

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education Minutes

April 26, 2021

Report 20-131

Present: Adam Easlick, Sara Keyes, Ty Krauss, Rick Mowen, Shelly Ochodnicky, Olga Quick, Marlene Webster

Absent: None

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.

President Mowen informed the meeting's audience that Treasurer Keyes was participating via telephone in accordance with revised bylaw 0100.

Pledge of Allegiance

Building Reports

As part of the Celebrate Kids! segment of the meeting, Director of Early Childhood Education Amanda Rowell and Teacher Cassy Crandall presented on the Michael Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum at Bentley Bright Beginnings. The curriculum comprises of daily phonemic and phonological awareness lesson plans. In the classroom, students practice hearing, learning, and reciting nursery rhymes to take their first steps in becoming proficient readers. Ms. Crandall explained that students identify words that rhyme, independently think of rhyming word pairs, identify final or medial sounds, and eventually manipulate phonemes. Ms. Crandall shared a video of students at Bentley Bright Beginnings participating in their daily "Rhyme Time!" activity where the lesson culminated with students reciting the nursery rhyme "Rain Rain Go Away."

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle and the Board applauded Mrs. Rowell and Ms. Crandall for their work with young Owosso students, celebrating their teaching methods and the positive energy teachers at Bentley Bright Beginnings cultivate in the classroom.

Board Correspondence

Board of Education Student Representative Tyler Hoag thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as the student body representative, noting it has been an honor and a pleasure. Mr. Hoag reported spring sports are in full swing, with boys junior varsity and varsity golf, boys junior varsity and varsity baseball, girls junior varsity and varsity softball, girls junior varsity and varsity soccer, and girls junior varsity and varsity tennis all having competitions this week. Mr. Hoag informed the Board that OHS Drama Club is holding auditions for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, a musical comedy the Drama Club plans to perform in the new Performing Arts Center or outdoors in the Mitchell Amphitheater on July 7th and 8th. Mr. Hoag shared the OHS choirs are preparing for Cabaret which will take place on May 15th and 16th. The performance will be live streamed. Mr. Hoag announced the OHS Model United Nations team is preparing for a home conference in conjunction with Powers Catholic High School. Students will work to resolve a simulated cold war conflict. Mr. Hoag informed the Board the OHS Student Government is continuing their annual tradition of creating "senior signs," as well as preparing for a senior parade and posting shout outs to celebrate seniors on social media. Mr. Hoag neared the end of his report, again thanking the Board and adding that he has learned what it takes to be a leader through this position. Mr. Hoag has committed to Alma College where he plans to study political science and pre-law. Mr. Hoag thanked teachers Penney Wakefield and Melanie Lounds for their help with student government. He announced his successor, OHS

Junior Madalyn Hasyn, noting that she is incredibly trustworthy, and he has no doubts that she will do an excellent job as the next Board of Education Student Representative. Mr. Hoag concluded his report saying, “thank you to the Board, to my teachers and advisors for every step of the journey. Because, you have made me who I am, and thank you to Owosso Public Schools for giving me the opportunity to be myself and find my way in the world. Thank you for everything and, one final time, go trojans!”

Dr. Tuttle thanked Mr. Hoag for coming to every meeting with well-organized and thoughtful reports. She expressed her sincere appreciation to Mr. Hoag for bringing the Board smiles and laughs over the past year while being incredibly passionate about representing Owosso students. The Board presented Mr. Hoag with a gift to express their appreciation.

Dr. Tuttle introduced OHS Principal Jeff Phillips who recognized Mr. John Hankerd for his years of dedication to the OHS Robotics Club. Mr. Phillips explained that eight years ago, the Robotics Club’s first advisor had to step back from the position. Mr. Hankerd volunteered to help out with the expectation that he would advise for a couple of years while his son was in high school. Mr. Phillips explained how fortunate OHS was because Mr. Hankerd ended up staying for seven years in which he worked with over 150 students. The OHS Robotics Club competes annually at Kettering University. Mr. Phillips has attended the competitions himself and noted how exciting it is to watch the kids and their creations. The OHS Robotics Club once finished in 3rd place under Mr. Hankerd’s leadership which allowed them to compete at state and world competitions where they finished in the top 10%. This year, 20 OHS students will compete virtually in the competition. Mr. Phillips concluded saying, “John, we can’t thank you enough. You’ve been awesome. You’ve built this program, and we really appreciate all your efforts.”

Mr. Hankerd thanked Mr. Phillips, Dr. Tuttle, and the Board, saying that while he has traveled around the state with students for the competitions, he has felt fortunate to have had the support of the district and administration. He explained this tremendous support was the main reason he stayed with the club all those years. Mr. Hankerd concluded by thanking his wife, Sue, for being his biggest cheerleader.

Dr. Tuttle stated that the Robotics Club Advisor is very much a facilitator. The kids run the show, make their own mistakes, and learn to problem solve. She noted that although Mr. Hankerd is not a certified teacher, he has been a wonderful educator to many Owosso students.

Dr. Tuttle reminded attendees that the 4th annual Boat Raffle is underway in support of the CTE program. Crest Pontoon of Owosso generously donated the boat and trailer for the fundraiser. Tickets are \$100 each and can be purchased at the administration building.

