

**OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Board of Education Minutes**  
**Committee of the Whole Board Meeting**  
**November 12, 2025**  
**Report 25-65**

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

Absent: Nick Henne

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

**Amend Agenda**

President Marlene Webster requested that the agenda be amended to include a Closed Session for the purposes of conducting a student discipline hearing. Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnicky, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

**Thrun Policy Updates**

Administration reviewed mid-year policy updates provided by the Thrun Law Firm. These updates incorporated legal terminology changes and new forms in response to recent state legislation, including the Educator–Student Trust Act (ESTA). Board members were directed to the packet where all revisions were marked in red. Policy 3118 was updated to replace the term “fondling” with “criminal sexual contact” to align with current legal definitions. Policy 4113 was updated to reflect ESTA requirements, and a new Form 4113 F2—a checklist to help Human Resources manage ESTA reporting and compliance—was added. The existing form was redesignated as 4113 F1 to distinguish it from the new checklist. Administration noted that these mid-year changes are unusual but necessary because of recent legal changes and the new ESTA law. Optional changes highlighted in blue had been previously discussed and decided upon by the Board. The policy update packet will appear on the November

agenda for review and on the December agenda for action.

### **Attendance Data 2025–2026**

The Board received an update on student attendance data with a focus on chronic absenteeism. A chart prepared by Dr. Cathy Dwyer showed building-level data for the 2022–23, 2023–24, 2024–25 and current 2025–26 school years. Chronic absenteeism was defined as missing more than 18 days (10% of a 180-day school year). For the current year, data were presented using two cut points: after 30 instructional days, where chronic absenteeism was defined as three or more absences, and after 47 days, where it was defined as five or more absences. All types of absences, including verified absences and suspensions, are counted.

Administration described the variety of strategies being implemented to improve attendance, including parent communication, family meetings, work with truant officers, newsletters, and incentives such as competitions between grades and classes. The administrative team emphasized that student presence is critical for learning and indicated that the committee will receive monthly updates on this data to monitor progress. Board members noted that the secondary buildings are performing relatively well, and there was interest in further disaggregating the data to distinguish between verified and unverified absences.

During discussion, members also shared observations about early-morning arrival patterns. Many students arrive between 6:30 and 6:45 a.m., often waiting outside in cold weather until staff arrive to open the building. While some students wear appropriate winter clothing, others do not, and care-closet resources remain essential. The Board also discussed the number of students who do not ride district buses and instead are dropped off by parents, creating traffic congestion—particularly at Emerson—where vehicles line both sides of the road and students and parents walk between parked cars. Members expressed concern about near-miss incidents and asked administration to continue exploring long-term solutions related to traffic flow, parking patterns, and student safety at arrival and dismissal.

### **Superintendent Evaluation Process**

The committee received an update on the superintendent evaluation process following recent MASB training. Trustee Pappas and President Webster reported that the training was beneficial and clarified the updated expectations. Superintendent Brooks will present data and supporting “artifacts” for the five evaluation categories at next week’s meeting; much of this information has already been previewed through his weekly Friday Letters.

Administration highlighted several key changes:

- The evaluation must be conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act; the superintendent has the right to be present during deliberations, even if they occur in closed session, and may request that deliberations take place in open session.
- The evaluation will be finalized by consensus rather than averaging numerical scores.

The process will include: (1) presentation of artifacts by Superintendent Brooks; (2) approximately three weeks for each Board member to review materials and complete an individual rubric; (3) a December

meeting to identify areas of immediate agreement and then work toward consensus on remaining ratings. All artifacts, including the training slideshow, are housed in a Google document. Board members experiencing difficulty accessing Google were encouraged to seek assistance in advance; loaner laptops or Chromebooks and password support are available.

### **Computer Replacement**

The Director of Technology prepared a comprehensive document outlining the condition of district desktop computers used by teachers, aides, and office staff. Many of these desktops were originally donated by Baker College in 2011–2012 and are believed to date back to approximately 2007. Over the years, the machines have been upgraded as much as possible with additional RAM, storage, and video cards; however, they are now at the end of their usable life and cannot support current software or operating systems.

The document included a quote from Dell estimating that replacing all necessary desktops would cost approximately \$205,000. It also outlined a potential three-year phased replacement plan, noting that computer prices are currently increasing by about 10% per year and have risen sharply in recent months—making a phased approach ultimately more expensive than a single bulk purchase. The Board discussed the advantages and drawbacks of both approaches: a bulk purchase would be more cost-effective but could create another large replacement cycle in the future, while a phased plan would spread costs but reduce purchasing power over time.

