

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Minutes
May 14, 2018
Report 17-158

President Jenc called the meeting of the Board of Education to order at 5:01 pm. The meeting was held in the media center located at Owosso High School, 765 E. North Street, Owosso, Michigan.

Present: Jenc, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnicky, Paez, Webster

Absent: Keyes (Motions of the Board of Education that were unanimous did not include Keyes)

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

As part of the Celebrate Kids! Segment of the meeting, the top 2018 graduates from Owosso High School and Lincoln Alternative High School were recognized for their achievements.

Owosso High School Principal Jeff Phillips and Assistant Principal Karen Van Epps introduced their 23 highest honors graduates from the class of 2018. The top graduates recognized were Hannah Ardelean who plans to attend Central Michigan University. Jake Bacigal plans to attend the University of Michigan. Jessa Baumdraher will attend Central Michigan University in the fall. Abigail Brainerd will attend the University of Michigan. Daniel Clevenger plans to attend the University of Michigan. Andrew Dallas will be attending Saginaw Valley State University. Brendan Dewley plans to attend the University of Michigan. Brooke Edington will attend Michigan State University. Danielle Gregoricka-Colby will be attending Loyola University Chicago. Jayden Guru plans to attend Kettering University. Daniel Hood plans to attend Michigan Technological University. Josephine Hufnagel will attend Saginaw Valley State University. Kennedy Krantz will be attending Michigan State University. Cole Mallory plans to attend Michigan State University. Eamon McClintock will attend Michigan Technological University. Damien Moore is planning to attend the University of Michigan. Spencer Phaneuf plans to attend Northern Michigan University. Anna Raffaelli will attend Grand Valley State University. Erin Rau will be attending Michigan State University. Hannah Skodinski plans to attend Northern Michigan University. Samuel Stechschulte is undecided on where he will attend college. Janae Voss will be attending Michigan State University. Sidney Voss plans to attend Olivet Nazarene University.

Lincoln High School Principal Steve Irelan announced that five LHS students were selected as their top graduates from the class of 2018. The LHS top graduates that were recognized were Sandy Huff, Makenzie Soldan, Saebrah Claybaugh, Tim Povelaitis, and Alexis Richmond.

Central Elementary Principal Bridgit Spielman introduced Mrs. Bethany Hutchison who is a teacher leader and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) trainer. Mrs. Hutchison has taken robotics to a whole new level this year and had her fifth grade students work on building a Clawbot with their IQ VEX robotics kit. This was a culmination of the students learning about robotics and automation around the world and in the workplace.

Mrs. Bethany Hutchison informed the Board that the first project her students completed was to build a robotic toy without using any electronic pieces. A video was shared that displayed the various robotic toys and their functions that were created by the students. Mrs. Hutchison's students Zane, Madelyn, and Blake demonstrated their Clawbot in motion for the Board.

Owosso Middle School Assistant Principal Cathy Dwyer informed the Board that the Shiawassee Scholars are the top 50 students in the county that are chosen based on their SAT scores. Owosso Public Schools host the annual assessment for the county with assistance from Mr. Lance Little. Being a part of this prestigious group is a high honor and it opens the door to multiple opportunities in the future. Mrs. Dwyer announced that the District had nine Shiawassee Scholars this year. The students recognized for

their achievements were Kendall Anderson, Aaron Jafri, Victor Jones, Harrison Ketchum, Kevin Laskowski, David Neese, Alexander Popovitch, Samantha Thayer, and Kyra Waldner.

On behalf of Owosso Public Schools, Cathy Dwyer recognized three Owosso Middle School staff members on their retirement. Samantha Lieberman Stechsulte, Media Specialist who is retiring after 19 years in the District. John Somers, Science Teacher who is retiring after 27 years of service. Jeff Sawyer, Physical Education Teacher is retiring after 30 years in the District.

Owosso High School Principal Jeff Phillips congratulated retiree Carole Bleau, Special Education Teacher after working the past 12 years for the District. Jane Back, Paraprofessional will retire after 15 years of service.

Mr. Steve Brooks, Director of Curriculum and Instruction honored Julie Howard, Elementary Music Teacher on her retirement after 29 years of service with the District.

Emerson Elementary Principal Terry Sedlar recognized Linda Burns, First Grade Teacher for 21 years of service with the District. Nola Bruder, Elementary Music Teacher is retiring after 31 years of service.

Central Elementary Principal Bridgit Spielman honored Cindy Helvie, Executive Secretary at Bentley Bright Beginnings who will retire after 27 years of service with the District.

