

**OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Board of Education  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
October 8, 2025  
Report 25-52

Present: Adam Easlick, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicky, John Pappas, Olga Quick

Absent: Marlene Webster, Nick Henne

Vice President Shelly Ochodnicky called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Administration Building, 645 Alger St., Owosso, MI 48867.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Participation**

There were no public comments.

**Agenda**

**Thrun Policy Updates – June 11 and July 25**

Superintendent Brooks reviewed the Thrun Law policy update packets issued on June 11 and July 25. He reminded the Board that Thrun provides annual legal updates unless significant circumstances, such as a Supreme Court decision or an executive order, require additional revisions during the year. The July 25 update resulted from a recently settled Supreme Court case affecting three policies and prompted immediate clarification. Most other revisions were editorial or legal language adjustments to align district policy with current federal and state guidelines. The Superintendent noted that a reference packet outlining the affected policies, the nature of each change, and supporting rationale is available for Board review prior to final approval at an upcoming regular meeting. The Board acknowledged receipt of the information and expressed appreciation for the clear summary of changes.

**Bond Update**

Superintendent Brooks provided a brief progress report on communication efforts surrounding the upcoming bond proposal. He shared that several community presentations, including one earlier that morning at Kiwanis, have been well received and that feedback from residents has been largely positive. A new full-page advertisement appeared in the Argus Press, highlighting key elements of the proposal, including building and safety improvements and the commitment to a zero-mill increase. A community forum is scheduled for October 20 at the Washington Campus, where residents may ask questions and learn more about the proposal. Information has been distributed to staff and families through School Messenger and social-media updates.

Clark Construction continues to assist with design and communication materials, all of which are reviewed by Thrun Law.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Administration provided the Board with an updated copy of the District's emergency procedures manual, which outlines the appropriate responses for a wide range of potential situations, including weather emergencies, medical events, and safety-related incidents. The Superintendent emphasized the importance of clear communication, consistent terminology, and regular training for staff. Board members discussed how administrators and principals communicate internally during safety events and the frequency of updates provided to the Board. Administration will continue to share relevant notifications when appropriate while keeping sensitive details confidential for security purposes.

### **Health Insurance Update 2025–2026**

The Superintendent reported that new health-insurance rates reflect a 10.52 percent increase for the 2025–2026 plan year. Administration collaborated with employee groups and the MESSA representative to review plan options and evaluate cost-saving strategies. The District will continue offering four health-care plans to employees. Prescription drug costs remain the largest contributor to overall premium increases, although Owosso's percentage is comparable to or below many neighboring districts. The State's hard-cap allowance will rise 3.1 percent beginning next year. Staff education will continue to encourage cost-effective medical choices, such as utilizing urgent-care facilities when appropriate.

### **Enrollment 2025–2026**

Preliminary fall-count data show the District's enrollment remains close to the budgeted projection. The 2024–25 final count was 2,837 students, and the current count is within approximately a dozen of that figure. While most area districts are experiencing gradual enrollment decline, Owosso's totals remain stable relative to regional peers. Some fluctuations are attributed to families relocating out of state, students enrolling in online programs, or transfers to local parochial schools. Administration continues to monitor these trends, adjusting staffing and sectioning where needed to maintain efficiency and strong student support.

### **Discipline and Attendance Data 2025–2026**

Curriculum Director Cathy Dwyer presented attendance data for the first 30 days of the school year. The percentage of chronically absent students has decreased notably at the middle-school level, while other buildings show steady or improving rates. Staff continue to implement layered supports such as attendance-tracking letters, parent meetings, and positive-attendance incentives. Regarding discipline, administration is refining data-entry practices within PowerSchool by eliminating outdated codes and standardizing entries across buildings. This process will produce more accurate and consistent data for trend analysis. The Board also discussed timely communication when staff injuries occur and emphasized the importance of continued transparency in such matters.

### **Curriculum Updates**

Curriculum Director Cathy Dwyer reviewed ongoing instructional initiatives. Parent and student surveys have been posted online and shared via School Messenger. The November 4 Professional Development Day will include sessions on reading comprehension through HMH, differentiated instruction, math-recovery strategies, and trauma-informed practices. Teams recently participated in the MTSS Data Day at the RESD, where district staff analyzed student progress in reading, math, attendance, and behavior. Elementary grade-level meetings have been restructured to allow multiple buildings to meet jointly, strengthening collaboration and enabling instructional coaches to provide targeted support. At Lincoln High School, early semester data show 94 percent of students passing all classes and 88 percent with no behavior referrals.

### **This Is Our Story – The Next Chapter**

The Superintendent noted continued success in the District’s communication campaign, “This Is Our Story – The Next Chapter.” The slogan is being used at events, in publications, and in community spaces to promote district pride and highlight student achievements.

### **Round Table**

Board members discussed several topics related to community engagement and facility management. Concerns were raised about student behavior and supervision during home football games, particularly regarding unsupervised younger students and items brought into the stadium area. Members agreed that reinforcing existing rules and ensuring adequate supervision will help maintain safety and a positive environment for spectators. The Board also discussed parking and lighting conditions near the stadium, with suggestions for evaluating visibility and safety in darker areas. Members expressed appreciation for the large community turnout at recent games and the growing sense of school spirit. Additional conversation centered on the importance of maintaining district facilities as visible points of community pride and the need to pursue grant opportunities for infrastructure improvements made available through recent state appropriations.

### **Closed Session – Personnel Update**

Moved by Mowen, supported by Pappas, to enter closed session at 6:39 p.m. for the purpose of personnel updates. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to return to open session at 6:54 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to adjourn at 6:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. Minutes recorded by Sara Selleck.

Respectfully submitted,



Nick Henne, Secretary