No immediate purchase decision was made. Any large-scale replacement would need to be incorporated into a future budget revision, and the physical installation of new devices would occur during the summer months. Superintendent Brooks requested that the Director of Technology develop a long-term technology replacement cycle for all district systems—including desktops, telephones, and swipe-card access systems—similar to the curriculum replacement cycle, which helps prevent multiple large expenditures from converging at the same time. The report also noted that aging computers limit the ability to run updated versions of Windows and complicate the viewing of certain district security videos, though workarounds remain in place.

### **Athletics**

Administration shared that there continue to be strong levels of student participation in fall athletics and preparations are underway for the winter sports season. The Board was advised that some students and parents may choose to speak at an upcoming Board meeting regarding recent softball and volleyball concerns. Administration summarized steps already taken to address those issues internally, including meetings, investigations, and interviews. Board members were reminded that public participation is not a time for dialogue and that the appropriate response to public comment is to acknowledge the concerns and note that the Superintendent, Dr. Lintner, and Mr. VanDuser are addressing them.

### **Audit**

Administration reported that the annual financial audit is complete and will be presented in detail by the auditor at the next regular Board meeting. Preliminary results show a projected increase in the district's fund balance of approximately 3.5%, bringing the total to nearly 28%, despite earlier projections of deficit spending. Auditors spent several days in June and August reviewing all federal funds, grants,

processes, and financial records. Tim and the business office staff were commended for their preparation and responsiveness.

The audit identified one finding related to uncashed checks issued to companies and employees. These outstanding checks remain on the books as liabilities that must be addressed. Corrective actions will include:

- Turning over long-outstanding funds to the State of Michigan's unclaimed property program;
- Adding future employee reimbursements for mileage and supplies directly to paychecks via ACH, reducing paper checks; and
- Increasing the use of ACH payments for recurring vendors.

The Board also received an update on the district's food service account, which again has a significant surplus that must be spent down. Last year, over \$300,000 was invested in new equipment and infrastructure. This year, approximately \$500,000 must be spent by year's end. New Food Service Director Carrie Hall has been with the district for about a week and a half and is already making a positive impact, including successful management of the Veterans Day event and improvements to kitchen operations. Administration anticipates she will bring forward additional recommendations to modernize equipment and further utilize available funds.

#### **Bond Update**

The Board continued its discussion of a potential bond election and reviewed updated financial scenarios prepared by PFM. Three primary scenarios for a May election were discussed:

- Scenario 1 (Table 1A): A zero-mill increase (maintaining 4.7 mills) that would generate approximately \$35 million.
- Scenario 2 (Table 1B): A 0.5-mill decrease (to 4.2 mills), generating about \$28.5 million—approximately \$6.5 million less.
- Scenario 3 (Table 1C): A 1.0-mill decrease (to 3.7 mills), generating about \$20 million—roughly \$15 million less than the zero-mill scenario.

Administration explained that a \$15 million reduction would require eliminating significant projects, such as the pool and the bus garage/maintenance center. The packet also included parallel scenarios for an August election using the same three millage levels. Amounts differ slightly due to timing of the bond sale and debt structuring.

The Board compared the advantages and disadvantages of a May versus an August election. A May election would involve a very tight timeline with required approvals by January 8 and would require the district to fund the election cost. An August election, which coincides with the governor primary, would not incur direct election costs for the district and would provide additional time to refine project scope. While August may result in higher voter turnout, it was noted that the additional planning time and lack of election cost are significant benefits.

Administration also provided an update on efforts to sell surplus properties. Venture continues to work with an investor who has requested additional documentation, and a state budget allocation of \$800,000 connected to Senator Singh is supporting the housing development project. Bids are being obtained for necessary blight reduction work, which may save the project approximately \$1 million.

The Board reviewed precinct-level results from the recent bond election and noted that the overall margin of defeat was about 600 votes (approximately 4%). Within the city limits, including absentee ballots, the bond failed by only 201 votes. Some precincts, such as Delaney, recorded a wider margin against the proposal, while others, such as Wilkinson, supported it. Board consensus favored targeting an August election as a “better bet,” while continuing to refine the project scope, including potential adjustments such as removing two additional classrooms at Bentley Bright Beginnings to free resources for other needs.