Mr. Steve DeLong, Director of Transportation recognized Louann Jacobs, Bus Driver for 34 years of service with the District.

Superintendent Tuttle proudly announced that Bentley Bright Beginnings Secretary Cindy Helvie was nominated and selected as the Argus Press “Best of the Best” Secretary. Bentley Bright Beginnings was awarded the “Best of the Best” Daycare Center. In addition, Vicki Tobey was selected as the “Best of the Best” Bus Driver.

Board of Education Student Representative Andrew Pond reported that members of the Owosso High School E-Board have been planning and exploring new ideas for the 2018-19 school year. Meetings will be changed from before and after school and will be held during lunchtime to increase student participation. The students are also planning to create birthday and student shout-out boards. OHS students will continue the “What’s Your 17?” initiative that promotes kindness and inclusiveness. Andrew stated that E-Board members recently attended their last Flint Metro League meeting where they sorted approximately 70,000 pounds of food at the Eastern Michigan Food Bank for families in the local area.

Andrew Pond announced that the ABC Channel 12 School Spirit assembly was held at Owosso High School on May 11, 2018. Owosso Public Schools was the winner of this year’s challenge and raised approximately 110,000 pounds of food for local food banks. The school district that came in second place raised 55,000 pounds of food. Andrew stated that 12 other school districts attended the early morning assembly. All students in attendance participated in fun activities. The first 250 OPS students to arrive at the assembly were given a pass to watch the movie “Wonder.”

Andrew Pond stated that the OHS Academic Pep Assembly Awards Ceremony was held on May 11th. Kayla Manley was chosen as senior of the year. Devon Burzmor was selected as staff member of the year. Trudy Schneider was awarded teacher of the year. In addition, 20 OHS students were given awards for their positive influences at Owosso High School.

Andrew Pond announced that on May 24, 2018 five out of six E-Board members will graduate from Owosso High School and each student has post-secondary plans that include either a trade school or four-year university.

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Andrea Tuttle thanked Treasurer Cheryl Paez, Trustee Ty Krauss, Secretary Shelly Ochodnicki, and Trustee Marlene Webster for attending the Marshall Plan meeting. The Marshall Plan is an initiative for the development of economic talent.

Superintendent Tuttle reported that she held her second Talks with Tuttle at Owosso Middle School. She explained that the students she met with had many positive comments about the middle school. The students overwhelmingly shared their appreciation of the staff and opportunities that they have at OMS. The students did state that they wish others were more kind to each other. Kindness is an initiative that is being focused on by the District.

Superintendent Tuttle informed the Board that Secretary Shelly Ochodnicki and Treasurer Cheryl Paez recently attended the Lincoln House Open House with her. The former Lincoln School building was purchased by the WODA Group and transformed into affordable housing apartments.

Superintendent Tuttle expressed her appreciation for Vice President Rick Mowen who has consistently attended the Channel 12 Spirit Cup Assembly's at 5 am to serve coffee and donuts to the participants.

Superintendent Tuttle announced that administrators recently met with the Transportation Department staff and participated in team building activities. She thanked Transportation Director Steve DeLong for organizing a bus rodeo contest where bus drivers assisted the administrators through a series of obstacles.

Superintendent Tuttle applauded Operations and Food Service Director John Klapko for writing and receiving the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) grant. The grant provides free breakfast and lunch that extended the program to all K-12 Owosso Public Schools students over the next four years.

Superintendent Tuttle stated that Owosso Public Schools is a District of opportunity and is continually looking for ways to increase opportunities for students. She stated that sadly, Ms. Kirsten Schaffert, OMS Choir Teacher has resigned effective at the end of the school year. With Ms. Schaffert's departure, the OMS Choir program will be enhanced to include musical theater. The fine arts enhancement will offer students the opportunity to experience music theater and choir under the direction of Mrs. Jessica McClung.

Curriculum Director Steve Brooks reported that eight elementary teachers, middle school, and high school teachers will receive robotics training through Project Lead the Way (PLTW) over the summer months. Hands on activities that engage students will also be purchased to support PLTW.

Steve Brooks announced that mindful preparations are under way for professional development opportunities that teachers will participate in over the summer months and during the 2018-19 school year.

Steve Brooks informed the Board that up to date instructional resources will be provided to teachers and students in the areas of Conceptual Physics, Advanced Placement Chemistry, and Spanish IV textbooks.

Steve Brooks reported that students are in the final stages of completing the M-STEP annual assessment. He stated that staff and students have worked very hard with the scheduling and completion of these tests.

