

Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING August 24, 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, Jason Burns, Jillian Winn, and Leeni Shrestha
Members Absent: None
Administration: Superintendent Matt Olson, Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey, Interim Finance Director Director Jen Shattuck, Human Resources Director Jody Noble

Trustee Shrestha shared how she was impressed with all of the support at the Chippewa Middle School ribbon cutting/open house; Trustee Doxie seconded Trustee Shrestha's sentiment on the open house at Chippewa; wonderful job to the students who assisted with Freshman Connect; President Buffett also spoke to the ribbon cutting/open house at Chippewa; agreed that Freshman Connect is a great example of the larger value of Okemos Public Schools and this happens in many other ways in the district; Trustee Burns spoke on Cornell progress after attending open house; Trustee Winn mentioned how opening day, kick starts, and open houses all went well and that there was much positive energy, Trustee Cavanaugh stated that the high school kick start went much better than last year; Opening Day video produced by Nathan Brown showed the historic connection and tied it to the present day.

Danielle Tandoc, OHS Science teacher and WILL Advisor, along with several of the WILL student members presented to the board. WILL stands for Women in Leadership and Legacy.

No public comment.

Discussion on the new state law requirement to have a cell phone policy in place: The policy committee met and had conversation on cell phone policy. Practices are consistent and some exceed state law requirements. Electronic devices policy with state statute - time for discussion for action items in this meeting. Thru policy recommendation looked at was (insert policy number), it is currently in practice at Chippewa and OHS, Trustee Burns thanked those who gave input, not only cell phones, would include smart watches, computers, blu-tooth headphones, computers, etc. Trustee Doxie inquired about what has been our practice this past year, trustee cavanaugh - appreciate that we left it up to the principals/teachers.

Superintendent Olson recognized all those who were a part of Opening Day, including the OEF and trustees, this year's theme was reflection; this Wednesday was the first day of school and Supt. Olson was able to make it around to all of the buildings, Kick-Starts and Freshmen Connection were well planned and attended; Supt. Olson also echoed the comments about the Chippewa ribbon cutting; shout out to the Operations Team who has been working hard this summer, we have had multiple building floods, pipes breaking, moving Cornell, and moving Chippewa

Trustee Phelps spoke on the value of clubs; President Buffett read correspondence and spoke on Trust-teas events; he reported that the number one concern is technology exposure; the next Trust-teas event will be Thursday, August 26. Trustee Winn shared information on the board retreat; draft agenda will be going out to board members; Trustee Phelps gave an update from the Facilities Committee including that the footings will be in the ground by the end of September at the new Cornell; high school kitchen renovation will be ready to go for the first day of school; parking lot lights at Okemos High School have been fixed and the fire system is done and replaced; steering

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committee for the 2027 bond has been formed, the first meeting will be September 16, 2026; Trustee Cavanaugh asked about discussion to move board meetings from Zoom vs YouTube.

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, **SUPPORTED** by Andy Phelps, that the board approve items 1 through 2 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 30, 2026. Item 2: Approval of new hires as presented.

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

Superintendent Olson recognized administrative hires Lindsey Price, Cornell Elementary Principal, Jody Noble, Human Resources Director, and Jen Shattuck, Interim Director of Finance. He recognized Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey for serving as the interim human resources director during this time.

Recognition of Appreciation: Elizabeth Lentz

Motion: Shulawn

Support: Jillian

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Jason Burns, that the board establish the dates of regular meetings of the board of education to generally be the second and fourth Monday of each month, adjusted for Mondays with no school; the time of each meeting to begin at 7:00 p.m., with no new discussion after 10:00 p.m.; and the place of meetings to be the Community Conference Room at Central School; and that the board directs administration to publish the date/time/location of these meetings on the district's web site.

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

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board retains Thrun Law Firm, P.C. as legal counsel for the 2026-2027 school year.

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

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board retained Maner Costerisan P.C. as auditor for the 2026-2027 school year.

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

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board designates Michigan School District Liquid Assets Fund Plus, Fifth Third Bank, and PNC Bank as depositories for school funds for the 2026-2027 school year, which includes Accounts Payable, Payroll, Debt Retirement Activity, Food Service, Student/School Activity and Building & Site Sinking Fund.

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

Discussion on amending Policy 5209 to 5209-O, and retain legal authority citation basis.

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MOVED by Jason Burns, **SUPPORTED** by Leeni Shrestha, that the board approve changing the name of Policy 5209 to Policy 5209-O.

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

MOVED by Leeni Shrestha, **SUPPORTED** by Andy Phelps, that the board adopt the cell phone policy as presented.

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

Chippewa Middle School's open position for principal has been posted, Jody Noble will be in that position until Labor Day, Lara Slee has agreed to step in and help in that space until the position has been filled.

No public comment.

President Buffett adjourned the Regular Meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Shulawn Doxie, Secretary