

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ORONO INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 278
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

Present: Sarah Borchers, Wendy Lundsgaard, Todd Madson, Gavin Tempero, Timothy Usset, Laura Wallander, and Kristi Flesher
Absent: none

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Orono Independent School District No. 278 was held on Monday, September 28, 2026, and called to order by Board Chair Sarah Borchers at 7:00 PM.

3. Consideration of the Agenda

4. Consent Agenda

- Approved Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on September 14, 2026
- Approved the appointment of Gregory Pusch as Long-Term Substitute Science Teacher at Orono High School, effective September 14, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Brianna Althoff as Long-Term Substitute First Grade Teacher at Orono Schumann Elementary School, effective October 1, 2026, through March 19, 2027.
- Approved the appointment of Diane Bacon as Long-Term Substitute Sixth Grade Social Studies Teacher at Orono Middle School, effective September 22, 2026, through approximately October 30, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Carrie Ross as Long Term Substitute Parent Educator at Orono Discovery Center effective August 25, 2026, through December 18, 2026.
- Approved the resignation due to retirement of Andy Lucey, full-time Physical Education Teacher at Orono Middle School, effective January 22, 2027.
- Approved the resignation due to retirement of Amy Roehl, Early Childhood Teacher at Orono Discovery Center, effective October 14, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Christina Flaten as part-time Special Education Paraprofessional at Orono Schumann Elementary School, effective August 31, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Paul Mullenbach as full-time Districtwide Maintenance Technician Carpenter at Orono Schools, effective October 12, 2026
- Approved the change of assignment of Shauna Shurson, part-time Paraprofessional at Orono Intermediate School to Districtwide ELL Paraeducator, effective September 9, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Caleb Hughes as part-time Activities Center Monitor Lead at Orono Activities Center, effective September 16, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Drew Elsenpeter as part-time Activities Center Monitor at Orono Activities Center, effective September 29, 2026.
- Accepted donations totaling \$19,546.27.
- Approved the Treasurer's Report for May 2025, June 2025, and July 2025.
- Approved the Electronic Fund Transfers for May 2025, June 2025, and July 2025.
- Approved Bill Vouchers: 325816-325933, EP Register items: 903627-903647, EFT Vouchers: 334-336, 6722, and Capital One items: 53808-53826.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda: MADSON

Second: USSET

Vote: APPROVED - 6 in favor, 0 against

5. – Superintendent's Report on Excellence

Dr. Flesher recognized the six Orono School Board members in celebration of Minnesota School Board Recognition Month and thanked them for their service, leadership, and commitment to the Orono learning community.

She then recognized members of the Class of 2027 for outstanding academic achievement through the National Merit Scholarship Program. Ethan Weiss was named a National Merit Semifinalist, and nine students—Liam Barkley, Ezra Cowden, Adam Haislet, Sophie Middleton, Cora Palm, Ella Palm, Carly Rausch, Zach Rothe, and Dylan Rutherford—were named National Merit Commended Students.

An activities update highlighted strong performances across Orono athletics. The boys cross country team placed third at the GRIAC meet, led by Eddie Loberg, who finished fifth individually, while the girls placed fourth, led by Jocie Hallen's eighth-place finish. Lula Coffey was the top girls finisher at the Eden Prairie Under the Lights meet. The undefeated, state-ranked football team improved to 4-0, while boys soccer, girls soccer, girls swimming and diving, girls tennis, and girls volleyball continue to have successful seasons. Dr. Flesher also congratulated girls swimming and diving head coach Reynolds on her first dual-meet victory.

Dr. Flesher encouraged the community to attend the middle school production of *The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza*, running October 8–10 at the Orono High School Fenholt Auditorium. And concluded her report by highlighting Homecoming Week activities, including the October 2 parade, community tailgate, pregame band concert, and Homecoming football game, and encouraged the community to come out and support Orono students.

6. – Board Members' Questions and Comments

Facilities and Finance Committee Meeting Update: Vice Chair Madson provided an update from the Facilities and Finance Committee meeting held September 21. The district's fiscal year 2026 preliminary financial results are ahead of the revised budget, with the unassigned fund balance expected to close at approximately 6.8%. The proposed Pay 2027 tax levy represents a 1.7% increase, one of the smallest year-over-year increases in recent years. The committee also reviewed enrollment trends, noting that resident enrollment is declining approximately 1.4% annually while open enrollment is offsetting the decline. The committee also discussed the Permanent School Fund, which will be addressed in greater detail during the meeting.

Policy Committee Meeting Update: Chair Borchers gave a brief update from the Policy Committee, with policy items to be discussed later in the meeting.

Board Member Updates:

Sarah Borchert – nothing additional to report.

Wendy Lundsgaard - provided an update from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) Executive and Legislative Committee, noting that the Compensatory Task Force and Blue-Ribbon Special Education Commission have completed their work, with reports due to the Minnesota Department of Education in mid-October. Wendy also reminded board members that the upcoming AMSD Board of Directors meeting featuring presentations by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and Lisa Demuth will not be recorded. Board members interested in attending were asked to RSVP.

Todd Madson – nothing additional to report.

Gavin Tempero – nothing to report.

Timothy Usset - shared a personal update that he recently traveled to Washington, D.C., for work and had the opportunity to visit the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial with his family.

Laura Wallander – nothing to report.

7. – Old Business

7. A – 2026-2027 Superintendent Goals (ACTION)

The 2026-2027 Superintendent Goals were presented for a second reading and approval. There were no adjustments made following the first reading at the September 14th meeting.

Motion to approve: USSET

Second: LUNDSTGAARD

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 – Policy Review (First Reading)

A.1 – Policy 506: Student Discipline

A.2 – Policy 722: Public Data and Data Subject Requests

A.3 – Policy 608: Instructional Services – Special Education

A.4 – Policy 610: Field Trips

A.5 – Policy 611: Home Schooling

8. B – Minnesota Permanent School Fund

8. C – Preliminary Year-End Financial Report

8. D – Preliminary Levy Certification (ACTION)

Motion to approve: USSET

Second: WALLANDER

Vote: APPROVED - 6 in favor, 0 against.

9. E – Other New Business as Necessary

No other New Business was brought forward.

The next Regular School Board Meeting will be held on Monday, October 12, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the District Office Assembly Room.

Motion to adjourn: MADSON

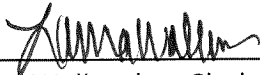
Second: USSET

Vote: APPROVED - 6 in favor, 0 against.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM to a work session for a report on Learning and Accountability.



Sarah Borchers, *Chair*



Laura Wallander, *Clerk*