

Owosso Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
Report 26-16

Present: Nick Henne, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicki, John Pappas, Olga Quick, and Marlene Webster

Absent: Adam Easlick

President Ochodnicki called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Owosso Performing Arts Center, 765 E. North St., Owosso, MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Building Reports

All State Softball Recognition

Superintendent Steve Brooks introduced Athletic Director Nick VanDuser, who recognized the Owosso High School softball program for an outstanding season and honored four athletes who earned All-State recognition.

Mr. VanDuser noted that one student athlete, Ady Freeman, was unable to attend due to participation in a softball tournament but was recognized for her accomplishments. He highlighted the achievements of Ady Freeman, Bella Harris, Audrey Hrncharik, and Danica Dwyer, recognizing their All-Conference, All-District, All-Region, Academic All-State, and All-State honors. Individual accomplishments, leadership roles, academic success, and school record performances were shared, along with comments from Head Coach Smith recognizing each student's dedication, versatility, leadership, and positive influence on the program.

Mr. VanDuser commended all four athletes for their contributions to the success of the softball program and expressed confidence in the future of the team.

President Ochodnicki congratulated the student-athletes on behalf of the Board and wished them continued success.

Student Representative Report

None

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Brooks reported that district staff continue to prepare for the opening of the 2026-2027 school year under the annual theme, "Choose to Make a Difference." He shared that significant efforts throughout the summer have focused on community communication regarding the upcoming bond proposal. Communication has included direct mail postcards,

social media, the district website, emails, text messages, community presentations, and individual conversations with community members. He encouraged residents to participate in early voting and the upcoming election.

Mr. Brooks provided updates from throughout the district. Construction of the new FFA Barn is nearing completion, with doors, windows, and electrical work in the final stages. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be announced once construction is complete.

Owosso High School has completed summer cleaning, technology upgrades, and classroom preparation. Middle School student schedules will be mailed during the first week of August. Lincoln High School students have completed numerous summer coursework opportunities with additional classes expected before the conclusion of summer programming.

Mr. Brooks highlighted the continued success of the Books at Bryant summer literacy program and praised the strong community involvement supporting weekly activities. He also welcomed incoming Central Elementary Principal Olivia Flores, noting that she has already begun meeting staff members and becoming familiar with the building.

At Bentley Bright Beginnings, students participated in educational field trips, outdoor learning experiences, and enrichment activities throughout the summer. Transportation staffing is currently fully staffed in preparation for the school year, while recruitment efforts continue to maintain substitute driver availability.

The Superintendent recognized the district's maintenance and custodial departments for completing summer projects ahead of schedule. Buildings, classrooms, parking lots, and mechanical systems have been prepared for the return of students and staff.

Mr. Brooks concluded by recognizing the Food Service Department for the success of the Summer Food Program, noting that the district is approaching 20,000 meals served with several weeks remaining in the program. He thanked food service staff for their continued dedication to serving students throughout the summer.

Curriculum Director's Report

Dr. Cathy Dwyer reported that curriculum materials for the upcoming school year continue to arrive and are being organized and distributed to classrooms throughout the district. Staff members are working to ensure all instructional materials are classroom-ready prior to teachers returning in August.

Summer school programming is nearing completion. Approximately 120 elementary and middle school students participated in summer learning opportunities. At the high school level, students have successfully recovered numerous course credits during both summer sessions, including students participating in the new in-person Algebra I recovery program. Dr. Dwyer reported that students have experienced positive success rates in recovering credits while preparing for future coursework.

Dr. Dwyer also announced that the district has been awarded an additional \$288,000 literacy grant. The funding will be used to purchase Take-and-Teach instructional lesson kits that will

provide classroom teachers with ready-to-use small group instructional materials aligned to the district's literacy curriculum.

She provided an update on Books at Bryant summer reading program, noting continued strong participation by students and families and expressing appreciation to Bryant staff members, volunteers, and community partners for their support.

Dr. Dwyer reviewed plans for the opening of the school year, including staff welcome activities, new teacher orientation, and district professional development. A significant portion of this year's professional learning will focus on meeting the requirements of Michigan's K-12 Literacy and Dyslexia legislation to strengthen instructional practices and student support across the district.

Public Participation

President Ochodnický 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 to 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.

No members of the public addressed the Board.

Venture

At the request of the Board, Superintendent Brooks provided an update regarding the redevelopment of the former Owosso Middle School.

He reported that Venture has continued making steady progress toward the transfer and redevelopment of the property. Recent milestones include securing commitments for tax credit financing, submitting updated construction plans to the National Park Service, completing architectural and engineering reviews, coordinating utility planning, and continuing discussions with lenders regarding permanent financing.

Superintendent Brooks informed the Board that Venture representatives are scheduled to attend the August Board meeting to provide an in-person project update and answer questions regarding the redevelopment timeline. He expressed optimism that the project continues to move toward a successful conclusion.

