

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2025
Report 24-104
(At Place)

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

President Webster 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

Building Reports

Bryant Elementary Principal Bridgit Spielman introduced a group of fifth graders, describing them as a spectacular crew chosen to share what they've been learning in music. She explained that their music teacher, Mrs. Hillard, had a vision for teaching ukulele when she first started in the district in 2018. Mrs. Hillard approached her with the idea, and they found a way to make it happen together. Now, seven years later, the program is still going strong, and Principal Spielman expressed confidence that the audience would be both impressed and entertained.

Mrs. Hillard greeted the audience before introducing a group of students. These students led an interactive session, teaching the Board members how to hold a ukulele, strum, and play a few basic chords. The session concluded with everyone putting their new skills together to play a ukulele play-along of *Waka Waka* by Shakira, creating an engaging and lively moment for the audience. At the end of the performance, each student introduced themselves and shared who had brought them to the event that evening.

Al Martin from Venture, Inc. provided an update on the middle school project, he announced some good news—both the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) have approved their Part One historic application, officially listing the project on the historic registry. This designation is a crucial step in securing funding. Meanwhile, they continue working with contractors and architects to refine project details and pricing. Given current market conditions, pricing remains challenging, making the planning process more complex.

In terms of investment, Venture, Inc. is actively seeking a financial backer for the project. They met with two potential investors this week but have yet to secure one who is fully on board. Despite this, they remain optimistic and committed to finding the right partner. Fortunately, the paperwork required between agencies allows them some time to navigate the process.

Paige Davis presented this month's student representative report. She began by highlighting a major athletic milestone—Danica Dwyer broke the 2001 leading point record with 985 points.

Last Saturday, the middle school and high school jazz bands performed at Baker College for their annual *Evening of Jazz* dinner dance. Today, the high school held a clap-out celebration for Camden Caswell, who is heading to the state bowling competition, and Hannah Hart, who qualified for states in wrestling.

Monday featured the Unified Basketball Game, which was a success, bringing students together for an inclusive and competitive event. On Tuesday night, the district recognized the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Students of the Year, and the high school hosted its first FAFSA completion night, where 10 families successfully submitted their forms.

The theater program also accomplished significant things, as the studio play *Riding the Cyclone*, directed by Mr. Ciarlino, advanced to the state competition. The production placed fourth in the state and won both an Innovation Trophy and the People's Choice Award. Meanwhile, the Future Farmers of America (FFA) program earned five gold awards at the regional level, with four students advancing to the state competition.

In the music department, the OHS band recently hosted its pre-festival concert, preparing for the upcoming Festival on March 7 and 8. The choir also had a concert scheduled for tonight at 7:00 p.m. Additionally, 17 students participated in the Bay City MSBOA Solo & Ensemble competition, showcasing their musical talents.

In athletics, the boys' varsity swim team completed their regular season undefeated for the second year in a row, marking an outstanding achievement. In career and technical competitions, 13 students competed in the SkillsUSA regional competition at Delta College, with five advancing to the state level.

Finally, the Student Government successfully hosted the February *Metro Media* event, wrapping up a busy and successful stretch for the students of Owosso High School.

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Brooks began his report by stating the Jazz Band Dance was another sold-out success, with 250 guests enjoying an evening of outstanding music. A special thank you to our band directors, Erica Mitchell and Jordan Sterk, and the many volunteers who made this event possible. In other music news, the OHS bands recently held their pre-festival concert, and both the Central and Bryant ukulele showcases were a hit, highlighting our students' musical talents.

Athletics continue to shine across the district. The boys' basketball team defeated Corunna in the first round of districts for the third time this season, while the girls' team will face Corunna next Wednesday in what promises to be an exciting matchup. Two OHS winter athletes—Camden Caswell (bowling) and Hannah Hart (girls' wrestling)—have advanced to the MHSAA state finals. Meanwhile, Lincoln basketball holds a strong 6-3 record with one home game remaining on March 3.

Academically, our students are excelling in various initiatives. OMS eighth graders have begun piloting "Into Literature," and visits from OHS counselors are helping guide them through the

scheduling process. At Lincoln, students are preparing for MAEO Legislative Day and the MAEO Stars competition while continuing their efforts toward Green School certification. Lincoln is also celebrating three outstanding Rotary Students of the Month: Lizzy Henderson, Cameron Good, and Miracle Stewart. At Bryant, elementary principals are engaging in kindergarten registration outreach at local preschools, ensuring families are well-prepared for the upcoming school year. Great Lakes Bay Health Centers will provide dental health education and preventive care for Bryant students in the coming weeks. Last Friday, Bryant welcomed a special visit from the Detroit Pistons organization, which delivered motivational messages, character-building sessions, and an appearance by their mascot, Hooper. The visit focused on teamwork, perseverance, and school pride. That same day, students, staff, and families participated in the Glow Run, a fun and engaging event that promoted fitness, school spirit, and community involvement.

