

**Owosso Public Schools
Board of Education Minutes
September 27, 2021
Report 21-27**

Present: Adam Easlick, Sara Keyes, Ty Krauss, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnický , Olga Quick,

Absent: Marlene Webster

President Rick Mowen called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Gymnasium, 645 Alger Street, Owosso MI 48867.

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

Board Correspondence

Student Representative Madalyn Hassan began her Student Report by introducing herself. “Hello I am Madalyn Hassan. I am excited to officially be back representing students this year. Let’s get right into it.” Madalyn listed Spirit Week and Homecoming as exciting upcoming events, with tickets being sold for the Saturday Homecoming dance every day at lunch during the week. She continued with the Spirit themes for each day “Monday is action-adventure day, dress as a cowboy or pirate. Tuesday is sci-fi day, dress as your favorite science-fiction character. Wednesday is animation day, dress as your favorite animated character. Thursday is comedy day; students can wear a silly hat or hair style. Friday is blue and gold day, as always. For the Homecoming game on Friday, the Owosso Trojans will play against the Lake Fenton Blue Devils. The Homecoming Queen and King will also be announced during half-time so don’t miss it! The powderpuff game is tomorrow, it will take place at Willman Field. Come support our lady trojans and donate to fundraise for the Homeless Angels of Owosso Campus. The game will begin at 6:00pm. We had our second international presentation right after school. Our foreign exchange student Maialen presented about her home country Spain and her language. All our foreign exchange students are doing well and settling in. Finally, our Owosso Drama Club is putting together the fall show ‘Back to Broadway’. It’s a combination of many different songs from several musicals. Thank you.”

Dr. Tuttle thanked Madalyn for her student report. She continued “I’ve kept my remarks short so that we can get started introducing our new teachers to those of you who were not able to join us for the New Teacher Orientation at Fortitude before the beginning of the school year. I’ll start by congratulating our Homecoming Court members Camden Barnhill, Cody Fields, Willow MacLaughlin, Baily Cummings, Lucy Marsh, Evelyn Johnson, Kendall Anderson, Christopher Ott, Cameron Rowison, and Kevin Laskowski. A great group. Also, after the parade and before the football game, our State Championship Girls’ Softball team will be given their rings and some gifts from the district. If you could come out and support our kids that would be great.

Also, The HVAC design phase is under way. CFO Omer, Mr. Klapko and I worked with our engineers today looking at the design phase for the potential air conditioning project for our elementary buildings. The design phase will be complete in December. We hope to put those out to bid in January. If we choose to go through with this project it will take quite a bit of time. This may be a three-year summer project because of the lack of human resources. Our dump truck that you approved in January may not be in until 2023. Everything is delayed, delayed, delayed.”

Dr. Tuttle continued by commending all OPS staff “On a positive note, I want to take a moment to commend our team working with our students. I truly believe we have an incredible group of people working during these challenging times of adversity. I quote I like is ‘Adversity does not build character it reveals it.’ Administration, teachers, support staff, custodians, maintenance all have been working together for our kids, working to do what is right and to keep school open for our kids. We are a Character Counts district and character matters all the time, so I commend our staff for their hard work.”

Dr. Tuttle continued with an update on staffing. “We always try to hire the best staff. You’ll see in a later report we have many people that have resigned and a few that have hired on. All districts have been having a difficult time hiring new employees, we are no exception to that. We continue to hire great people first and great employees second. We are grateful and fortunate to have them. Just before this meeting we had our Teacher and Staff Member of the Year Reception. This had been announced 18 months ago so it is nice to finally be able to recognize our staff and celebrate them. To finish my report, I am going to ask our administrators to introduce their new teachers to the Board. We have 26 new teachers from last year and this year so if those teachers are present, I would like the administrators introduce them. Unfortunately, our Lincoln High School Principal Dr. Dallas Lintner could not be with us tonight, so I have the good fortune of announcing his new staff members. We’ll start with you Jenny; I see you sitting in the back. Jenny Maier is serving as our LHS special education teacher, and she is also serving at the high school. She received her bachelor’s from Baker, she is an SVSU graduate completing her Master’s in Special Education. She taught at Omni Adult and Alternative Education where she taught English and Special Education. She is a huge Harry Potter fan so her favorite place to vacation is Orlando, Florida. She also added that she once dated Joey Fatone from N’Sync. Welcome Jenny. Next is Taylor Sergeant. Taylor is our LHS Social Studies teacher. He graduated from Owosso High School then went on to Michigan State for a Bachelor’s in Art. He is now working on his Master of Art in K-12 Educational Administration and hopes to be finished by May of next year. He has seven years’ experience teaching and five years’ experience as a coach. A fun fact about Taylor is that he was a performer in the 125th Rose Bowl Parade and the 100th Rose Bowl Parade. So welcome Taylor.”

