

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2024
Report 24-55

Present: Adam Easlick, Nick Henne, Ty Krauss, Rick Mowen, Olga Quick, Marlene Webster
(arrived at 6 p.m.)
Absent: Shelly Ochodnicky

President Mowen 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

To kick off National Principals Month, Superintendent Brooks recognized the exceptional leadership within our district. He highlighted how fortunate we are to be led by such a dedicated team of professionals, and that October is the perfect time to show appreciation for all they do. Along with our principals, Superintendent Brooks extended this recognition to the entire administrative team, calling out their names and asking them to stand for a well-deserved round of applause.

At yesterday's all-admin meeting, Superintendent Brooks gave the team a small token of appreciation. He also shared an impressive fact: collectively, this group has 127 years of administrative experience and has contributed 213 years of service to Owosso Public Schools.

Joy Hartman, our Food Service Director, recognized Mr. Cory Hauk for his 15 years of dedicated service to our district. If you've driven around town during the day, you've likely seen Cory behind the wheel of a box truck, delivering meals and handling various deliveries for all our buildings. Tonight, we are honoring Cory for his remarkable contributions.

Joy shared a few heartfelt remarks, highlighting Cory's essential role as a food service truck driver. Over the past 15 years, Cory has delivered more than a million meals to students across the district, serving every building and every age group. His work has been critical in ensuring that our students receive the nutrition they need, day in and day out. In doing so, Cory has safely driven over 90,000 miles, always performing his duties with care and dedication. We are incredibly grateful for Cory's years of hard work and commitment to the district, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

Carrie Rugenstein, the principal of Lincoln High School, introduced her team and shared exciting news about the new "Service Learning" class launched this year at Lincoln. Last spring, teachers and students proposed 14 new courses, all approved by the Board. As a result, Lincoln High is now offering courses like Service Learning and Bioethics for the first time. Today, Mrs.

Emily Brinks and several students provided insights into these courses' positive impact on the school and community.

Mrs. Brinks, a third-year science teacher at Lincoln, explained the origins of the Service Learning course. After brainstorming with the school social worker, they developed a course that allowed students to learn and grow through hands-on community service while earning school credit. Students in the Service Learning class have been involved in several impactful projects, including organizing a small lending library, planning a field trip to volunteer at a local nursing home, and initiating the process to become the first certified Green School in the county. They've partnered with Bryant Elementary to continue the "Bryant Buddies" program and worked with local church groups on a soccer tournament. Looking ahead, they are planning a community garden project and preparing care packages for veterans, among other initiatives.

Students like Lily Chase and Carter Harris shared personal experiences in the Service Learning and Bioethics courses. Lily spoke about her enjoyment of Bioethics and her decision to join the Service Learning class, where she has been inspired by the kindness and enthusiasm of the younger students she mentors. Carter discussed how Service Learning helped him overcome his social anxiety and step outside his comfort zone, highlighting experiences such as volunteering at a nursing home and running concessions at a soccer game.

The team also touched on future plans, including continuing their efforts to become a certified Green School, organizing a food drive for Thanksgiving, and exploring partnerships with local homeless shelters. The students expressed excitement about the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on their community and encouraged more students to get involved in service projects.

President Mowen asked Mrs. Brinks about the Green School initiative and the projects underway for the program. Mrs. Brinks explained that the Green School Program is a state initiative led by the Department of Natural Resources. Schools can apply for green certification after meeting various requirements, including teaching climate change lessons, implementing eco-friendly policies, or starting a recycling program. Other steps might involve creating signs and flyers to raise awareness about environmental issues. The gradual certification process allows schools to fulfill multiple criteria before submitting the application. Mrs. Brinks emphasized that achieving this certification serves as a recognition of the school's commitment to environmental sustainability, a cause she is passionate about pursuing.

Treasurer Quick asked Principal Rugenstein to share more about the Bryant Buddies program. Principal Rugenstein explained that the initiative began last year in response to some challenges at Bryant, where several students struggled with social interactions and exhibited aggressive behaviors. The program pairs these students with older peers who have overcome similar issues. The "buddies" now volunteer to support Bryant students by spending time with them during lunch, leading activities like coloring, and helping out during recess. The program, which runs on Mondays, Fridays, and full days on the fourth Wednesday of each month, has already shown positive results, including reduced aggressive behavior. Principal Rugenstein praised the program's impact and potential for fostering a supportive environment as the school year progressed.

In closing, the Board commended the students and staff for their dedication and fluency in presenting their work. The Service Learning program has created a positive and transformative experience for the students and the broader community.

