

**OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Board of Education**  
**Committee of the Whole Meeting**  
**May 14, 2025**  
**Report 24-123**

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

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**

**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

**Spicer/Clark Project Presentation**

The meeting began with a presentation by Dave Warner of Clark Construction and Darrick Huff of the Spicer Group, outlining the proposed bond scope of work. The team collaborated closely with Spicer Group, Clark Construction, and district leadership to refine the project list based on extensive community engagement, including over 600 survey responses and multiple in-person sessions. While the comprehensive facility assessment identified nearly \$120 million in infrastructure needs across ten buildings, the bond funding is limited to \$35 million. As such, the plan focuses on addressing the most urgent and essential infrastructure items.

Dave Warner explained that the proposal covers approximately 30% of the identified needs, prioritizing aging infrastructure and critical systems rather than cosmetic upgrades. The primary goal is to keep students safe, warm, dry, and to ensure that district facilities remain functional and educationally effective. Projects were selected based on urgency and the potential impact on daily operations. The work is scheduled to be phased over three years—2027, 2028, and 2029—with escalation costs factored into all estimates to maintain fiscal accuracy.

A breakdown of the budget was provided, with funding allocated across multiple sites: Bentley Bright Beginnings (\$1.7 million), Emerson (\$2.2 million), Bryant (\$2.1 million), Central (\$2.9 million), and the high school (\$8.7 million). Additional investments include Washington (\$1 million), Jerome (\$500,000), the new Transportation and Maintenance Facility (\$5.1 million), and Cedar Street Warehouse (\$212,000). Technology and furniture updates are also included, specifically new elementary-level furnishings to ensure equity across campuses. The total comes to approximately \$34.6 million—just under the \$35 million target.

The team highlighted how several elements of the plan had to be scaled back to stay within budget. For example, a planned three-classroom addition at Bentley was reduced to two classrooms to free up funds for other needs. Emerson's scope includes replacing deteriorated exterior finishes with durable composite panels, repairing the roof, replacing the aging boiler system, and updating parking and sidewalk infrastructure, particularly at the Dewey bus loop.

At Bryant, the proposed improvements include restroom renovations, gym roof replacement, replacing the yellow-painted fascia, and full ceiling replacement. A secure vestibule will be constructed to enhance school safety, and fencing will be installed around the playground. The high school project will tackle long-standing issues with the sawtooth roof over the cafeteria and former media center, overhaul pool mechanical systems, remove problematic skylights, and resurface the freshman parking lot. The pool work, scheduled for 2029, includes a full mechanical replacement through a design-build approach, with significant escalation costs included due to its timing and complexity.

Washington and Lincoln will receive restroom upgrades, secure vestibule improvements, plumbing replacements (due to galvanized water lines), minor electrical updates, and new classroom furniture, particularly for the alternative high school at Lincoln. At Jerome, the existing transportation facility will be demolished and replaced with a parking lot to support Willman Field and future development. The current building is flood-prone and beyond cost-effective renovation.

At the Cedar Street warehouse, the deteriorating structure will be demolished and the area paved. This building is no longer viable, and its removal reflects the district's commitment to responsible property management.

The new Transportation and Maintenance Facility will consolidate operations into a 10,000-square-foot building, down from an earlier plan for two buildings totaling 14,000–15,000 square feet. The streamlined design includes shared amenities like a single restroom and break room, and will feature covered canopies for 12 buses. This addition will improve vehicle maintenance efficiency and protect the fleet from weather-related wear. The site will be equipped with appropriate technology and basic furnishings.

Board members expressed concerns about how the bond would be received by the public, especially given recent tax-related developments in the City of Owosso. Clarification was requested on what percentage of the district falls within the city limits, as well as how the proposal would affect surrounding townships such as Owosso Township and Caledonia

Township. While precise numbers were not available, it was acknowledged that all regions served by the district would benefit from the proposed improvements.

Discussion turned toward long-term planning. The new transportation facility, located near the high school, supports the district's master planning efforts by centralizing services and preparing for future construction. This central location is ideal for potential additions, such as a future elementary school, should the need arise. Several board members emphasized that the district should move forward with efforts to sell or repurpose surplus properties like Cast Street, Cedar Street, and Green Meadows. These buildings are no longer in use and are costing the district money to maintain. Their sale or redevelopment could reduce overhead and demonstrate fiscal stewardship to the community.

