

**Owosso Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Report 25-148**

Present: Adam Easlick, Nick Henne, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicki, John Pappas, Olga Quick, and Marlene Webster

Absent: None

President Ochodnicki called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Owosso Performing Arts Center, 765 E. North St., Owosso, MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Building Reports

Recognition of Retirees

The Board and administration recognized the following employees for their years of dedicated service to Owosso Public Schools. Superintendent Brooks noted that retirees honored represented a combined 205 years of service to the district.

Megan Dodak

Jennifer LaMay

Debra Clevenger

Melanie Lounds

Karen Van Epps

Kim Klapko

Michelle Whiteside

Jacalyn Little

Terry McHallam-LeDuc

Jillian Kowalczyk – MSBOA D5 Teacher of the Year

The Board recognized Jillian Kowalczyk, Owosso Public Schools Band Director, for being named Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association District 5 Teacher of the Year.

Superintendent Brooks praised Mrs. Kowalczyk's exceptional musical leadership, instructional expertise, and ability to develop student musicians at all levels. Representatives from MSBOA District 5 presented the award and shared excerpts from her nomination materials. They highlighted her commitment to student achievement,

continued tradition of excellence within the band program, strong relationships with students, and leadership within the music education profession.

The presenters noted that Mrs. Kowalczyk consistently inspires students through high expectations, mentorship, and dedication to both musical and personal growth. Her service to MSBOA, mentorship of new teachers, and contributions to district leadership initiatives were also recognized. The Board congratulated Mrs. Kowalczyk on this significant professional achievement.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Ellen DeLong presented her final report of the school year. She highlighted numerous accomplishments and activities occurring throughout Owosso High School, including the annual choir cabaret, district art show participation, woodworking competitions through MITES, student government elections, and academic competitions.

Ms. DeLong reported that twelve students participated in the Flint Metro Math and Science Competition, with five students placing in the top three of their respective categories. She also highlighted recognitions received by FFA students, all-academic team selections, athletic achievements, and academic honors earned by graduating seniors.

As she concluded her final report, Board members and Superintendent Brooks thanked Ms. DeLong for her service throughout the year. Brooks acknowledged her involvement in student government, band, track, and numerous other school activities while faithfully serving as student representative to the Board.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Steve Brooks provided a comprehensive update on district activities and accomplishments as the 2025-26 school year neared completion. He reported that graduation season was underway across the district, with Owosso High School's commencement recently completed and Lincoln High School's graduation scheduled for the following day. Additional graduation and transition ceremonies were being held throughout the district as students prepared to advance to the next grade levels.

Brooks highlighted several successful student activities and celebrations across the district. At all three elementary schools, fifth-grade band students participated in special performances for their school communities. He also noted the completion of the elementary Unified Basketball season, which provided valuable opportunities for students to participate in inclusive athletic experiences.

The Superintendent recognized Staff Appreciation Week, held May 4-8, and thanked local businesses and restaurants that partnered with the district to support and recognize employees. He expressed gratitude for the community's continued support of Owosso Public Schools staff.

At Owosso High School, Brooks reported that graduating seniors had earned approximately \$842,000 in scholarship awards, which were recognized during the district's Honors Convocation. He also noted that students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses had already met with their instructors and received summer reading assignments in preparation for the upcoming school year.

Brooks commended Owosso Middle School staff for their extensive efforts to support incoming sixth-grade students through transition activities. These included visits to elementary schools, campus tours, parent orientation opportunities, and other events designed to familiarize students and families with the middle school environment. He also highlighted the upcoming Eighth Grade Awards Ceremony and Spring Fling scheduled for May 30.

Attendance and behavior incentive programs were recognized throughout the district. Brooks reported that 282 middle school students attended a Lansing Lugnuts baseball game as a reward for strong attendance and positive behavior. Lincoln High School also rewarded approximately 40 students with a Lugnuts field trip for maintaining at least 90 percent attendance. He further reported that Lincoln High School would honor 37 graduates during its commencement ceremony.

At Bryant Elementary, students participated in numerous educational field trips, including visits to Mackinac Island, Sleepy Hollow State Park, the Saginaw Children's Zoo, and various historical sites. Brooks also highlighted the district's partnership with a mobile health services provider, which delivered health services to students over a three-day period.

Central Elementary's annual Third Grade Market Day was recognized as a successful learning experience that provided students with opportunities to practice entrepreneurship, budgeting, and financial literacy skills through hands-on activities.

At Emerson Elementary, Brooks highlighted a highly successful Family Fun Night held on May 14. Hundreds of students and family members attended the event, which featured activities, food, and community engagement opportunities. He also referenced the participation of staff members and school resource personnel in student activities that contributed to the event's success.

Bentley Bright Beginnings recently celebrated the graduation of 88 preschool students who will transition to kindergarten next year. Brooks also highlighted the program's therapy dog turning two years old and noted the positive attention received by the

district's "Trojan Time Machine" project, which had been featured by MLive and other media outlets.

Athletically, Owosso High School continued its tradition of excellence. Brooks announced that both the boys' and girls' track and field teams earned Flint Metro League Championships. He also recognized Noah Jacobs and Aaron Gillett as Flint Metro League Coaches of the Year. Owosso was scheduled to host baseball and softball district tournaments during the upcoming weekend, and twelve student-athletes had qualified for state track and field competition. Additionally, thirty-nine student-athletes earned All-Conference honors during the spring season.

Brooks provided an update on the district's summer meal program, "Meet Up and Eat Up," which would begin June 8. The program will provide breakfast and lunch to children ages birth through eighteen at designated district locations, with additional weekend meal packages available on Thursdays. He thanked the Food Service Department for its continued efforts to provide thousands of meals to area children throughout the summer months.

The Superintendent concluded by recognizing the Transportation Department for safely supporting numerous field trips and athletic events throughout the spring season. He also commended the Maintenance and Grounds Department for preparing district facilities and athletic fields, noting that their work allowed Owosso Public Schools to successfully host league championships, district tournaments, and other community events.

Curriculum Director's Report

Curriculum Director Dr. Dwyer provided an update on summer learning opportunities, student achievement initiatives, and preparations for the 2026-27 school year.

Dr. Dwyer reported that staff members across the district had been actively identifying students who would benefit from summer academic support or credit recovery opportunities. Teachers and support staff were personally contacting families to encourage participation and ensure students were connected with appropriate summer learning programs. She reminded the Board that summer school programming would not take place July 6-10, due to a scheduled break for the Independence Day holiday to accommodate family travel and vacation plans.

Dr. Dwyer reported that elementary and secondary leadership teams recently participated in NWEA and MiData Days hosted by Shiawassee RESD. During these collaborative sessions, administrators analyzed multiple sources of student achievement data, reviewed growth trends, celebrated successes, and identified areas requiring additional support. She stated that these discussions had already resulted in meaningful planning around instructional strategies, intervention systems, and resource allocation for the upcoming school year.

As part of the district's continuous improvement efforts, leadership teams were proactively identifying students who may require additional academic or behavioral supports beginning in the fall. This planning would allow resources and interventions to be in place at the start of the school year rather than waiting until concerns emerged.

Looking ahead to the 2026-27 school year, Dr. Dwyer shared that teachers and instructional leaders were already engaged in professional learning, curriculum review, and collaborative planning. Educators were reflecting on current instructional practices, examining curriculum resources, and discussing adjustments that would strengthen student learning outcomes. She announced that elementary teacher leaders would participate in a planning day on June 8 to reflect on the first year of implementation of the district's new curriculum resources and develop recommendations to support teachers during the second year of implementation.

Dr. Dwyer also provided an update on the district's Books at Bryant summer literacy program. The program would begin June 10 and continue for eight consecutive weeks, excluding the week of July 1 due to the holiday. Weekly events would be held on Wednesday evenings and would feature themed literacy activities, family engagement opportunities, and partnerships with local organizations. Community partners already committed to participating included Baker College, the Shiawassee Historical Society, the Shiawassee Family YMCA, and several additional organizations. Dr. Dwyer emphasized that Books at Bryant continues to be an important initiative for promoting literacy, strengthening community connections, and providing meaningful summer learning experiences for students and families throughout Owosso Public Schools.

Public Participation

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment.

Prior to public participation, Trustee Webster addressed misinformation circulating within the community regarding Board leadership. She clarified that the Board had not discussed removing Board President Ochodnicky from office and emphasized the Board's obligations under the Michigan Open Meetings Act. Webster noted that no formal discussions or actions regarding Board leadership changes had occurred.

Kimberly Bowen
Lynn Schayshem
Orlin Stringham
Angie Snyder
Matt Gleason
Kal Busby
Don Field
Tom Manke
Kristina Yaklin
Erica Matteson
Judy Ford

Colin Bernard
Elizabeth Byrne
Alexander Hart

For Action

Moved by Mowen, supported by Henne, to approve the Consent Agenda, including the April 22, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes, May 06, 2026, Committee Meeting Minutes, Current Bills, and Financials. Roll Call Vote: Ayes-Easlick, Henne, Mowen, Ochodnick, Pappas, Webster, and Quick. Nays-None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Easlick, supported by Mowen, to approve the MDHHS Additional Compensation. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Easlick, to approve the Superintendent Contract Amendment. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Webster, to approve the Food Truck (2) Purchase. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to approve the Shiawassee RESD 2026-27 Proposed General Fund Budget. Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

The Board will be asked to review the 25/26 Final Budget Revisions. Moved by Easlick, supported by Quick, to move to For Action at the June 24, 2026, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board will be asked to review the 26/27 Original Budget Adoption. Moved by Mowen, supported by Easlick, to move to For Action at the June 24, 2026, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Roll call vote: Ayes – Easlick, Henne, Mowen, Ochodnick, Pappas, Webster, and Quick. Nays – None. Motion carried unanimously.

For Information

Superintendent Brooks provided the monthly personnel update to the Board.

Brooks also reviewed the personnel changes included in the Board packet, including employee resignations and retirements. He noted that the district was experiencing a significant amount of staff transition due to retirements and reiterated that the Board had recognized several retirees earlier in the meeting. He emphasized that the retirees

honored that evening represented a combined 205 years of service to Owosso Public Schools.

The Superintendent expressed appreciation for the dedication, professionalism, and commitment demonstrated by all retiring employees throughout their careers. He acknowledged the tremendous impact these individuals had on students, families, colleagues, and the community over many years of service. Brooks stated that the knowledge, experience, and relationships built by these employees would be difficult to replace and that their contributions had helped shape the success of Owosso Public Schools.

He concluded by thanking all departing employees for their service to the district and wishing them success and fulfillment in their retirement and future endeavors. The Board joined in recognizing the retirees and acknowledging their lasting contributions to Owosso Public Schools.

Public Participation

Cassandra Russell
Marsha Bird
Dan Law
Lori Cook
Rick Ross
Rochelle Elwing
Pastor of the Church of Jubilee
Erika Matteson
Chelsea Mishler
Buffy Torak

Board Member Comments

Trustee Mowen thanked community members for attending the meeting and expressed appreciation for the respectful and civil manner in which differing viewpoints were shared. He congratulated Jillian Kowalczyk on being named MSBOA District 5 Teacher of the Year and commended her contributions to the district's highly successful band program.

He also recognized the district's retirees and their combined 205 years of service. Trustee Mowen shared special appreciation for retiree Karen Van Epps, noting the positive impact she had on his family and the support she provided to students throughout her career.

Finally, he congratulated Student Representative Ellen DeLong on her graduation and future plans to attend the University of Michigan to pursue a career in education. He

thanked her for her service to the Board and wished her continued success.