In regards to the plans that will enhance the Owosso Middle Schools Choir program, Steve Brooks commented that he recently spoke with a retired theater instructor from East Lansing Public Schools who also has ties to Owosso. Their conversation focused on the bond, theater, and musical opportunities at OPS. Mr. Brooks stated that he is working with this gentleman to develop the musical theater experience at the middle school and the theater experience that has been incorporated into English 10 beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. Mr. Brooks commented that he is very excited that Owosso Public Schools will be one of the few schools in the state to offer theater in the high school curriculum.

Public Participation

President Jenc stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded that 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.

Olga Quick addressed the Board as a concerned citizen. Mrs. Quick expressed her concerns about changes to the middle school choir program and how musical theater will impact students. She stated that it doesn't cost any money for students to be in choir, but there are costs associated with band. Her concern was that the District may be impacting or prohibiting the opportunity for students to experience choir in the middle school, which is also a feeder program to the high school.

Sidney Voss, OHS senior commented that both the choir and drama programs have an indispensable value that the District cannot do without. However, she believes that one cannot replace the other. Sidney stated that not all students involved in choir want to be singers or actors. Choir is an emotional and creative outlet that middle school students need.

Autumn Weir, OHS junior shared information about a friend that had a lot of problems growing up. The friend was able to grow and develop a great deal of confidence over the years after being involved in the District's music and choir programs. Autumn stated that everything she has accomplished would not have happened if not for her involvement in the choir program and the opportunities available at OPS.

Eric Locker, a graduate of Owosso High School was very involved in the OPS choir, band, and arts programs as a student. He is currently a short-term substitute choir teacher at Owosso High School. Eric and members of the various OHS choir programs were in attendance to get a better understanding of the proposed changes to the middle school choir program. He stated that he and the students are worried about the lack of transparency or discussion about the changes to choir. Eric remarked that middle school choir is a feeder program and the high school choir would not be what it is without middle school choir. He encouraged the Board to attend Cabaret and witness firsthand how great they are.

Tom Manke remarked that it is a sad day for the District. He stated that two of his children participated in the middle school choir program under the direction of Mrs. Cheryl Gapinski and it helped them tremendously. Mr. Manke stated that the administration is making these changes sound like a great opportunity, but he believes that it is all related to the budget and the District does not want to hire a choir teacher. Mr. Manke commented that he was not aware of the proposed changes until he arrived at the meeting and is ashamed. He asked the Board to be honest with students and tax payers.

OPS parent Amy Weir expressed similar concerns to those that were reiterated during public participation. She stated that she agrees there are differences in choir and theater. Mrs. Weir commented that she believes the District is taking a big risk with the proposed changes, especially after the program has grown and become so popular with students. She stated that people have a lot of questions about the changes.

A student named Megan commented that she suffers from anxiety. Choir and music are her passions, but she does not like theater. She stated that it would be devastating to her if choir was eliminated from the middle school because this is how she found her voice.

Makayla stated that she has been in choir since sixth grade. She has made many friends and feels very comfortable in the choir environment. The music teachers are like her second mom.

Ava Fett, an OHS Madrigal commented that the choir program is a tight-knit group. Many students come to school to participate in this class because it makes them happy. She believes that the elimination of middle school choir would damage the high school programs and its traditions. OHS has scored very high a festival for the past several years and if middle school choir was taken away she thinks that scores would be much lower. Ava remarked that her sister and her came to Owosso Public Schools because of the Trojan Marching Band, music and arts traditions. She commented that musical theater is great to include in the curriculum but it is very different than choir. The middle school choir program means a lot to many people.

Alyssa remarked that she came from Bath Schools two years ago and was not in the middle school choir. She stated that she was very intrigued with all of the choir levels at OHS. Since being in choir she has learned to site read music and does not want to see the middle school program cut.

Ethan, an OHS senior and member of the Madrigals stated that there are a lot of things that theater can teach. He was recently in the OHS school play "Check Please" and does not think he would have been a part of this if it were not for the choir program. Choir is a family that is developed in middle school. Ethan stated that many of the things that students do in high school choir are taught when they are in middle school, such as site reading music. He stated that it would be terrible to destroy the choir tradition at OPS.

Kasmira Trevorrow explained that choir is her passion and at one time she battled stage fright. Kirsten Schaffert helped her find her voice and gave her the courage to try out for a solo that she did get. She loves singing and music and it has played a very crucial part in shaping her as a person.

Abby Christian remarked that like many of her friends, she tends to be a very nervous person. She stated that she has been involved in several performances in school but would never have auditioned for any of them without her choir experience. Choir has helped her blossom, be more social and gain her confidence and skills. Abby commented that she believes that choir is a huge asset to Owosso Public Schools.