OHS extracurricular programs continue to make us proud. The Robotics Team will compete at Kettering this Friday, and the Drama Club recently placed fourth at the Michigan Interscholastic Forensics Association (MIFA) state finals with their production of *Ride The Cyclone*. They also earned both the "Innovations in Theater Award" and the "People's Choice Award." At Emerson, the Drum Club for 3rd–5th graders is in full swing, meeting every Tuesday as students prepare for their upcoming performance during the 4th-grade recording event this spring. Emerson has also launched a new attendance initiative led by music and art teacher Katie Seibel and school psychologist Crystal Cheever. Through daily morning check-ins, they are working to support students with chronic absences and are optimistic about seeing positive results. The Girls on the Run program is in full swing, led by dedicated staff and volunteers, and will culminate in a 5K event at MSU this May. Student Council members recently delivered Valentine's Day cards and chocolates to senior citizens at Oliver Woods, spreading kindness throughout the community.

At Central, preparations are underway for March, which is Reading Month. Mrs. Riley is putting in a tremendous effort to secure exciting prizes for students. These will be awarded during a special assembly in April. The school also rocked its Boosterthon fundraiser, and students had a blast participating in last week's Glow Run!

At Bentley Bright Beginnings, excitement is building as we kick off preschool registration for the 2025-26 school year, welcoming many eager families. We also received exciting news—we will be getting a therapy dog soon! The first PTO fundraiser of the year was a success, with students purchasing 276 flowers for staff, classmates, and family members for Valentine's Day, raising \$318 for school initiatives.

District-wide, we are celebrating outstanding achievements in operations and services. Our custodial and maintenance teams worked tirelessly over the long weekend and snow days to clear the district of snow and thoroughly sanitize all buildings. The Transportation Department received a perfect rating from the Michigan State Police in its recent bus inspection, thanks to the diligence of bus mechanic Mike Graham, Steve DeLong, and our incredible drivers. This achievement reflects the district's commitment to investing in a safe and reliable bus fleet. Meanwhile, the Technology Department has successfully completed its ERATE projects, upgrading both our wired network infrastructure and Wi-Fi to better serve our students and staff.

Superintendent Brooks wrapped up his report by highlighting exciting new opportunities on the horizon. The district is thrilled to announce a new partnership for a Crest Pontoon raffle, and we eagerly anticipate the upcoming Legislative Breakfast on March 14. At this event, he will be joined by FFA President Evelyn Harrand and FFA Vice President Danielle Zelemka to engage with state legislators on important farming initiatives.

Curriculum Director Dr. Dwyer provided several important updates, beginning with a celebration of student achievement at the recent CTE Awards Night, hosted by the RESD. The event recognized outstanding students in our Career and Technical Education programs, highlighting their dedication and accomplishments. Each of our seven programs honored one student, while two additional students were recognized by the RESD, bringing the total to nine. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and grateful for the valuable opportunities provided through our CTE programs. This year's honorees included Hayden Hall (Culinary), Jacob Chant (Construction Trades), Damien McDonald (Woodworking), Simon Erfourth (Business), Joseph St. Clair (Engineering), Danielle Zalenka (Agriscience), and Ellie Mallory (Cosmetology), along with Montana Lorencz (SRES D Public Safety) and Noah Kiger (SRES D Heavy Equipment).

Planning for summer school is well underway. As in previous years, we will offer an eight-week program focused on academic enrichment, intervention, and credit recovery. Our goal is to engage as many students as possible and provide meaningful learning opportunities throughout the summer. Efforts are currently focused on finalizing program details, including staffing, scheduling, and curriculum, to ensure a successful experience for all participants.

Dr. Dwyer concluded her report with an update on the K-5 literacy pilot, which is progressing as teachers prepare to wrap up their work with *Into Reading*. To support a smooth transition, an end-of-pilot discussion will be held to reflect on the program's strengths and challenges and to gather valuable teacher feedback. The next phase will introduce *Collaborative Literacy*, following a similar structure. Participating teachers will begin with a pilot launch session, while all K-5 teachers will receive a comprehensive program overview. This next step is important to our commitment to selecting the most effective instructional resources to support our students' literacy development.

Public Participation

President Webster 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 Mowen, supported by Pappas, to approve January 22, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes, February 12, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes, February 12, 2025, Closed Session Minutes, Current Bills, and Financials as presented. Secretary Henne conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Pappas, Quick, Henne, Webster, and Mowen. Nays: None. Easlick and Ochodnicky were absent. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to authorize the Owosso Public School's Construction Trades Department to dispose of older tools that they no longer use. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Webster, to authorize administration to begin the exploration process for a bond campaign, assemble district and community committees to assess facilities and district needs, and partner with professional firms to conduct a comprehensive review and develop recommendations. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Henne, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of the following certified staff:

Name	Building/Grade	Recommending Administrator	Salary Schedule Step
Robert Broomfield	Bryant/Emerson/Special Education	Superintendent Steve Brooks	BA Step 3 \$47,382
Breanna Prickett	OMS/Science	Superintendent Steve Brooks	BA Step 1 \$44,415

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

RyAnne Hetfield has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant.

Jackson Linter has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant.

Resignations

Barb Dion, Custodian at OHS has resigned effective January 20, 2025.

Marie Schautz, Bus Driver has resigned effective January 20, 2025.

