

**OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Board of Education**  
**Committee of the Whole Meeting**  
**September 10, 2025**  
**Report 25-39**

Present: Marlene Webster, Adam Easlick, Nick Henne, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnick, John Pappas

Absent: Olga Quick

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 to discuss confidential attorney client privilege information. Moved by Pappas, supported by Ochodnick, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

**Agenda**

**Thrun Policy Updates**

Superintendent Brooks reviewed the June 11 and July 25 Thrun Law policy update packages. Most changes were legal or terminology clean-ups. Highlights included updated nondiscrimination language, Title IX complaint handling procedures, financial and accounting clarifications, extracurricular staff evaluations, and federal Title and Perkins updates. Both update batches will move forward for first reading in September and second reading in October.

## **Bond**

The Board participated in a “Bond or Bust” review game to reinforce key facts. Absentee ballots will be mailed September 25. Delaying pool upgrades for ten years would likely result in closure and higher costs. Using bonds rather than general fund dollars avoids impacting salaries and operations, which comprise 80–85% of the general fund. By restructuring current debt and maintaining 4.7 mills, the district can generate approximately \$35 million with no millage increase. The swimming pool project remains the largest single cost at approximately \$8.9 million. Owosso’s 4.7 mills are lower than many neighboring districts. The Board also reviewed voter registration procedures and noted that 20,063 registered voters are eligible for the district’s proposals.

## **Budget Communication**

The district issued a budget status communication through School Messenger and its website, aligned with statewide superintendent messaging urging lawmakers to act promptly on the state budget. Owosso’s fund balance of 23–24% allows the district to remain financially stable into December despite state budget delays. Neighboring districts with lower balances may experience earlier strain.

## **Curriculum Updates**

Curriculum Director Cathy Dwyer reported that fall assessments are underway across the district to collect baseline data that will guide instruction and identify student support needs. A district team will attend the MTSS Data Day at the RESD on October 3 to analyze results, set measurable goals, and determine support for teachers and students. She also highlighted that OHS recently held its Academic Awards Night, where 181 students were recognized for academic achievement, with first-year awardees receiving certificates, second-year students earning academic letters, and third-year students receiving medals. The Curriculum Newsletter will resume September 12 and continue on a bi-weekly basis. Instructional coaches recently participated in training through HMM Coachly, which provides on-demand support for curriculum implementation. In addition, the district has applied for Math Recovery Grants to support teacher training, purchase instructional kits, and reimburse costs for participation. Each elementary building submitted its own \$5,000 application, and award notifications are expected soon.

## **Cell Phone Policy**

Administrators and teachers report strong satisfaction with the new cell phone policy, with high compliance across all buildings. At the elementary level, phones are stored in lockers or with teachers until dismissal. While one parent expressed concern, overall feedback has been positive, and staff feel supported by the Board’s decision.

## **Health Insurance Updates 2025-2026**

New insurance rates are effective with the upcoming payroll, reflecting a 10.52% increase for OPS. The district will cover a portion of this increase, with the remainder passed on to employees. Other county

districts are experiencing increases of 15–16%, while last year OPS saw a 17–18% increase. A MESA representative will meet with all staff groups together on September 30 to present options in advance of open enrollment (November 1–15).

### **Board Training**

Funds remain available for MASB training opportunities, both online and in person.

### **This Is Our Story the Next Chapter**

The district continues to promote its communications slogan, “This is our story — the next chapter.” Signs featuring the tagline were displayed at the Academic Awards Night, and families eagerly took photos with them. The campaign is being used to encourage community engagement and highlight district pride.

### **Round Table**

Vice President Ochodnický raised the idea of moving toward a grade-level elementary configuration, such as grouping K–2 students together, citing curriculum alignment and safety benefits. She suggested the district consider exploring feasibility at a future time. Trustee Pappas asked about concerns within the softball program. Superintendent Brooks noted that he has been reviewing the program and will continue follow-up discussions, including with families who had raised concerns. Trustee Mowen inquired about the water line project; Superintendent Brooks shared that a flow test had been completed, but cost estimates and state permits for Phase 1 are still pending.

### **Closed Session**

Following the agenda amendment, President Webster requested that the Board enter closed session to discuss confidential attorney-client privilege information. Moved by Vice President Ochodnický, supported by Henne at 6:50 p.m. to move into closed session. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Henne, to move back into open session at 6:56 p.m. for the purpose of adjournment. Motion carried unanimously.

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

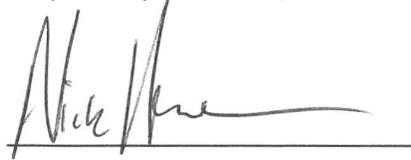
- September 24: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- October 8: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- October 22: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- November 12: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- November 19: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

**Adjournment**

Moved by Webster, supported by Henne, to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Sara Selleck.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Nick Henne, Secretary