Dr. Tuttle then gave the floor to Owosso High School Principal Mr. Bruce Holladay to introduce his new teachers. “Hello there. First, we have Katelyn Horgan, Katelyn if you’ll stand for a moment. Ms. Horgan teaches Language and Literature for ninth and tenth grade students at OHS. We were lucky to hire Ms. Horgan this fall; she just completed her student teaching with Holt Public Schools and was serving as a long-term sub. As a recent MSU graduate, Katelyn played in

the MSU campus band at the Wharton Center. We're thrilled to have Katelyn with us. Next is Greg Klapko. Mr. Klapko helped us out as a long-term sub at the end of the 2020 school year. This year, he joined our CTE department. He teaches 'Entrepreneurship', 'Accounting', 'Virtual Enterprise' and 'Approaches to Learning'. He has an MBA in leadership studies from Baker College and Mr. Klapko also worked for several years at Baker as the director of career services. He is the former CEO of Owosso Chamber of Commerce. When not in the classroom he enjoys running and he is a new grandpa. Welcome Mr. Klapko. Next, we have De'Nae Streeter. De'Nae comes to us from the Milan school district, she joined last year. She teaches Botany, Natural Resources, and Zoology. Mrs. Streeter majored in integrated science and minored in mathematics at UVM Flint and has a graduate degree from Maryville College. Her family has a dairy farm in Flushing with dairy goats, mules, chickens, honeybees, rabbits, and they use those animals to make soap, ice cream, cheese and lots of other fun, nifty things. Welcome De'Nae. Next, we have Carrie Warning. Mrs. Warning is our new engineering teacher, and she also coordinates things for us at the high school. She teaches 'Intro to Engineering' and 'Civil Engineering'. Carrie is also our Work-Based Learning Coordinator, Co-op Coordinator, and our Testing Coordinator and we're learning about all that together this year. Carrie has a bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering from Lake Superior State University, she has a master's in Business Administration and is currently working on a master's in Leadership from EMU. Carrie comes to us with experience in the engineering field, many years as a CTE teacher, and most recently has served as the State Director for SKILLS USA which is a student organization. She and her husband are currently rebuilding an old farmhouse near Swartz Creek. Welcome Carrie."

Following Mr. Holladay, Owosso Middle School Principal Rich Collins introduced his new teachers. "Good evening, everybody. Our first teacher that we have this evening is Scott Buddy. He is teaching sixth through eighth grade science for us. He has taught in several other countries and then with COVID he was grounded, and we picked him up. The second teacher we have is Marissa Koeplinger, she served as a building sub last year for special education. This year, we are planning on hiring her as our new special education teacher for sixth through eighth grade. She is very crafty and an Owosso graduate, I also heard she works wonders with a Cricket, so she'll be doing some bulletin boards for us. Welcome Marissa Koeplinger."

Principal of Central Elementary Bridgit Spielman introduced her new teachers next. "I have the privilege of introducing Mrs. Heidi Nohel. Heidi comes to us most recently from Illinois and Colorado, but she has literally taught all over the world. We've got a couple fast facts. The first is this past week she took our third graders to the capitol in Lansing and that was the first official field trip this year. Mrs. Nohel not only got married, moved to a new state, and accepted a new position, but she did it all in the middle of a global pandemic. Welcome Heidi."