Paige Davis provided this month's student representative report, noting less activity than the previous month. The major highlight was Homecoming, held on October 5th. While she didn't have the final expense report, Paige estimated that over 500 tickets were sold, which was an excellent turnout. This year's theme was "Drop the Beat," which added a fun and energetic vibe to the event.

She also mentioned that the football game was moved to Erie Mason to give the team a better shot at the playoffs, which was exciting for the school. However, this change meant the band's senior night game had to be rescheduled. Instead, the band will hold their senior recognition during the "Trojan Spectacular" event on Wednesday, October 30th, at Willman Field. In more band news, Owosso's band earned straight "ones" at the festival again, continuing a remarkable 70-year tradition.

Looking ahead, the Drama Club is gearing up for its production of *Shrek*, scheduled for November 15th, 16th, and 17th. This show promises to be entertaining. Lastly, in September, Paige shared about Owosso's participation in the SkillsUSA Washington Leadership Training Institute. Four students attended the five-day trip to Washington, D.C., where they engaged in leadership development and met with staff from their state senators' offices, making it a valuable experience for all involved.

Board Correspondence

Superintendent Brooks reported on recent activities and upcoming events across the district. Parent-teacher conferences were held last week, allowing parents and teachers to connect. The "Trojan Spectacular" is set to take place at Willman Field on October 30 at 7 p.m., encouraging the community to come out and support the Trojan Marching Band. Veterans Day celebrations are planned for November 11.

At Owosso High School, several notable events took place. Makani Tenorio was notified this week that he had been named a National Merit Scholar. This is a significant honor, and we want to congratulate him for this impressive accomplishment. The equestrian team secured 4th place at the Michigan Interscholastic Horsemanship Association state finals. Homecoming festivities saw Emily Easlick and Charlie Nolph crowned as King and Queen. The school year's first choir and band concerts occurred, and a Powderpuff Football game is scheduled for November 6.

Owosso Middle School also recently held its Fall Choir Concert, and a Powderpuff Football game will take place on November 4.

Lincoln High School hosted its first blood drive of the year, where 27 out of 35 donors successfully gave blood. The school's inaugural flag football tournament resulted in victories over Odyssey and ACEA, with hopes to continue this success in another tournament on October 24. A new cooking club, supported by MSU's 4-H extension, began this week and will run for

six weeks. Regarding academics, 65% of in-person students are passing at least four classes, with an additional 12% nearing this goal.

Emerson Elementary is preparing for the annual Trunk or Treat event on October 24 from 6-7 p.m. The school's Mileage Club kicked off, promoting physical activity by encouraging students to walk or run laps before the school day starts. This initiative, supported by MSU Health Care Sports and Fitness Finders Mileage Club, aims to enhance physical well-being and academic performance.

Bryant Elementary recently conducted student council elections, allowing 3rd-5th grade students to participate in a mock voting. The STEM program, led by Mr. Neitzke, engaged students in technology and computer-based learning, which they demonstrated during parent-teacher conferences. The Peer-to-Peer program, fostering connections between students with and without disabilities, resumed last week to support a positive and inclusive school environment.

Central Elementary enjoyed a successful book fair, and many books were purchased. Upcoming activities include classroom parties and a Halloween parade, which promise to excite the students.

Teresa Graham has been excelling in her role at Bentley Bright Beginnings. Fifteen students participated in cheerleading at a JV football game, and a fire truck will visit the school during fire safety week. GSRP programs are planning a visit to Peacock Tree Farms on October 30, followed by a Fall Fest on October 31.

The Maintenance Department received special recognition for its efforts, with compliments from visitors about the well-maintained facilities.

The Food Service Department celebrated National School Lunch Week from October 14-18, featuring pirate-themed activities. The district also participated in Michigan Apple Crunch Day on October 17, promoting locally grown apples. The department received a Michigan 10 cents per meal grant, effective October 1.

Transportation services are marking National School Bus Safety Week from October 21-25 with safety demonstrations at various schools. Students enjoyed learning about bus safety in a fun way and appreciated seeing their bus drivers involved in different school activities.

Fall athletics are winding down, and student-athletes are being recognized for their achievements. A Booster Bash is scheduled for November 9, and the district will announce conference and academic awards at an upcoming board meeting.

Superintendent Brooks concluded his report with a reminder for the community to participate in Election Day on November 5.

Dr. Dwyer began her report by noting the implementation of Number Corner is thriving in elementary schools. Similar to the traditional "Calendar" time, this math routine enhances number sense and mathematical reasoning. Through hands-on activities, pattern recognition, and

problem-solving exercises, students engage with key concepts such as counting, operations, geometry, and measurement in an interactive and meaningful way.

