

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
ORONO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 278
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
DISTRICT OFFICE ASSEMBLY ROOM | 685 N OLD CRYSTAL BAY RD, LONG LAKE, MN

Present: Todd Madson, Wendy Lundsgaard, Gavin Tempero, Timothy Usset, Laura Wallander, and Kristine Flesher

Absent: Sarah Borchers

Community Members' Questions and Comments: none

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Orono Independent School District No. 278 was held on Monday, September 14, 2026, and called to order by acting Board Chair, Todd Madson, at 7:00 PM.

4. Consideration of the Agenda

MOTION to approve the agenda: Lundsgaard

Second: Wallander

VOTE: Approved – 5 in favor, 0 against

5. Consent Agenda

- Approved Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on August 17, 2026
- Approved the appointment of Susan Truax, as Long Term Substitute Special Education Teacher at Orono Intermediate School, effective September 1, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Cindy Blumer, as full-time Fourth Grade Teacher at Orono Intermediate School, effective August 19, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Lori Soule, as full-time Preschool Teacher at Orono Discovery Center, effective August 19, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Carmen Baysinger, as full-time Building Substitute Teacher at Orono Intermediate School, effective August 25, 2026, through June 5, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Jennifer Pfeffer-Dittes, as Long Term Substitute English Teacher at Orono High School, effective September 21, 2026, through January 25, 2026.
- Approved the unpaid leave of absence for Joseph Suchomel, as full-time German and World Language and Cultures Teacher at Orono Middle School and Orono High School, effective for the 2026-2027 school year.
- Approved the resignation of Bryce Pettit, as .75 FTE Physical Education Teacher at Orono Intermediate School, effective June 5, 2026.
- Approved the change of assignment of Kristan Nalezny, from Long Term Substitute Second Grade Teacher to full-time Second Grade Teacher at Orono Schumann Elementary School, effective August 24, 2026.
- Approved the change of assignment of Margo Mattei, from full-time Second Grade Teacher to full-time Kindergarten Teacher at Orono Schumann Elementary, effective August 24, 2026.

- Approved the appointment of Jennifer Chapman, as part-time Districtwide Special Education Paraprofessional at Orono Schools, effective August 17, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Dalay Perez-Negrete, as full-time Special Education Paraprofessional at Orono High School, effective August 31, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Laura Gagne, as part-time Paraprofessional at Orono Schumann Elementary School, effective August 31, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Keri Weiss, as part-time Paraprofessional at Orono Intermediate School, effective August 31, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Tracy Erb, RN BSN, as part-time School Nurse at Orono Middle School, effective August 27, 2026.
- Approved the resignation due to retirement of Duwayne Friesen, as Districtwide Class IV Custodian Carpenter for Orono Schools, effective June 1, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Miles Aguilar, as part-time Activity Center Monitor at Orono Activity Center, effective September 3, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Justine Petit, as part-time Activity Center Monitor at Orono Activity Center, effective June 3, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Wesley McLean, as part-time Activity Center Monitor at Orono Activity Center, effective June 1, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Alexander Pilakowski, as part-time Activity Center Monitor at Orono Activity Center, effective June 1, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Cade Hovland, as part-time Activity Center Monitor at Orono Activity Center, effective June 24, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Caroline Fairbrother, as part-time Program Aide at Orono Spartan Kids, effective June 18, 2026.
- Approved Vouchers and Payments:
 - Bill Vouchers: 325619-325815, 2088-2097
 - EP Register Items: 903566-903626
 - EFT Vouchers: 332-333, 6717-6721
 - Capital One Items: 53778-53807

MOTION to approve the Consent Agenda: Wallander

Second: Usset

VOTE: Approved – 5 in favor, 0 against

6. – Superintendent's Report on Excellence [00:02:14]

- School Year Kickoff & Connectedness: The 2026-27 school year is off to a strong start, with staff actively working to build relationships and welcome students. This commitment to connectedness was highlighted on September 4, when staff across the district wore grant-funded "We Believe in You" T-shirts.
- ASBO Award: The Business Services Department received the national ASBO Certificate of Excellence in financial reporting for the FY25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.
- Upcoming Events: Homecoming runs from September 29 to October 2, culminating in a 2:00 p.m. parade, a tailgate party, and a 7:00 p.m. football game against Zimmerman. Additionally, the district is partnering with Maple Plain for Art in the Park on September 22.