Next to introduce their new teachers was Principal of Bryant Elementary Mrs. Shelly Collison. "Good evening, I am excited to introduce two of our new employees. Last year, Stephanie Jordan came to us as a Title I Reading Interventionist. She received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Oakland, and she received her Master's in Educational Psychology from Eastern Michigan University. She began her teaching career by teaching fifth grade in

Byron. She also worked as a Reading Interventionist in Rochester schools and Lake Orion Community Schools. Interesting facts about Stephanie is that she grew up and went to elementary school right down the road from the Hershey's Chocolate Factory in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Welcome Stephanie. Next, we have Mrs. Darcy Stephenson. She is our Global Arts Teacher, and we share her with between Central and Bryant. She has a B.S. in Elementary Education from Northern Michigan University and she substitute taught for five years both in the Upper and Lower Peninsulas. She is a parent and just joined our staff, two of her children attend Bryant. A random fact about Darcy is that she plays the bagpipes. She is a member of the Flint Scottish Pipe Band and the Superior Pipe and Drum Band. Welcome Darcy."

Dr. Tuttle finished the New Teacher Introductions by thanking all attendees and the teachers introduced. "Board, I just want to tell you this is a small portion of our great staff. Thank you to everyone who joined us tonight, I know you have other responsibilities to attend to as well. Thank you for being here, for choosing Owosso. When I started years ago, typically our new hires were first year teachers. You can see we are bringing a lot of experience to the district; we are going out and seeking the highest caliber people we can. Other districts don't necessarily love us for that, but we want the best of the best for our students and our community. I think you saw a great sampling of that this evening. That concludes my report for this evening."

President Rick Mowen thanked all the new teachers and administrators for attending the Board meeting and remarked that the introductions were a pleasant way to begin the evening. The Board members then introduced themselves to the audience. President Mowen then introduced the first Public Participation portion of the meeting by reading the Public Participation Statement.

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.

No public participants addressed the Board.

For Action

- Moved by Ochodnický, supported by Easlick to approve the August 9, 2021, regular meetings minutes, September 13, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes, September 13, Closed Session minutes, current bills, and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Quick, supported by Keyes to approve the 2021-2022 Head Start Contract. Dr. Tuttle stated "Thank you President Mowen. This is something you've approved over the

years, and it is a win-win for kids and the district. The Head Start program is not housed in our district however it provides students with a full day of learning. We enjoy having these students come to us for half a day and spend the second half of the day at Bentley Bright Beginnings. We receive the financial benefits to that as well. I recommend continuing the partnership with the Head Start Program.” Motion carried unanimously.

- Moved by Krauss, supported by Keyes to approve the New Teacher hires. Dr. Tuttle stated “Thank you. These are two new teachers from the beginning of the year. Deborah Elkins is teaching at Emerson Elementary. She too is an Owosso graduate and comes back to us after having several years’ experience teaching at another district. Mrs. Aue reached out to Deb to see if she would like to come back to Owosso. Another example of how we reach out and seek great candidates for our community. Darcy Stephenson is the next new hire to approve. She has five years’ experience in subbing, this is her first year as a full-time teacher. She is our Global Arts Teacher for both Central and Bryant. Both are doing an outstanding job.” Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board will be asked to approve the 2022 Owosso Middle School Washington D.C. trip. Dr. Tuttle stated “This is exciting to see us come back to field trips. As you know, I think field trips are one of the greatest opportunities that we offer to students beyond the bricks and mortar of our buildings, and we couldn’t offer them last year. So, in this report you will see that we are not only looking to take eighth graders like we’ve traditionally done but also ninth and tenth graders will be welcome to join the trip if they wish to do so. Dr. Dwyer would be a chaperone along with other OPS staff members and parents. There is a cost associated with the trip that the parents will be responsible for but there will be opportunities for fund raising to help with those costs.” Mr. Collins added that sign up will be in late October. Moved by Quick supported by Easlick to move to a ‘For Action’ item. Motion carried unanimously.
- The Board will be asked to approve the 2021-2022 Performing Arts Center fee structure. Dr. Tuttle stated “Yes this is the fee structure that I brought to your attention at our last meeting. You can see there are different columns for profit, non-profit, from Owosso or out of Owosso, Community Education Director Jessica Thompson did a lot of research for this fee structure. Tyler Mercer-Leonard who was going to run the auditorium for us through the Cook Family Foundation fund resigned from our district and from the Lebowsky Center where he was splitting half his time. I don’t know when we will be able to rent this facility because we don’t want to let just anyone in there. The community paid a lot of money for that auditorium, so we are looking for someone qualified to fill that position. Our technology department does not have the human resources to take that on. When we do get ready to rent the PAC out this will be the rental structure for you to approve to do so. We can always adjust the numbers.” Moved by Quick, supported by Keyes to move the rental structure to a ‘For Action’ item. Motion carried unanimously.