Last year, we received a \$423,000 literacy grant (35J), with half of the funds initially distributed. After submitting and gaining approval for a Year 2 amendment, the remaining grant money will be included in the November State Aid payment. The grant is being used to support improvements in literacy materials and professional development at the elementary level. We have initiated a curriculum review to update the K-5 literacy program, aiming to complement our current phonics program, UFLI. This process begins with a needs assessment and gathering feedback from K-5 teachers to select three to five curricula for review, narrowing to two for pilot testing in the second semester. A final recommendation for purchase and implementation is expected in May, with full implementation planned for next August. Lexia PowerUp has been chosen for reading intervention at the middle school, and staff training will take place in January, with the program also available for use during summer school.

Data collection for the fall is nearing completion, and teachers will review the results during the professional development day on November 5th. The data will guide decisions regarding interventions and additional support to help students succeed.

To honor Veterans Day, elementary schools will host a "Visiting with Veterans" event where students can invite veterans to a breakfast celebration. At OMS, breakfast will be followed by a school-wide assembly featuring a veteran panel that will answer pre-approved student questions developed in social studies classes. OHS will gather photos and biographies of veterans from students' families to create a tribute video, which will be shared on social media. Meanwhile, Lincoln prepares care kits and sends cards to veterans at a VA hospital.

Dr. Dwyer concluded her report by highlighting OMS's election-related activities, including topics such as the electoral college and swing states. These lessons will culminate in a school-wide mock presidential election on November 4th. Additionally, the YMCA has supported civic engagement by organizing voter registration days at Owosso High School and Lincoln High School, encouraging students to participate actively in the democratic process.

Public Participation

President Mowen 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 Webster, supported by Henne, to approve September 25, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes, October 9, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes, Current Bills, and Financials as presented. Secretary Krauss conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Quick, Krauss, Webster, and Mowen. Nays: None. Ochodnicky is absent. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Easlick, supported by Henne, to authorize the Superintendent to upgrade building controls at Emerson Elementary for the sum of \$80,500.78 using TECHNICAL BUILDING AUTOMATION INC., who was the only contractor to place a bid. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to authorize the Superintendent to renew the City of Owosso’s revised agreement for two “full-time” officers with the City of Owosso, pending City approval. To enhance the public safety of the City of Owosso and Owosso Public School District through the provision of police officers to serve as School Resource (liaison) officers for the contract year of fiscal year 2024-25 through fiscal year 2028-2029. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Webster, supported by Henne, to authorize the district the option to purchase one 77-passenger bus instead of leasing as originally proposed in June/July of 2024. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Krauss, supported by Webster, to authorize the district to transition from NEOLA to Thrun Policies. Vote Ayes: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Webster, and Mowen. Nays: Quick. Motion carried 5 to 1.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss, to authorize the district to purchase a student transportation tracking system with Tyler Technologies, including the equipment, software, installation, and training for 20 buses and up to 25 drivers for full implementation to roll out in August 2025. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Easlick, supported by Webster, that the Board of Education approve the hiring of the following certified staff:

Name	Building/Grade	Recommending Administrator	Salary Schedule Step
Josh Ramirez-Roberts	LHS Social Studies Teacher	Superintendent Steve Brooks	BA Step 1 \$44, 415
Danielle Fuller	Bryant Special Education Teacher	Superintendent Steve Brooks	BA Step 13 \$73,774

Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board will be asked to approve the audit report for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick, to move to For Action at the November 20, 2024, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- The Board will be asked to approve the out-of-state travel for Owosso High School SkillsUSA students, teacher (Carrie Warning), and parent chaperone (Dana Boggs) on a trip to Atlanta, GA, June 23 - 28, 2025. Moved by Easlick, supported by Quick, to move to For Action at the November 20, 2024, Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

For Information

Superintendent Brooks announced the following personnel changes:

Accepted Positions

Ginger Strittmatter has accepted the Food Service Worker position at OHS.

DeAnn Floria has accepted the Custodian position at OMS.

Lorri Matousek has accepted the Sub Food Service Worker position.

Colton Blaha has accepted the Paraprofessional position at OMS.

Kelly Kline has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Central.

Jennifer Coe has accepted the Paraprofessional position at Bryant.

Michael Flagg has accepted the Sub Custodian position.

Resignations

Taylor Sergent, Teacher at LHS has resigned effective October 4, 2024.

Laurie Winke, Early Childhood Director at Bentley Bright Beginnings has resigned effective October 4, 2024.

Patrick Hunt, Teacher at LHS has resigned effective September 18, 2024.

