Albrecht, Ashlea Phenicie, Amanda Dernovshek, Colleen Gast, and Kelsey Ellis regarding proposed cut to Edgewood daycare; Jessica Warren, Carley Ivers, Trisha Garvey, Erica Harris, Dima Allo, Amy Olivarez, Kara Womack, Krista Ruonavaara, Christine Batora, Soleil Campbell, Christine Skoutelas, Samantha Forman, Angela Hussain, Katie Parker, Katie Thorington, Brie Wellington, Nichole Berridge, Erin Binkley, Adrienne Hagon, Corey Neiland, Rachael Friend, Nicole Popovich, Kelly Bertilrud, Becky Krawczyk, Maureen Chromiak, Tasha Rader, Elizabeth Gauthier, Lisa Hall, Erika Parsons, Adam Clements, Kristin Hundt, Suzie Ziel, Carrie McCarthy, Jennifer Keith, Megan Lloyd, Amanda Bussa, Joe Thornton, Kristi Howart, Ted Sczepanski, Kara VanDyken, Dan Leaman, Katie Sachdev, Erin Binkley, Heather Paris, Missy LaMarre, and Alexia Mansour regarding proposed but to MTSS Coach positions. Candace and David Seaman, Valerie Hedges, Daniel Jacobson, Simon Belisle, Laura Belisle, Christine Batora, Sandra Ortiz, Dave Gupta, Rashi Gupta, Amit Shah, Fawaz Kaseer, Farnaz Nezami, Jenna Pierce, Yangfan Liu, Priya Chakraborty, Yuying Xie, Hardik Gandhi, Shapna Shah, Courtney Hines, Dristen Boeskool, Courtney Isanhart, Alyssa Lochinski, Alexa Schrock, Ken Schrock, Jessica and Lance MacDonald, Martha Rutledge, Vinupriya Veerasamy, Leanna Kent, Emily Greenberg, Jennifer Eddy, Ying Yan, Katie Arends, Megan Nyquist, Tetyana

Taragara, Ashleigh Salazar, Jane Stone, Beth Brauer, Lindsey Klug, Lynette Pemble, Rajiv

Ranganathan & Mei-Hua Lee, Autumn Hart, Jessica Scott, and Sage Hales-Ho regarding proposed but to Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

Trustee Cavanaugh gave a report along with Trustee Burns from the Advocacy Committee that letters were written to legislators following up on what is being requested for the budget. The last Trust-Tea event was held May 26 at Biggby Coffee with thirteen community members in attendance.

Okemos resident Jennifer Keith regarding proposed cuts to MTSS coaches
Okemos resident Sue Hallman regarding proposed cuts to MTSS coaches
Okemos resident Paul Stemer regarding the choir program and lack of support being given
Okemos resident Elliot Belisle regarding the proposed cut of the Gifted & Talented Coordinator
Okemos resident Simon Belisle regarding the proposed cut of the Gifted & Talented Coordinator
Okemos resident Alexandra Atang regarding proposed close of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Kelly Miller regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Lansing resident and Okemos High School teacher Ricky Brooks regarding proposed cut of building subs
Okemos resident Lea Yam regarding proposed close of Edgewood 0-2 program
Holt resident Karly Pulford regarding proposed close of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Eric Juenke regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Okemos resident Paul Vallin regarding proposed closure of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Amy Odom regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Okemos resident Laura Freidhoff regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Okemos resident Joe Freidhoff regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Okemos resident Tracey Epley regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Okemos resident Daniel Lance regarding proposed closure of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Ashlea Phenicie regarding proposed closure of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Cheri Meyer regarding proposed cuts to MTSS coaches
Okemos resident Yuying Xie regarding the proposed cut of the Gifted & Talented Coordinator
Okemos resident Elena Mapley regarding proposed close of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Lottie-Brooke Mims regarding proposed cut of building subs and MTSS coaches
Okemos resident Lucas Joncas regarding proposed cut in building subs, reduction of counselors
East Lansing resident DeeLane Camling regarding proposed close of Edgewood 0-2 program
Okemos resident Kristin Hundt regarding proposed cuts to MTSS coaches
Okemos resident Rebecca Mercado Jones inquired about alternative options with budget
Okemos resident Emily Backus regarding proposed cuts to MTSS coaches
Okemos resident Yangfan Liu regarding early intervention and the importance of it

President Buffett spoke on how the community has come together and positively communicated with the board on the proposed budget. Trustee Cavanaugh reminded everyone to write to legislators as the state is where our funding comes from and where they can find forms to do so.

Secretary Doxie reported that there is an edit that needs to be updated for the District Handbook. Page 5 under Section 504 Title II Coordinator for Adults, lists John Hood as Superintendent along with Superintendent Olson's email. This will need to be updated.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Shulawn Doxie, that the Board approve Item 1 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 26, 2026, Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Meeting of May 26, 2026.

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

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Jillian Winn, that the board approve the 2026-2027 District Handbook for distribution to students and parents noting the edit made by Secretary Doxie.

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

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, **SUPPORTED** by Andy Phelps, that the board adopt the new curriculum for use at Okemos Public School beginning with the 2026-2027 school year: Elementary & Middle School Textbook Adoption Proposals: K-5th Grade Math; 7th-8th Grade ELA and High School Textbook Adoption Proposals: Sports Literature; AP Calculus; Biology; and AP Microeconomics.

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

MOVED by Jillian Winn, **SUPPORTED** by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board waive the reading and certify collection of summer tax levy for Okemos Public Schools in the amount specified by the tax levy provided by the Ingham Intermediate School District and negotiation of the fee for collecting the tax levy

Roll Call

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

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

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Leeni Shrestha, that the board waive the reading and adopt the resolution permitting Okemos Public Schools to continue membership in the Michigan High School Athletic Association for the year August 1, 2026, through July 31, 2027.

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

Executive Director of Finance Elizabeth Lentz led the discussion regarding the 2026-27 Budget Planning Conversation. Director Lentz presented the multi-year budget projection and reviewed the impact of $1.2 million in budget reductions, as well as the proposed 2026-27 Budget Reductions and Revenue Enhancements. Superintendent Matt Olson presented outcomes from May 26, 2026, Board Work Session. The Board's average rankings are aligned closely with the administrative rankings. Superintendent Olson reviewed the levels of proposed reductions, including Levels Two and Three, which are not recommended for implementation at this time.

The board discussed in length the proposed budget reduction items by board rankings.

Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey recommended three applicants for the PHASE (Personal Health and Sexuality Education) Advisory Board. Applicants recommended are Mehgan Loughlin-Krusky, Jamie Storey, and Timothy Erickson.

Okemos High School Assistant Principals Allison Cironi and Joseph Schmidt presented the 2026-27 High School Academic Handbook and the proposed changes.

Okemos resident Anjali Sardar regarding the OHS/CMS Choir
Okemos resident Sophia Potter regarding the OHS/CMS Choir

President Buffett adjourned the Regular Meeting at 11:11p.m.

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary