

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2024
Report 24-62

Present: Adam Easlick, Nick Henne, Ty Krauss (arrived at 5:59 p.m.) Rick Mowen, Olga Quick, Marlene Webster (arrived at 5:48 p.m.)

Absent: Shelly Ochodnicky

President Mowen called the Board of Education 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

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Brooks provided an update on recent activities and initiatives across the district, beginning with the impactful Veterans Day celebrations. All buildings hosted events to honor veterans, including guest speakers, breakfasts, panels, art displays, and thank-you cards. The “*thisisourstory*” initiative gained extensive coverage, further emphasizing the importance of community and gratitude.

Schools collaborated to collect baskets for needy families in preparation for Thanksgiving, supported by partnerships such as the Farm Bureau. Meanwhile, the Owosso Sports Boosters hosted their most successful Booster Bash fundraiser. The event, held on November 9, sold 250 tickets in advance, welcomed approximately 275 attendees, and raised nearly \$29,000 in profit.

The district’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs also made strides. OHS CTE Coordinator Carrie Warning and Jessica Thompson recently finished filming seven videos highlighting CTE classes, with final edits expected soon. In addition, OHS Construction Trades students completed a storage shed for Central Elementary, providing extra playground storage.

Performing arts and athletics had notable highlights. Under the direction of Jerry Ciarlino and Jessica Maginity, the OHS Drama Club staged five successful performances of *Shrek*, including shows for OPS elementary students. On the athletics front, OHS, in partnership with the Owosso Soccer Club and the YMCA, launched the first of six Saturday Futsal events, offering a fast-paced variation of indoor soccer.

Each school contributed unique efforts to enrich student experiences. OMS focused on community support by raising \$3,600 through a Powderpuff game and providing vision screenings while gearing up for volleyball and wrestling. At LHS, new course offerings such as Medieval Art and Human Biology were introduced, and the therapy dog Morgan is acclimating ahead of starting full-time in December. Bryant hosted multiple family engagement events, including Math and Mackinac Night and Bingo for Books, while students visited the PAC for a

performance of *Shrek*. Central's PBIS rewards program continues to motivate students, with plans to tape Principal Rowell to the wall as part of their next reward. Emerson boosted morale with an "Underground Spirit Week," where BBB engaged students in a mock election, kindness projects, and preparations for their holiday concert.

The Transportation Department is preparing for Tyler Technologies training on December 4, while the maintenance team ensures buildings are heated and ready for winter sports. Food Service celebrated Thanksgiving with a holiday meal featuring turkey and all the trimmings, introduced new fruits and vegetables weekly at the high school and middle school, and was highlighted in the Local Foods Presentation at the Michigan School Nutrition Association Conference.

Dr. Dwyer began her report by celebrating the success of the Professional Development Day on November 5th. Over 60 support staff participated in a session on De-escalation Strategies and Scripts, which received excellent feedback. Many attendees have requested a follow-up to complete the training. Other well-received sessions included CPI, CPR, disciplinary literacy, Number Corner, Number Worlds, and data meetings, ensuring a diverse and impactful day of learning.

Dr. Jan Richardson, a nationally recognized reading expert, worked an entire week with PK-5 teachers. Each teacher attended a three-hour training session followed by a learning lab. During these labs, Dr. Richardson modeled small group lessons while teachers and paraprofessionals observed, culminating in a debriefing session to discuss key takeaways. Participants highly praised this hands-on approach.

Jenny LaMay is working with middle school teachers on integrating writing into content areas. Last week, Jenny gathered input from teachers and observed classrooms. This week, she is modeling lessons for middle school Science and Social Studies teachers, demonstrating how writing can enhance comprehension and improve student outcomes.

Elementary teachers are also reviewing four updated reading programs funded through the 35J Grant. The Instructional Leadership Council (ILC) team began evaluating the materials, and grade-level meetings allowed all teachers to review them. To further involve stakeholders further, Dr. Dwyer will host open curriculum review nights on December 2, 4, and 11. The goal is to narrow the options to two programs before winter break for piloting during the second semester.

The Lexia PowerUp program, designed as a reading intervention for grades 6-12, is gaining traction. OMS English and Special Education teachers recently completed training on the program, and Valerie Meder from Lincoln sees its potential for her students. With RAG grant funding secured, Lexia PowerUp will launch at OMS and Lincoln in January.

Dr. Dwyer concluded her report by sharing exciting news about OHS band teachers Jordan and Jillian. Both have been approved to attend training to become adjudicators for the MSBOA Band and Orchestra Festival. This prestigious opportunity requires applicants to have at least five years of teaching experience and involves rigorous training. Upon successful completion, they will be

qualified to judge band and orchestra performances, bringing recognition to their expertise and dedication.

These updates highlight the district's commitment to professional growth, academic innovation, and celebrating staff achievements.

Public Participation

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on education issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

The following participants addressed the Board:

None

For Action

- Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick, to approve the October 23, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, Current Bills, and Financials as presented. President Mowen conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Quick, Mowen, and Webster Nays: None. Krauss and Ochodnický are absent. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to approve the audit report for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Motion carried unanimously. The Board heard a presentation from Gabe Seng, CPA, CGFM, with Maner Costerian, regarding the audit for the year ended June 30, 2024. Mr. Seng informed the Board that the financial statements received an unmodified opinion, which is the highest-level opinion you can receive. The district's evaluation of internal controls identified no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. They focused on the Child Nutrition cluster for the single audit and issued an unmodified opinion with no findings related to federal awards. The financial analysis highlights several key updates at the state and district levels. Notably, OPEB liabilities transitioned from a liability in prior years to an asset, reflecting strong performance. Additionally, the district recorded \$2.6 million in capital asset additions, excluding \$5 million reclassified from construction-in-process to buildings and additions for completed projects. Bond repayments included \$1.1 million in principal repayments, made per amortization schedules. Overall, the district's net position improved by \$9.24 million. The reported assets are \$20 million, liabilities are \$10.8 million, and an ending fund balance of \$9.4 million. Revenues totaled \$41 million, with expenditures of \$39 million, resulting in a \$2.1 million increase in the fund balance. Expenditures accounted for 24% of the fund balance. The Capital Project Sinking Fund reported assets of \$3.8 million, liabilities of \$160,000, and a fund balance of \$3.7 million, reflecting a \$54,000 decrease in the fund balance. Meanwhile, the Non-Major Funds combined assets totaled \$3.8 million, liabilities were \$72,000, and the fund balance stood at \$3.7 million, reflecting a \$600,000

increase. The original budget for revenues and other financing sources in the General Fund was \$42.6 million, adjusted to \$41.7 million in the final budget. Actual revenues came in slightly under budget by \$320,000, primarily due to late adjustments to state funding. Expenditures were initially budgeted at \$44.1 million, revised to \$40.8 million, with actual expenditures \$1.7 million under budget. General Fund revenues were primarily derived from state sources (80%), followed by local sources (12%). Expenditures were heavily allocated to instruction (70%), with 28% going to support services. Over the past five years, the General Fund balance has grown significantly, peaking at \$9.4 million in 2024, driven by state and federal COVID-related funding. Looking ahead, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has issued upcoming changes that will impact fiscal years 2025 and beyond. These include updates to compensated absences, risk disclosures, and the financial reporting model. These changes will be addressed in future audits.

- Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to approve the out-of-state travel for Owosso High School SkillsUSA students, teacher (Carrie Warning), and parent chaperone (Dana Boggs) on a trip to Atlanta, GA, June 23 - 28, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Webster, supported by Henne, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of the following certified staff:

Name	Building/Grade	Recommending Administrator	Salary Schedule Step
Alexandra Eskew	Bentley/Director	Superintendent Steve Brooks	Step 4 \$64,762
Jennifer Blazen	OHS/Special Education	Superintendent Steve Brooks	MA-8 \$65,912

Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

No ‘For Future Action’ items were presented at this meeting.

For Information

Superintendent Brooks announced the following personnel changes:

Accepted Positions

Jaclyn Gregoricka has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant.

Taylor Crowe has accepted the Monitor position at Bryant.

Rebecca Hiland has accepted the Monitor position at Bryant.

Stephanie Loveless has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant.

Caius Rowley has accepted the Sub Custodian position.

Resignations

Amy Black, Teacher at OHS has resigned effective November 1, 2024.

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None

Board Comments

Trustee Henne expressed appreciation for the General Fund balance being at 24%, noting that districts of similar size don't typically maintain such a strong fund balance. He commended the district's efforts, stating that knowing the district is a good steward of its financial resources provides reassurance and peace of mind.

Secretary Krauss apologized for being late, explaining that a family matter required attention, causing him to miss a few items earlier in the meeting.

Treasurer Quick welcomed Alex and shared her joy in attending the *Shrek* performance over the weekend, calling it an incredible experience. She praised the students for their stellar performances and applauded everyone involved. She also commended the schools for their efforts in preparing Thanksgiving baskets, highlighting the significant need for food in the community. Treasurer Quick expressed her gratitude for the ongoing efforts of various groups, including those volunteering with the YMCA and the mobile food pantries, and acknowledged the positive impact of these initiatives. She concluded by celebrating all the good work being done across the district.

Trustee Easlick shared that he also attended *Shrek* and was particularly impressed by the costumes, especially Lord Farquaad's. He welcomed Alex and extended a warm welcome back to Jennifer. Trustee Easlick thanked CFO Dame and Gabe for their collaboration in completing the audit, noting that it was a strong outcome despite last year's CFO transition challenges.

President Mowen echoed earlier comments, highlighting Owosso Public Schools' active role in the community. He appreciated the district's efforts to connect with the community through various student groups and activities, emphasizing that education extends beyond classrooms and students and significantly impacts the broader community. He thanked everyone for their dedication and efforts in driving this positive impact.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

- December 11: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- January 8: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112
- January 22: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

Important Upcoming Dates

- November 20: Volleybrawl, 7:00 PM, OHS Gym
- November 25: Mr. Wonderful, 7:00 PM, PAC
- November 27-29: No School, Thanksgiving Recess
- December 3: OMS Band Concert, 7:00 PM, PAC
- December 4: OHS Band Concert, 7:00 PM, PAC
- December 5: Shiawassee County FFA Chapter Degree Ceremony, 7:00 PM, PAC
- December 6: Senior Citizen Holiday Celebration, 8:30 AM, PAC
- December 10: OMS Choir Concert, 7:00 PM, PAC
- December 11: OHS Choir Concert, 7:00 PM, PAC

Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick, to move into closed session at 6:10 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a student hearing. Secretary Krauss conducted a roll call vote: Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Mowen, Quick, and Webster Nays: None. Ochodnicki was absent. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Webster, supported by Henne, to move back into open session at 7:01 p.m. for the purpose of reading the Board's decision. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to move into closed session at 7:07 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation and address matters protected by attorney-client privilege. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to move back into open session at 8:31 p.m. for the purpose of adjournment. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Goetzinger.

Respectfully submitted,


Jy Krauss, Secretary