The board also discussed the increasing demand for early childhood education. Enrollment at Bright Beginnings fills within the first week of each year, and many families are placed on waiting lists. Additional GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) classrooms have opened at private providers in the area, but there is still unmet demand. The two additional classrooms proposed at Bentley would be filled immediately, supporting long-term student retention and expanding access to high-quality preschool education.

On the technical side, Darrick Huff explained that all proposed bond-funded projects must comply with the State Treasury's useful life requirements. For instance, roofs are rated for 20 years, boilers for 30 years, and parking lots for 30 years, although the board questioned the realism of that duration. Furnishings and equipment have a useful life of 10 years, and technology just 5 years. This analysis is critical to ensure bond funds are not used to pay for items beyond their lifecycle, and it is part of the application being submitted to Treasury.

The meeting concluded with a reminder of the timeline: the Treasury review is scheduled for May 23. The formal bond language will be read at the May 28 board meeting, and the board is scheduled to vote to place the bond on the ballot at its June 25 meeting. A draft version of the ballot language has been shared with legal counsel and is currently being refined to meet legal standards while maintaining clarity and flexibility.

### **2025 SRESB Biennial Election**

2025 is an election year for the Shiawassee RESD. Superintendent Brooks took time and reviewed the process with the board. Our next board meeting will be a little different than usual due to the requirements of the biennial election. Every two years, we are required to follow a specific process that includes holding two separate board meetings in May. These meetings can be scheduled back-to-back on the same day, but they must be conducted as distinct, individual meetings.

The first of these meetings is held to consider the designee resolution. During this time, the board must discuss and identify individuals who will serve as the district's representative and alternate for the SRESB election.

After the first meeting is adjourned, we will immediately begin the second meeting. This is when the board will vote to officially appoint our representative and alternate for the election. That decision—approved by board resolution—must then be submitted to the RESD no later than June 1.

### **Board Norms Review and Update**

Superintendent Brooks introduced a review of the district's current board norms, which have been in place since October 2012. Following suggestions from the recent committee meeting and board retreat workshop, he initiated a draft revision to modernize and streamline the norms. His proposed version condenses the original nine norms into seven, reworded for clarity and a more positive tone, with each norm beginning with "We will..." to emphasize proactive and collective responsibility. Key updates include removing negative phrasing (e.g., replacing "disagree without conflict" with "communicate respectfully"), consolidating redundancy, and clarifying expectations around communication timelines. Brooks highlighted specific edits, such as modifying language around notifying absences to include either the board president *or* superintendent. A draft chart of the revised norms was shared for further review. The board expressed general support for the revisions, and the item will be placed on the May 28 agenda for formal board action.

### **Graduation**

Superintendent Brooks provided details to the board for graduation next week. The high school graduation will be held on Wednesday, May 21, at 7:00 p.m. Board members should plan to arrive between 6:00 and 6:15 p.m. You can enter through the back gate off of Oakwood and park behind the visitor section. From there, please gather near the scoreboard area, where we'll meet up and provide further directions.

Amy Parsons and Dallas will guide you on how to line up, where to walk, and where you'll be seated. Your names will be on your seats on the stage. After the students receive their diplomas, typically the board president remains on stage, while the rest of the board members and administrators move down to congratulate the graduates after they exit the stage ramp and take their photo.

As of now, there's a 50% chance of rain in the morning, but it looks like it will just be cloudy by the afternoon. If we need to postpone due to weather, our rain date is Thursday, May 22. We scheduled it this way because Friday falls on Memorial Day weekend, and many families will be out of town.

We also have Lincoln's graduation on Wednesday, May 29, at 6:00 p.m., which is the day after our next board meeting. Please plan to arrive around 5:30 p.m. for that ceremony. We'll meet in the middle school band room, which is the first classroom to the north when you enter the PAC. From there, we'll walk through the PAC and enter from the east side. Your seats will be labeled.