- Fall Activities Highlights: Fall athletic programs are having highly successful seasons across the board. Notably, the football team is ranked #1 in the state, both cross-country teams are ranked in the top 10, girls tennis is ranked #6, and girls soccer coach Erin Murray became only the third soccer coach in Minnesota to reach 300 career wins.

7. – Board Members' Questions and Comments [00:08:40]

Facilities & Finance – Acting Chair Todd Madson

- 2026 Projects: The parking lot replacement and intermediate school tuckpointing are substantially complete and within budget.
- 2027 Capital Planning: The committee is prioritizing upcoming capital projects, including parking lot replacements and exterior building work, and reviewing long-term asset management options.
- Tennis Courts Update: MCWD permitting schedule adjustments will shift court usability to Spring 2027; all four courts remain buildable on-site without rework.
- Enrollment: Total K-12 enrollment stands at 2,981 students, matching projections.

Tim Usset – Noted attendance at the grand opening of the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum in Little Falls.

Laura Wallander - Highlighted the district's national ASBO award for financial reporting transparency and excellence.

Wendy Lundsgaard - Reported on the recent AMSD session highlighting results from the Morris Leatherman survey, which indicated strong, positive community support for public education across Minnesota.

8. – Old Business

8. A – Other Old Business as Necessary

No other old business was brought forward.

9. – New Business

9. A – Presentation of check from Orono Foundation for Education [00:13:07]

Ms. Katie Hollerman, Board Chair of the Orono Foundation for Education, along with her daughter, Miss Mollie Hollerman, a senior at Orono High School, presented the board with a check on behalf of the foundation.

9. B – 2023-2024 Superintendent Goals [00:23:00]

Dr. Flesher presented her goals for the 2026-2027 school year to the board for a first reading.

9. C – Approval of Bid for Discovery Center Kitchen Remodel Project (ACTION) [00:23:48]

Motion to approve: Wallander

Second: Usset

Vote: Approved - 5 in favor, 0 against.

9. D – Resolution for Dissolution of MSHSL Cooperative Sponsorship Agreement for Nordic Ski with Delano Schools (ACTION) [00:30:37]

Motion to approve: Lundsgaard

Second: Wallander

Vote: Approved - 5 in favor, 0 against.

9. E – Approval of MSHSL Cooperative Sponsorship Agreement for Nordic Ski with Delano Schools and Rockford Area Schools (ACTION) [00:32:23]

Motion to approve: Usset

Second: Tempero

Vote: approved - 5 in favor, 0 against.

9. F – Community Education Update [00:33:08]

Ms. Tiffany Clifton, Director of Community Education, provided the board with an update on Community Education. Orono School Board YouTube Channel [

9. D – Other New Business as Necessary

No other New Business was brought forward.

The next Regular School Board Meeting will be held on Monday, September 28, 2026 at 7:00 PM in the District Office Assembly Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

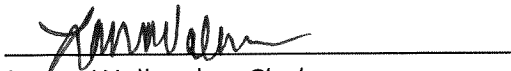
Motion to adjourn: Lundsgaard

Second: Usset

Vote: approved - 5 in favor, 0 against.



Sarah Borchers, *Chair*



Laura Wallander, *Clerk*

Portions of this document were prepared with assistance from AI-based summarization software and reviewed by district staff for accuracy.

Timestamps correspond to the meeting recording available on the Orono School Board YouTube Channel or on the oronoschools.org website.