For Information

Dr. Tuttle announced the following accepted positions and resignations.

Accepted Positions

- Tiffany Hosler has accepted a Food Service Worker position at Emerson Elementary.
- Geraldine Kiley has accepted a Food Service Worker position.
- Courtney Webster has accepted a Food Service Worker position.
- Marissa Matthews has accepted a Paraprofessional position at Emerson Elementary.
- Connie Tew has accepted the Special Education Paraprofessional position at Owosso Middle School.
- Jennifer Nagel has accepted a Food Service position at Bryant Elementary.
- Darcy Miller has accepted the 2.5-hour Food Service position at Central Elementary.
- Chelsea Mishler and has accepted a Paraprofessional position at Bryant Elementary.
- Kim Fauth-Newberry has accepted a Paraprofessional position at Bryant Elementary.
- Julie Ockerman has accepted a 3.25 ECSE Paraprofessional position at Bentley Bright Beginnings.
- Alyssa Webb has accepted the 3.75 GSRP Associate Teacher position at Bentley Bright Beginnings.
- Alyssa Smith has accepted the ECTRR Special Education Paraprofessional position at Emerson Elementary.
- Patty Slamka has accepted a Paraprofessional position at Emerson Elementary.
- Carol Barrera has accepted the 2.75-hour Food Service position at Emerson Elementary.
- Jeanne Peterson has accepted the 4.5-hour Food Service position at Owosso Middle School 6-12 Campus.
- Chris Hart has accepted a Monitor position at Central Elementary.
- Courtney Morales has accepted a 6.5-hour Paraprofessional position at Emerson Elementary.
- Tamara Harris has accepted the 6.5-hour Title I Paraprofessional position at Bryant Elementary.
- Veronica Adamski has accepted a Monitor position at Emerson Elementary.
- Jan Laurin has accepted an At Risk Paraprofessional position at Lincoln Alternative High School effective September 1, 2021.
- Eric Arendt has accepted an At Risk Paraprofessional position at Lincoln Alternative High School.
- Laurie March has accepted a Monitor position at Central Elementary.

Resignations

- Irene Bump, 5th Grade Teacher at Emerson Elementary submitted her letter of resignation effective August 11, 2021.
- Kaitlin Bockh, Paraprofessional at Emerson Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation.
- Jan Laurin, At Risk Paraprofessional at Lincoln Alternative High School resigned effective September 7, 2021.
- Madyson Decker, Monitor at Central Elementary has resigned.
- Chris Hart has resigned her 7-hour Lead Cook II position at Owosso Middle School, 6-12 Campus.

- Meg Benson, Paraprofessional at Owosso High School has resigned effective September 10, 2021.
- Andrea Savage has resigned her Monitor position at Owosso High School to accept a Food Service position.

Public Participation

Misty Guru addressed the Board.

Board Reports

Trustee Easlick stated “I just wanted to say welcome to all the new teachers. I think they should realize how much of an impact they have in this community and how many people come back to this school district is amazing. I also wanted to share feeling the energy from Homecoming is great. Hearing my daughters talking about the homecoming floats they haven’t been able to do in a couple years and their excitement about getting back to somewhat normal has been great.”

Trustee Quick began her comments by saying “I also want to welcome the new staff as well and congratulate the Teachers and Staff Members of the Year, I’m sorry I wasn’t able to make the reception. I also want to join with Dr. Tuttle and the rest of the Board in thanking district staff for your continued efforts and continuing to do what you do every day. One thing I would like to say and to thank Dr. Tuttle for is the clarity in what we do and how we do it. Dr. Tuttle’s willingness and ability to communicate with the community about what the Board talks about adds a lot of clarity for everybody and I want to thank you for that.”