Lincoln's graduation is a bit tighter in space, so as the students walk across the stage, we'll do our best to make room for board members to shake hands and offer congratulations. Photos are typically taken at the far end of the stage as students exit.

### **Tyler Technology**

Superintendent Brooks provided an update on the implementation of Tyler Technology for the district's transportation system. Bus drivers received training last week and are currently using the system for regular bus routes. While swipe cards are not yet in use, tablets onboard display student names, allowing students to check in and out by selecting their names as they board and exit the bus. This allows for real-time tracking of student ridership.

The route design feature has significantly improved efficiency by generating turn-by-turn directions automatically. In addition, the parent notification system is being tested by Transportation Director Steve DeLong using his own children. The app sends real-time updates to parents when their child boards or exits the bus, as well as alerts when the bus is within five minutes of the stop.

No other local districts currently use this system, though some, such as Mount Pleasant and a few on the west side of the state, have adopted it recently. The implementation was funded through Safety and Security grant money, and the district anticipates the system will enhance both safety and accountability.

Drivers use docking tablets to complete post-route checks, including a verification step to ensure no student is left on the bus. If a student is still listed as onboard, the system prevents the route from being closed out. Drivers also complete required daily inspections, such as checking tires and lights, directly on the tablet, eliminating the need for paper logs.

Brooks noted that while the system is currently being used for daily transportation, the district plans to expand it to include field trips and athletic events later in the school year.

### **Handbook Update**

Superintendent Brooks provided an update on the status of the district's handbooks. He shared that approximately 95% of the revisions are complete across all handbooks, including those for the high school, middle school, Lincoln, elementary families, Bright Beginnings, and staff. Each handbook ranges from 100 to 225 pages and is closely aligned with the district's updated Thurn policies. The documents are extensive and will be available electronically for ease of access.

Brooks noted that the handbooks cannot be formally adopted by the board until the Thurn policy updates are approved, as the handbooks are directly linked to those policies. Final edits are minimal and being wrapped up quickly. The full package—including both the policy updates and handbooks—will be brought to the board this summer for review and approval.

## **Curriculum Update**

Dr. Cathy Dwyer shared that the district held the first of two state-required public viewings for the proposed health education materials earlier this evening. Although no community members attended—something she noted is fairly typical—materials were made available for review, including a PowerPoint presentation that was also provided in board packets. The viewing was part of the mandated process for adopting a new health curriculum, offering the public an opportunity to examine instructional content and ask questions about implementation. The second public session will be scheduled before final adoption. We welcome continued community feedback as we work to ensure transparency and engagement throughout this process.

Last Tuesday, over 60 staff members attended our final new teacher event of the year, held in the PAC Lobby. The session featured guest speaker Rhonda Jones, a registered nurse with over 30 years of experience, who now works with MESSA. Her presentation focused on stress and effective strategies for managing it. Attendees received valuable insights, practical tips, and enjoyed a variety of snacks and treats generously sponsored by MESSA. The event was well-received and served as a meaningful opportunity to support staff well-being and encourage self-care.

The 23h Early Math Grant has provided essential support for strengthening early math instruction across the district. In the first year, our focus was on implementing Number Corner, a daily routine-based program designed to build number sense through hands-on learning. With approximately \$200,000 in funding, we purchased 56 classroom kits—one for each K–5 classroom—and funded the role of Missy McIntyre, who provided professional development, distributed materials, and supported lesson planning. Her work ensured high-quality and consistent implementation. We are thrilled to continue this initiative with a second year of funding, estimated at \$80,000, allowing us to deepen our focus and build on the strong foundation established in Year One.

After a comprehensive review process that began with five highly rated ELA programs, our Elementary Literacy Pilot Team has unanimously selected *Into Reading* for district-wide implementation. Using rubrics aligned with Michigan's essential literacy practices, we narrowed the options to two programs, which were piloted by 12 teachers, two from each grade level. Each pilot included dedicated professional development and planning time. Through structured discussions and comparisons, *Into Reading* emerged as the clear choice due to its rigorous, engaging content and strong alignment with standards. Teachers praised the program's instructional structure, its support for both whole- and small-group learning, and its integration of science and social studies content. With the selection finalized, we are preparing for a robust launch in August, which will include training, collaborative planning, and ongoing professional support throughout the school year. We are excited for the positive impact this will have on literacy instruction and student success.