### **School Accountability Index**

Administration provided an update on the new School Accountability Index scores, which are currently under embargo. Scores will be publicly released around Thanksgiving after districts have an opportunity to challenge them. Most district schools maintained stable performance, with Emerson gaining five points. Although the number of schools identified for additional support has more than doubled statewide this year, no new schools in the district were identified beyond Lincoln, which will continue as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school with significant additional funding for targeted interventions.

The Board reviewed the components of the index formula. At the elementary and middle school level, scores are based on approximately 43% student growth, 36.7% proficiency, 17% school quality, and 2% assessment participation. At the high school and Lincoln, the formula weights are about 38% student growth, 32% proficiency, 11% graduation rate, 15% school quality, and 2.25% assessment participation. School quality measures include attendance and, at the elementary/middle level, access to art, PE, and a librarian. Administration emphasized that the district performs particularly well in the area of student growth, which is more directly influenced by school efforts than proficiency alone.

Board members discussed the difficulty of comparing scores between districts because the index is applied differently depending on each school’s grade configuration. Questions were raised about how post-secondary enrollment is defined in the index and whether it includes trade schools as well as college; administration will seek clarification.

### **Senior Citizen Holiday Showtime**

Administration announced that the Senior Citizen Holiday Showtime event is scheduled for December 5 at 9:00 a.m. and will feature performances from various middle and high school performing arts groups, including bands and choirs. Jess Thompson is coordinating the event.

### **Curriculum Update**

The curriculum team shared a series of recent instructional and school culture highlights. These included a successful middle school assembly with positive messaging, a high school student-produced video honoring veterans, and recognition of students in Lincoln’s ATL classes. The district recently hosted an HMH literacy coach, who provided targeted support for principals, instructional leaders, and grade-level chairs as they continue to implement the new literacy program.

Elementary data days were held to review attendance, social-emotional, reading, and math data. Staff

examined building-wide trends, grade-level results, and individual student interventions, including a “check-in/check-out” program to support student attendance and engagement. Planning is underway for a January 19 professional learning and data review day.

The Board also discussed the district’s growing special education population, estimated at approximately 22% of students, and funding associated with these services. Administration noted that RESD support and increased state funding have helped offset costs, and that last year the district received additional reimbursement for special education services. Discussion also touched on the role of Lincoln High School and the balance between in-person and virtual learning for students with anxiety. The administration reiterated that in-person learning remains the preferred option; virtual placements are closely monitored and students who are not successful in an online environment are required to return to in-person settings. It was clarified that Lincoln’s program was originally designed for credit-deficient students and that one of its features is the ability for students to earn up to ten credits per year, creating a possible three-year graduation pathway.

#### **Round Table**

During Round Table, Board members and administration discussed several ongoing district matters, including student arrival patterns, transportation, and site-based safety concerns. Members noted continued challenges with morning traffic congestion at Emerson and emphasized the importance of maintaining safe drop-off and pick-up procedures. Administration will continue collaborating with local law enforcement and families to promote safer traffic flow and pedestrian movement during high-volume times.

Additional updates were shared regarding internal planning and scheduling for upcoming agenda items, staffing needs, and building-level updates. Board members also discussed preparations for future meetings, including anticipated reports and upcoming presentations.

#### **Closed Session – Attorney–Client Privileged Communication**

Moved by Ochodnicki, supported by Mowen, to enter closed session at 6:30 p.m. to review an attorney–client privileged communication. Motion carried unanimously. The Board returned to open session at 6:38 p.m.

#### **Closed Session – Student Discipline Hearing**

Moved by Pappas, supported by Quick, to enter closed session at 6:45 p.m. to conduct a student discipline hearing pursuant to Section 8(b) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. Motion carried unanimously. The Board heard testimony and reviewed information related to Student #110005049 and remained in closed session for deliberations. The Board returned to open session at 8:02 p.m.

Moved by Webster, supported by Mowen, to suspend Student #110005049 for 180 school days, with a re-evaluation to occur in August 2026 to review progress on a safety and support plan to be developed by administration and presented to the family by December 1, 2025. The motion further specified that the plan will include conditions related to educational participation, therapeutic services, medication management, and documentation from outside providers prior to any consideration of re-entry.

Roll Call Vote:  
Webster – Aye  
Easlick – Aye  
Mowen – Aye  
Ochodnicky – Nay  
Pappas – Aye  
Quick – Aye  
Henne – Absent  
Motion carried.

**Adjournment**

Moved by Webster, supported by Mowen, to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Sara Selleck.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Henne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Henne, Secretary