Jaclyn Gregoricka, Paraprofessional at Bryant has resigned effective February 14, 2025.

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Board Comments

Trustee Mowen expressed congratulations, highlighting two key areas of pride—Owosso's sports teams and their dedicated fans. He particularly recognized the boys' varsity team, who will be competing against Hamady this evening at 7:15 p.m. He noted that while the team faced some challenges earlier in the season, they have found their rhythm and are receiving recognition for their hard work and perseverance. Trustee Mowen highlighted how significant it is for the district to achieve three wins over Corunna in any sport during a single season.

Trustee Pappas expressed his enthusiasm for the district's wide range of participation. He expressed his happiness in seeing contributions from all areas of the organization, from support and maintenance staff to administration. He emphasized that every team member plays a crucial role and achieves outstanding results together.

Pappas reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the district's progress and pushing for continued improvement. He challenged everyone to strive for even greater success, with the goal of elevating the district to the next level. He expressed excitement about what the future holds and the potential for Owosso to become recognized as one of the leading educational areas in the region.

Treasurer Quick began by expressing gratitude to the Bryant students. She then took a moment to congratulate various individuals and groups. She congratulated Danica, the basketball team, the drama department, the band, the choir, and everyone involved in making these programs thrive. She also mentioned her enjoyment of working on the leadership contest with FFA and appreciated the experience.

Quick thanked Mr. Brooks for attending the *Evening of Jazz* and gave a special shout-out to Mrs. Van Epps, who has always been a supportive group member and willing to pitch in whenever needed. She commended Mrs. Mitchell for her excellent work, noting that she stepped in and has done a fabulous job. She also appreciated the district's maintenance and custodial staff, specifically highlighting their efforts to sanitize and ensure the environment's safety during challenging times.

Quick also congratulated the district on the successful bus inspection and the impressive CTE awards. Reflecting on her experience attending the basketball games at Lincoln, she praised the officials, especially Mr. Brooks, for his work, and expressed his admiration for the students' pride and dedication. She was particularly impressed by how the students took pride in their uniforms, noting that not all teams have that level of representation. Quick wrapped up by encouraging the district to continue its excellent work, acknowledging the ongoing success, and apologizing for anything she might have missed.

Secretary Henne congratulated to the CTE students. He recognized the importance of CTE programs, especially in industries like construction management, noting that college isn't the right path for everyone. Henne highlighted the current nationwide shortage of skilled trade workers, with over 800,000 jobs unfilled, and pointed out how crucial CTE programs are in addressing this gap.

He also expressed his excitement for the upcoming spring sports season and praised Mike and the grounds crew for their excellent work. Henne welcomed Mr. DeLong back. Wrapping up, he expressed his gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead.

President Webster shared that she has been in and out of the Emerson school office a few times a week and was recently impressed by the efficiency of the office staff, particularly given the high volume of sick students. She observed how quickly the staff could take temperatures and contact parents, managing the situation quickly and carefully. She admired the staff's ability to handle such a challenging task, emphasizing that their work is vital in every school building. Webster also acknowledged the critical role that secretaries and office staff play in the smooth operation of the schools.

She went on to note her relief that the worst of the sickness in schools may be behind them, attributing some of the improvement to the snow days and Presidents Day weekend. She expressed her appreciation for the excellent rating the district's buses received, recognizing the hard work that has gone into improving the fleet. She commended Mike Graham, Steve DeLong, and everyone involved for their efforts in ensuring the buses run smoothly and safely, providing reliable transportation for students and drivers alike.

Meeting Updates:

- March 12: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112
- March 26: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

- April 9: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112

Important Upcoming Dates:

March 7: MSBOA District 5 Band and Orchestra Festival, 7th grade 3:35PM, 8th grade 6:35PM, 9th grade 7:35PM, PAC

March 8: MSBOA District 5 Band and Orchestra Festival, Concert Band 2:25PM, Symphony Band 4:30PM, PAC

March 14: End of Marking Period

March 17: NHS Night, 6:30PM, PAC

March 18: OHS Cornhole, 7:00PM, OHS Gym

March 28: Half Day for All Students: Teacher Work Day

March 31-April 4: No School: Spring Recess

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to move into closed session at 6:21 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a student hearing. Secretary Henne conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Mowen, Webster, Henne, Quick and Pappas. Nays: None. Easlick and Ochodnický were absent. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to move back into open session at 6:34 p.m. for the purpose of reading the Board's decision. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Henne, supported by Pappas, that the Owosso Board of Education find student number 110005022 responsible for the charges presented against him and for such misconduct be suspended from Owosso Public Schools for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year. Secretary Henne conducted a roll call vote: Ayes: Pappas, Henne, Webster, and Mowen. Nays: None. Quick abstained due to relationship outside of school. Ochodnický and Easlick are absent. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Pappas, to move into closed session at 6:36 p.m. to address matters protected by attorney-client privilege. Secretary Henne conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Mowen, Webster, Henne, Quick and Pappas. Nays: None. Easlick and Ochodnický were absent. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to move back into open session at 6:42 p.m. for the purpose of adjournment. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to adjourn at 6:43 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Goetzinger

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Henne

Nick Henne, Secretary