### **Closed Session**

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to move into closed session at 6:33 p.m. to address matters protected by attorney-client privilege. President Webster conducted a roll call vote: Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Mowen, Ochodnicki, Pappas, Quick, and Webster. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Henne, to move back into open session at 6:37 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. President Webster conducted a roll call vote: Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Mowen, Ochodnicki, Pappas, Quick, and Webster. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Superintendent Contract Review**

Superintendent Brooks provided an update regarding a clerical correction needed in his contract following a recent Michigan Supreme Court ruling involving ORS and superintendent retirement calculations. He explained that the chart in the appendix of his contract does not currently reflect the correct information outlined in the body of the contract, specifically regarding merit pay eligibility tied to evaluation ratings. While the merit pay is already listed under the compensation section, it was inadvertently omitted from the chart.

Additionally, during a review of the contract, a separate clerical error was found related to the calculation of his annuity. It should be based on both his base salary and longevity, but the chart had only included one of those components. That has now been corrected. Superintendent Brooks emphasized that these updates do not involve any changes to pay or new compensation—they are strictly clerical and meant to align the appendix with both the contract language and recent legal guidance.

The board agreed that, for transparency, the correction will be brought forward for action at the next meeting. Because it reflects legal clarification and not a contractual change, the board will proceed with a single-action item to update Schedule A (the appendix) accordingly.

### **Thrun Policies**

Superintendent Brooks led a comprehensive discussion with the Board regarding the Thrun policy review and update process, specifically focusing on the 4000 series, which addresses District Employment. This includes the 4100 series on Employee Rights and Responsibilities, 4200 on Employee Conduct and Ethics, 4300 concerning Non-Exempt Staff, 4400 covering Professional Staff, 4500 addressing Administrators and Supervisors, and 4600 about the Superintendent. He emphasized the importance of a thorough review of these policies to ensure alignment with both current district practices and state legal requirements. Live documents were made accessible for Board members to provide feedback, to finalize a complete recommendation package for a vote in June or July.

Superintendent Brooks reiterated that these policy updates are critical for maintaining legal compliance, supporting operational efficiency, and fostering a safe and inclusive work

environment for all district employees. The updates reflect evolving district needs and best practices, ensuring that policies remain up to date and effective.

In addition to the employment policy review, Superintendent Brooks highlighted an urgent decision needed regarding Policy 5209, which relates to student cell phone use. With potential state legislation on the horizon, he noted that the Board will need to determine a direction—whether to allow cell phones in school with certain restrictions, prohibit them entirely, or craft a customized policy. He requested that Board members review the available options carefully. A decision on Policy 5209 is needed before the next Board meeting to finalize the student handbooks for the upcoming school year.

#### **Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:**

- May 28: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- June 11: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112
- June 25: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

#### **Important Upcoming Dates:**

- May 14: 5Th Grade Combined Band Concert, 7:00PM, PAC
- May 16: OEA Retirement Banquet & Celebration, 5:00PM, Comstock Inn & Conference Center
- May 19: Senior Cookout, 10:00AM, OHS Courtyard
- May 19: OHS Athletic Awards, 7:00PM, PAC
- May 20: OHS Honors Convocation, 7:00PM, PAC
- May 21: OHS Graduation, 7:00PM, Willman Field, May 22nd, Rain Date
- May 23: Half Day for All Students: Teacher Work Day (optional)
- May 26: No School: Memorial Day
- May 27: Bentley Bright Beginnings Preschool Graduation, 6:00PM, PAC
- May 29: LHS Graduation, 6:00PM, PAC
- May 31: 8th Grade Awards Ceremony, 6:00PM, PAC
- May 31: Spring Fling Dance, 7:00PM, OHS Gymnasium

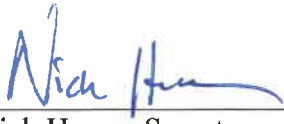
#### **Adjournment**

Moved by Quick, supported by Pappas, to adjourn at 7:54 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Goetzinger.

Respectfully submitted,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick Henne", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Nick Henne, Secretary