Jeffrey Proulx, Teacher at Bryant has resigned effective September 30, 2024.

Taylor Ladd, Monitor at Bryant has resigned effective October 7, 2024.

Retirements

Cory Hauk, Food Service Driver has submitted his letter of intent to retire effective October 18, 2024 after 15 years of service.

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The following participants addressed the Board:

None

Board Comments

Trustee Henne began by recognizing the district principals and support staff, acknowledging their dedication with a month of recognition, and noting the impressive 213 years of combined service. He congratulated Corey, whose recent speech highlighted reliability—a value Henne finds increasingly rare and important. He praised the Lincoln School students' presentation on the Green School program and expressed support for the Bryant Buddies initiative, which he sees as much-needed. Henne thanked Paige for her updates, shared his mixed feelings about the approaching winter, and wished everyone a great school year, encouraging them to continue their hard work.

Vice President Webster remarked that she didn't have much to share this evening, acknowledging her late arrival to the meeting. She mentioned having two more months of balancing dual roles, often requires arriving late and leaving early. After six years of managing both positions, she expressed excitement about soon being able to fully dedicate her focus to this role in just a few months.

Secretary Krauss expressed gratitude for several accomplishments within the district. He praised the Lincoln students for their impressive presentation, noting that their leadership sets a high standard for others. Krauss congratulated Corey on serving a million meals, emphasizing the district's deep appreciation for his dedication. He commended the equestrian team for an outstanding season and congratulated the students on their hard work. Looking ahead to Friday's football game, he wished the team the best of luck, hoping for a win to secure a playoff spot. Lastly, Krauss thanked the principals for their invaluable service and dedication, expressing how much they are truly valued.

Treasurer Quick acknowledged the challenge of speaking last, as many vital points had already been covered, but emphasized her agreement with the previous remarks. She sincerely appreciated the principals and supervisors, celebrating their dedication and noting they deserve even more recognition. She congratulated Corey, recalling his efforts during the pandemic when

he delivered meals to the YMCA and praised his ability to navigate challenges. Quick also commended the Lincoln High School students for their impressive achievements, noting how well they handled presenting and the strong support they received from their peers. She expressed excitement about the new literacy programs, recognizing the significant investment to address an important need. Finally, she thanked everyone for their continued hard work and commitment.

Trustee Easlick shared their excitement about attending the high school choir concert, praising the performance and the new choir uniforms. He congratulated the band for achieving straight superior ratings for 70 consecutive years, calling it an impressive accomplishment. Easlick thanked Paige for informing the Board about high school events and commended the Lincoln High School students for setting a strong example through community involvement and volunteer work. He also congratulated Corey on his retirement and extended appreciation to the principals and administrators, acknowledging that their efforts, though sometimes overlooked, are deeply valued.

President Mowen reflected on the significance of citizenship, especially in an election year, and praised the community's commitment to civic involvement. He acknowledged Paige, the student representative, for her dedication to keeping the Board informed, noting the extra effort required. Mowen also thanked the staff, principals, and supervisors for their volunteer work beyond their official duties, demonstrating the true spirit of good citizenship. He echoed the appreciation for the Lincoln students, commending their willingness to step out of their comfort zones and grow through their activities and presentations. Mowen concluded by thanking everyone for their attendance and contributions to the evening.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

- November 13: Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- November 20: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium
- December 11: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Gymnasium

Important Upcoming Dates

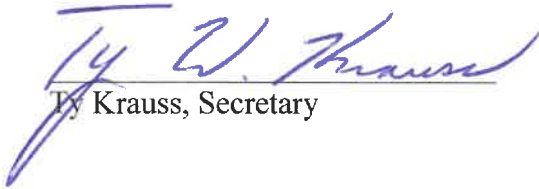
- October 24: Emerson Trunk or Treat, 6-7 PM
- October 30: Trojan Spectacular, 7:00 PM, PAC
- October 31: Half-Day for All Students, Teacher Work Day
- November 4: OMS Powder Puff Game, 6:00 PM, Willman Field
- November 5: No School: Professional Development
- November 6: OHS Powder Puff Game, 7:00 PM, Willman Field
- November 9: Owosso Sports Boosters Bash, 6:00 PM, Knights of Columbus
- November 15-17: OHS Drama Club presents Shrek- The Musical, PAC
- November 20: Volleybrawl, 7:00 PM, OHS Gym
- November 25: Mr. Wonderful, 7:00 PM, PAC
- November 27-29: No School, Thanksgiving Recess

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick, to adjourn at 6:20 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Goetzing.

Respectfully submitted,


Ty Krauss, Secretary