Trustee Webster stated that she supports individuals' First Amendment rights and the ability to express differing viewpoints, including discussions regarding what is appropriate for children in public settings. However, she expressed concern regarding a letter that had been circulated publicly which suggested that Board members were considering removing the Board President from that position.

Trustee Webster clarified that no such discussion had taken place among Board members and stated that she felt the letter inaccurately characterized the Board's actions and positions. She emphasized the importance of responsible leadership, accurate communication, and avoiding assumptions about the opinions or intentions of fellow Board members. Trustee Webster concluded by encouraging greater care when representing the views of the Board and its members in public communications.

Vice President Easlick congratulated the district's retirees and thanked them for their years of dedicated service to Owosso Public Schools, noting that their impact on students would be felt for years to come. He also congratulated the graduating students recognized during the Owosso High School Honors Convocation and commencement ceremony and expressed anticipation for Lincoln High School's graduation.

Easlick thanked Student Representative Ellen DeLong for her service to the Board and acknowledged the valuable perspective she provided throughout the year. He also congratulated Jillian Kowalczyk on being named MSBOA District 5 Teacher of the Year and recognized her dedication to education. He concluded by expressing appreciation to all district staff for their hard work during the school year and wished everyone an enjoyable and restful summer.

Secretary Henne thanked everyone who attended the meeting and expressed appreciation for the comments shared throughout the evening. He acknowledged the discussion regarding the district bond initiative and stated that he looks forward to sharing additional information and important upcoming dates with the community as planning moves forward. He congratulated the district's retirees on their combined 205 years of service, noting that their longevity reflects the strong commitment and retention of staff within Owosso Public Schools. He concluded by thanking family members and supporters who attended the meeting.

Treasurer Quick thanked everyone who attended the meeting and shared their perspectives. She congratulated Jillian Kowalczyk on being named MSBOA District 5 Teacher of the Year and commended her for the outstanding work she has done leading the district's band program.

Quick also recognized the district's retirees and reflected on the meaningful relationships she has developed with many of them throughout her years in the community. She emphasized the lasting impact that educators have on the lives of students and offered special recognition to retiree Karen Van Epps for her dedication to supporting children, particularly those facing significant challenges. She concluded by congratulating all retirees and thanking them for their service to Owosso Public Schools.

Trustee Pappas emphasized that as a lifelong community member and former nurse, he is committed to serving everyone fairly, regardless of differing beliefs. He stressed that board members have a responsibility to ensure all voices are heard, even when there is disagreement.

Pappas highlighted the importance of maintaining civil, respectful dialogue especially in contrast to hostile or divisive behavior seen elsewhere and expressed concern about growing societal polarization. Pappas encouraged people to “agree to disagree” when necessary while continuing to communicate respectfully.

He closed by thanking attendees for participating and urging continued open, adult conversations focused on shared goals and understanding.

President Ochodnicky reflected on her long tenure on the board and shared a personal story about her son’s military service and the loss of a young service member, which shaped her deep respect for the country, its Constitution, and individual rights.

She emphasized that her commitment to serving on the board is rooted in community service and a belief in respecting everyone’s rights and perspectives. While acknowledging the board’s diversity of opinions and history of strong debate, they noted that members have generally been able to disagree respectfully and still focus on what is best for students.

She expressed concern that this collaborative spirit has weakened over time, especially in recent years, and called for a return to more respectful, constructive dialogue. She thanked attendees for sharing their views and encouraged continued open conversation moving forward.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

June 24: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, PAC

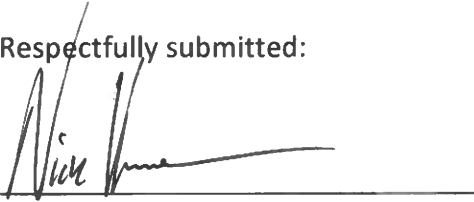
July 22: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, PAC

Adjournment

Moved by Mowen, supported by Easlick, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by: Melissa Buehler

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nick Henne", is written over a horizontal line.

Nick Henne, Secretary