For Action

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to approve the Consent Agenda, including the June 24, Regular Meeting Minutes, Current Bills, and Financials. Roll Call Vote: Ayes- Mowen, Quick, Webster, Henne, Pappas, Ochodnický. Nays-None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Pappas, to approve the Thrun Policy Updates. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to approve the Course Offerings 2026-27. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Webster, to approve the OHS & LHS Science Textbook Adoption. Motion carried unanimously. Roll Call Vote: Ayes-Henne, Quick, Pappas, Mowen, Webster, Ochodnick. Nays-None. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Webster, supported by Mowen, to approve the Student Handbooks. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to approve the Band Obsolete Materials. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to approve the Personnel New Hire. Motion carried unanimously.

- William Lentz – 5th Grade - Bryant
- Olivia Flores – Principal – Central Elementary
- Kristin Delaney – 1st Grade - Central
- Tabitha Thompson – DK - Bryant

Moved by Quick, supported by Henne, to approve the Superintendent Contract Correction. Motion carried unanimously. Roll Call Vote: Ayes-Pappas, Quick, Henne, Webster, Mowen, Ochodnick. Nays-None. Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

The Board will be asked to review the OHS Choir Trip to Chicago. Moved by Pappas, supported by Mowen, to approve the OHS Choir Trip to Chicago from Future Action to For Action. Motion carried unanimously. Moved by Webster, supported by Henne.

The Board will be asked to review the Technology Obsolete Materials. Moved by Pappas, supported by Mowen, to move to approve the Technology Obsolete Materials from Future Action to For Action. Motion carried unanimously. Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick.

The Board will be asked to review the SkillsUSA Washington Leadership Training Institute in September 2026. Moved by Pappas, supported by Mowen, to move to approve the SkillsUSA Washington Leadership Training Institute in September 2026 from Future Action to For Action. Motion carried unanimously. Moved by Webster, supported by Quick.

The Board will be asked to review the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June 2027. Moved by Pappas, supported by Mowen, to move to approve the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in June 2027 from Future Action to For Action. Motion carried unanimously. Moved by Quick, supported by Mowen.

Public Participation

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment. No individuals came forward to speak during this portion of the meeting.

Board Member Comments

Trustee Pappas

Trustee John Pappas commented that the summer had passed quickly and expressed appreciation for the significant work completed throughout the district. After visiting district facilities, he noted that buildings are in excellent condition and stated that he is optimistic about the upcoming school year and the strong team in place to continue moving the district forward.

Treasurer Quick

Treasurer Olga Quick congratulated the All-State softball athletes on their accomplishments, welcomed the district's newly hired employees, and thanked all district staff for their hard work throughout the summer in preparing for the new school year.

Secretary Henne

Secretary Nick Henne echoed congratulations to the student-athletes and thanked the maintenance, custodial, and support staff whose work often goes unnoticed during the summer months. He also encouraged community members to participate in early voting for the upcoming bond election and welcomed the district's newest employees to Owosso Public Schools.

Trustee Webster

Trustee Marlene Webster expressed appreciation to the maintenance department and food service staff for their dedication during the summer. She highlighted the district's Summer Food Program and shared her personal experience helping distribute weekend meals to local families. She also recognized the continued efforts of Shiawassee Hope in providing backpacks, school supplies, and new shoes to students preparing to return to school.

Trustee Mowen

Trustee Rick Mowen congratulated the softball program and recognized the leadership demonstrated by the team's senior athletes. He welcomed the district's new employees and shared positive comments he had received regarding incoming Central Elementary Principal Olivia Flores. Mr. Mowen also expressed appreciation for the district's continued expansion of educational opportunities and praised staff members for aggressively pursuing grant funding that allows the district to enhance programs while remaining fiscally responsible. He noted that the Board's careful review of the Superintendent's contract correction demonstrated its commitment to responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Mr. Mowen added that Owosso maintains many historic school buildings requiring ongoing maintenance and renovation. He stressed the importance of protecting district facilities through responsible stewardship and encouraged residents to review the detailed information available on the district's website regarding the proposed bond projects.

President Ochodnicky

President Shelly Ochodnicky announced her intention to seek another term on the Board of Education. She emphasized the importance of the upcoming bond proposal, explaining that the request represents a continuation of the district's existing debt millage rather than an increase.

She encouraged Board members and community members to continue educating residents about the purpose of the proposal, emphasizing that the district remains fiscally responsible while addressing necessary facility improvements that cannot be funded through the General Fund.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

August 12: Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112

August 26: Board of Education Regular Meeting, 5:30 PM, PAC

September 09: Committee of the Whole Meeting, 5:30 PM, Washington Campus Conference Room 112

Closed Session

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to move into closed session at 6:24 p.m. for the purpose of conducting the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation. Motion carried unanimously.

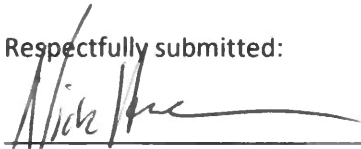
Moved by Quick, supported by Mowen, to move back into open session at 6:58 p.m. for the purpose of adjournment. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Moved by Mowen, supported by Quick, to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by: Melissa Buehler

Respectfully submitted:

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

Nick Henne, Secretary