Tyler Hogg, an OHS freshman stated that he has always loved music. He praised Mrs. Julie Howard for encouraging him as an elementary music student. He also expressed gratitude for Ms. Schaffert helping her students feel at home in her classroom, especially when things got tough in the middle school. Tyler stated that with his exposure to choir, he is now thinking about majoring in music when he attends college.

Katelyn, an OHS sophomore stated that she had Mr. Wyndham for sixth grade choir and he pushed her out of her comfort zone. She tried out for a solo in Cabaret when she was a freshman and made it. She thanked Mrs. Julie Howard for introducing her to music as an outlet when she attended Bryant Elementary School. She also was pleased to learn how to read site music in middle school, which benefited her as a high school student.

Taylor remarked that she is not in choir, but is associated with many choir students. She stated that she has attended many performances and feels that choir and theater require very different skills. The importance of learning to site read music in middle school was reiterated.

Meredith Weir stated that she is in seventh grade. She has a friend that has anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and has been abused by his mother. She added that the only thing that has kept her friend in school is the choir program.

For Action

- Moved by Mowen, supported by Paez to approve the April 23, 2018 regular meeting minutes, April 23, 2018 closed session minutes, current bills, and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously

- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to adopt Revised Bylaw 0143.1 – Public Expression by Board Members, as a second reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to adopt Revised Policies 3121 and 4121, New Policy 1421 – Criminal History Record Check (administrative, professional, and support staff), as a second reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to adopt Revised Policy 4162 – Controlled Substances and Alcohol Policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Drivers and Other Employees Who Perform Safety Sensitive Functions, as a second reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to adopt Revised Policy 5111 – Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students, as a second reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to adopt Replacement Policy 7540.02 – Web Accessibility, Content, Apps and Service, as a second reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to adopt Revised Policy 8321 – Criminal Justice Information Security (Non-Criminal Justice Agency), as a second reading. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Mowen to approve the 2018-2019 student handbooks for Bentley Bright Beginnings, elementary, middle and high schools as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Paez to authorize the Superintendent to sign the contract with BSB Communications for the purchase of a replacement phone system in an amount not to exceed \$146,464.46 and approve the purchase of the server to support the phone system from Dell in the amount of \$21,611.77. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnický to authorize the Operations Department to dispose of a 1998 Ford Van with 167,636 miles. The vehicle has been deemed to be no longer viable for use in the Operations Department due to the wear and tear that has taken place over the years. The van will be placed up for sale through a closed bid process. The funds garnered will be returned to the general fund. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Krauss to support the Shiawassee Regional Education School district 2018-19 budget as presented and authorize the Superintendent to forward the resolution to the SRESB Board on or before June 1, 2018. Vice President Mowen commented that similar to most school districts, the SRESB is also struggling with their fund balance. A bond issue will be presented to voters to try and remedy some of this. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Krauss to approve the out-of-state travel for Owosso High School FCCLA students, Emily Rau, Lucy Popovitch, and Morgan Louch, as well as Trudy Schneider, FCCLA Advisor to travel to Atlanta, Georgia to compete at the National Level. The trip will be from June 26-July 3, 2018. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Paez to adopt the resolution as presented and prepared by the Thrun Law Firm to facilitate the closing of the sale of the bonds for the purposes as authorized by the voters in November 2017. Carrie Blanchett of PFM reported that the bonds were sold at an average overall interest rate of 3.84%. The final results comparison from the pre-election shows approximately \$10,000,000 less in interest, which will provide more dollars for the construction costs of the bond. Attorney Matt Heiser of the Thrun Law Firm was happy to report that the Bond Authorizing Resolution that was approved by the Board at the March 26, 2018 meeting was accepted from J.P. Morgan Security LLC to purchase the bonds. The Bonds shall be dated May 16, 2018 and the District will receive all of the proceeds that will allow the construction process to proceed. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnický to approve the hiring of certified staff Karleen Koskinen as a Special Education Teacher at Owosso High School. Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board of Education will be asked to authorize the disposal of the obsolete material listed below:

The Transportation Department to dispose of the following obsolete bus:

- 2002 International School Bus (bus #35) 305,949 MILES, VIN #28947165

The District to dispose of the following obsolete media center material:

- 25 Drawer wooden Remington Rand Library Card Catalog
- The Board of Education will be asked to authorize the Superintendent to renew the contract with Baker College for Adult Ed services for the fiscal year 2018-19.
- The Board of Education will be asked to authorize the borrowing of an amount pending attorney approval and recommended for the 2018-2019 budget adoption inclusive of “set-aside” notes and “no set-asides” for operating purposes to eliminate cash flow challenges that result from timing issues related to State Aid payments for the 2018-19 school year. The actual borrowing resolution that is necessary for the Board to pass will be provided on June 25, 2018, which will include the attorney approved amount.
- The Board will be asked to adopt the resolutions that revise the appropriations for the General, School Service and Building and Site Funds for the 2017-18 fiscal year to be presented to the Board for adoption at the June 25, 2018 regularly scheduled Board meeting.
- The Board will be asked to adopt the resolutions presented for the 2018-19 fiscal year budget package for the General Fund, School Service and Sinking Fund at the June 25, 2018 Board meeting.