Vice President Ochodnický began by apologizing for missing the Teacher and Staff Member of the Year Reception “I apologize for not being able to make the Reception, I care for my uncle, and he came home from the hospital today, but I congratulate everyone for their honors. I would also like to thank our class for adopting Homeless Angels. The donations we receive are well used in the community and very much needed. I would also like to thank Amanda who is out there in the audience, we have three kids in shelter and two of them came to us, three and four years old, with a lot of needs. We decided Head Start would be best for them, so they have a full day at school while mom works on other things that need doing. This mom came right to the shelter after Amanda reached out and that made the process happen very quickly. That was so needed, and I am so happy and blessed that we have these relationships throughout our community in these times of need. I am also still asked about COVID and our quarantine rules. First and foremost, I’ve been doing this for a lot of years, I don’t take my job here lightly and I have a lot of respect for our Board and Dr. Tuttle. In these times of difficult decisions, we may not agree on everything that is brought forward. I have personally reached out to our health director these last few weeks both through email and voicemail and have not heard back from him to clarify what is mandated and required, as I personally have not seen that in writing anywhere. I want to state aloud that I am seeing the bigger picture that we really must focus on mental health and keep our kids in school as much as possible. With quarantine and isolation, isolation is obviously different if your kids are sick keep them home, but for quarantine due to a possible exposure I feel that it should be a parent’s

choice. We are a year and a half into this, and we know a lot more than we did last year. I think it is of utmost importance that our parents have some decisions in this whether about masks, quarantine, I think it is time to put parents back in the driver's seat. I am seeing the bigger picture on mental health, student discipline, it is all starting to culminate. Our kids need to be in school, they need the routine, parents need to be back at work. Thank you."

Treasurer Sara Keyes "I would also like to comment on Homecoming. My kids are getting excited as well, about pep assemblies and all the things we took for granted before COVID. I also have a sixth grader and we were driving down the road the other day and she says 'Mom, did you hear I get to go to Mackinaw this year?!' I remember how devastated my kids were when things started getting cancelled because of COVID, so it is nice to hear them excited again. It is greatly appreciated that this district is doing what it can to make sure they don't miss out and all the kids get the same opportunities. Also, the grounds look amazing. Thank you."

Trustee Krauss began his comments by addressing Misty Guru, the parent who addressed the Board during public participation. "I'd like to reach out to the parent who addressed us. It takes a lot of courage to step up, and I have said this before, but it needs to be said every time. We appreciate that input. That input is necessary for us to do our jobs appropriately and we respect and thank you for your courage for telling us what you think and what you're feeling. I also want to say thank you to Brooke, the transition has been nice and smooth. She is doing a fantastic job and keep up the good work. And welcome to all the new hires, thank you for choosing Owosso, we wish you all the best. Happy Homecoming and Go Trojans!"

President Rick Mowen ended the meeting with his comments on COVID. "Obviously this is a real struggle for the district. There is not one person in this room who does not want full time school, for every student to be in a seat, but we realize some things do happen that we have no control over. We are centered in the middle part of the county, roughly fifty percent of our population belonging to the 48867 and 48817 area codes. This thing changes every day but the latest numbers I have is 6,500 cases in Shiawassee County, if you figure half the population lives here that's about 3,200 covid cases in our area. According to the health department, fifteen percent of that fifty percent are people under the age of 20, and that certainly encompasses our student body. I was given information today that Michigan had it's first death of a student due to COVID, not in our district thankfully, but a Michigan district. So, it can happen. You hear the numbers on the website, in the newspaper. I fully understand the difficulties that parents and students are having due to quarantine and isolation. The district has struggled with that, but we try to follow the guidelines or mandates or whatever they may be from the health department. We receive our information from people who know more than we do about how to best handle this situation and keep everyone safe and we will continue to do so."

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:

October 11: Board of Education Retreat

October 25: Board of Education Meeting, 5:30pm, Washington Campus Gym

Important Upcoming Dates:

October 2: OHS Homecoming Dance
October 11: OHS Academic Achievement Awards
October 14: OHS Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 20: OHS Choir Concert

Important Upcoming Dates

Adjournment

Moved by Ochodnický , supported Keyes by to adjourn at 6:19 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Brooke Barber.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Webster

Marlene Webster, Secretary