For Information

Superintendent Tuttle reported that Alexis Mueller, Teacher at Owosso High School has submitted her letter of resignation to be effective at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 school year. Louann Jacobs, Bus Driver has submitted her letter of resignation effective at the conclusion of the school year after 34 years of service with the District.

Public Participation

Tom Manke remarked that of all the Board meetings he has attended, he has never witnessed almost 20 people speak during public participation. Many of those that spoke were students. He asked if the administration has any idea what it is doing to the District. Owosso Public Schools has held a long lasting tradition of having a strong choir program. He asked if the high school will be able to continue to maintain choir if the program is removed from the middle school.

Superintendent Tuttle responded to Mr. Manke’s comments by making it clear that Owosso Public Schools is not cutting choir at Owosso Middle School. She explained that there have been requests to include more theater into productions and the District is simply attempting to balance this.

Superintendent Tuttle commented that she understands the apprehensions that were voiced and praised the students that articulated their concerns in a respectful manner. It is not the District’s intent to cut the choir program, but to offer additional opportunities to students and give them exposure to theater.

Board Member Comments/Updates

Trustee Ty Krauss reported that he was able to attend the “Lunch and Learn” meeting about the Marshall Plan that was sponsored by the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership. He stated that this was an awesome informational setting. It was an opportunity to see employers and get their input. Mr. Krauss remarked that he looks forward to building a collaboration with local employers and education.

Secretary Shelly Ochodnický stated that she appreciates the students that attended the meeting and demonstrating their right to free speech. She thanked the students for coming to the meeting and expressing themselves.

Vice President Rick Mowen commented on the greatness of Owosso Public Schools and the fine staff that works for the District. He wished the best to the retirees. Mr. Mowen applauded the honor students that were recognized during the meeting from Owosso High School and Lincoln High School. He also recognized the Shiawassee Scholars from Owosso Middle School. Mr. Mowen commented that the ABC Spirit Cup Assembly was a fun event that was well attended and organized in just four days. Mr. Mowen

recognized the students that attended the meeting and those that spoke up about something they have a passion for during public participation. He stated that the country needs more young people to get involved in their communities and take a stand for what they believe in.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:

June 11: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5 pm

June 25: Regular Board Meeting and Budget Hearing, 7:00 pm

Important Upcoming Dates:

May 15: OMS Choir Concert, 7 pm

May 16: OPS Bond-Elementary Steering Committee Meeting, 12-2 pm

May 18 & 19: Cabaret at OHS, 7 pm

May 20: Cabaret at OHS, 4 pm

May 21: Athletic Awards Ceremony at OHS, 7 pm

May 22: Honors Convocation at OHS, 7 pm

May 24: Owosso High School Graduation, 7 pm

May 25: Half Day of School for all Students

May 25: LHS Community Breakfast, 7:45 am

May 28: No School – Memorial Day

May 29: Exchange Student Luncheon-OHS Room 306, 11 am

May 29: Lincoln Graduation Dinner-LHS Gym, 6 pm

May 31: Lincoln High School Graduation-OMS Auditorium, 7 pm

June 2: 8th Grade Awards Ceremony-OMS Auditorium, 6 pm

June 2: 7th & 8th Grade Spring Fling-OHS Gym & Cafeteria, 7 pm

June 4: OPS Bond-MS/HS Steering Committee Meeting, 3-5 pm

June 8: Last Day of School (half day for all students)

June 13: OPS Bond-MS/HS Steering Committee Meeting, 10am -12 pm

June 14: OPS Bond-Elementary Steering Committee Meeting, 12-2 pm

Closed Session

Moved by Mowen, supported by Ochodnicky to move into closed session at 6:52 pm for the purpose of a negotiations discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Paez, supported by Mowen to return to open session at 7:09 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Moved by Ochodnicky, supported by Mowen to adjourn at 7:10 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Clara Pitt

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Ochodnicky, Secretary