Dr. Tuttle thanked the OPS administrative team for their diligent efforts in planning big, yet safe, end of the year events for students in the midst of the pandemic. She extended her appreciation to teachers and support staff who are working hard to plan events for the younger students as well, such as Camp 2 U in place of the overnight Hartley experience fifth graders normally have.

Dr. Tuttle announced that OHS Graduation has been rescheduled to May 26, 2021. The move from May 27, 2021 is to accommodate a rain date that will not conflict with Memorial Day weekend. Lincoln High School Graduation will be held in the new Owosso Performing Arts Center at 5:00pm on May 26th, and the OHS Graduation will take place at Willman Field at 7:00pm on May 26th.

Dr. Tuttle informed the Board that summer school planning is well underway. This year, the program will offer opportunities for students in PreK through high school. She added that the

district is in the process of applying to grants that would help fund the program. Dr. Tuttle noted that a number of tremendous Owosso teachers have already applied to teach this summer.

Dr. Tuttle stated the district has several open positions that have been posted. She explained that recruiting is difficult right now, as few people are entering the education field in response to the pandemic.

Dr. Tuttle announced that over 464 paper and pencil assessments have been administered at OPS since beginning of year, including MSTEP, PSAT, and SAT tests. She commended Owosso students, saying that despite how tough this year has been, Owosso students have persevered.

Public Participation

President Mowen 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.

No participants addressed the Board.

For Action

- Moved by Krauss, supported by Webster to approve the March 15, 2021 regular meeting minutes, March 15, 2021 closed session minutes, April 12, 2021 committee of the whole minutes, current bills, and financials as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
- Moved by Webster, supported by Easlick to reaffirm the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan. Dr. Tuttle noted there have been no changes made to the plan since the March 15th Board meeting. She added that at OHS, approximately 55% of students are in person, whereas at OMS approximately 76% are in person, and at the elementary level approximately 85% are in person. Dr. Tuttle also shared that, at the time of the meeting, there were 34 positive cases of COVID-19 in the district. Vice President Ochodnický expressed her view on the importance of returning to “normal” in the fall. She stated that, ideally, masks will be optional for students in the fall and online learning will still be an option. Vice President Ochodnický suggested the district distribute a survey where students and parents can share input on how they would like to move forward. She also expressed concerns about mental health and addiction in the community. Concluding, Vice President Ochodnický stated that, in her opinion, students should not be encouraged by their teachers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. She believes it a personal choice that should not be influenced by the district. Trustee Quick asked Dr. Tuttle how the district decides when to quarantine an entire class versus a smaller group of individuals. Dr. Tuttle responded that there is not a threshold, and quarantines are determined on a case-by-case basis. She noted that sometimes, if a vast majority of a class is identified as close contacts (including the teacher), the district will move the entire class online. President Mowen stated that he appreciates the fluidity of the school’s decisions, adding that situations can change quickly, and he thinks the district has taken the necessary actions. Dr. Tuttle confirmed that administrators have students, staff, and community members at the forefront of their minds when making these difficult decisions. Vice President Ochodnický thanked Dr. Tuttle. Trustee Krauss asked if the district has tracked how grades have fluctuated with the move from online to in-person instruction for many students. Dr. Tuttle stated that the attendance and grades for online students improved significantly with the addition of virtual teachers at the elementary level. She said that

attendance and grades also improved drastically at the secondary level with the schedule change after winter break in which students must check in every hour with their teacher. Mr. Hoag noted that his teachers still give students a lot of flexibility, which is especially helpful for his AP classes. Mr. Hoag believes starting school later in the day has also helped many older students stay more focused throughout the school day. Dr. Tuttle stated the district hopes to reflect as the pandemic comes to an end, taking careful note of opportunities that have come from the pandemic on ways to not necessarily return to “normal” but ways to actually improve education for students. Ayes: Mowen, Easlick, Keyes, Krauss, Ochodnick, Webster. Nays: Quick. Motion carried.

- Moved by Quick, supported by Krauss to authorize the Superintendent to contract with the following entities for summer projects with the following funding sources: LA Construction, Flushing, Michigan for miscellaneous site improvements at the Owosso High School, Willman Field, Central School, Emerson School, Bryant School, Bus Garage, and Bentley Bright Beginnings inclusive of installation of playgrounds with rubber mulch in an amount not to exceed \$911,822.53, \$35,000 in contingency, and \$40,595 in soft costs; and RC Hendrick for bathroom and stairwell renovations at Emerson School in an amount not to exceed \$874,350 inclusive of \$40,000 in contingency and \$17,750 of soft costs. The total costs for all projects is \$1,786,172.53 with an amount not to exceed \$1,386,172.53 from sinking funds and amount not to exceed \$400,000 being from ESSER funds to promote air quality and safety for students. Secretary Webster conducted a roll call vote. Ayes: Krauss, Webster, Mowen, Ochodnick, Quick, Easlick, Keyes. Nays: None. Motion carried.
- Moved by Webster, supported by Keyes to adopt as their first reading new policy 7450–Property Inventory, revised policy 7455–Accounting System for Fixed Assets, revised policy 2260.01–Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Discrimination Based on Disability, revised policy 2266–Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities, new policy 5341–Emergency Medical Authorization, new policy 5342–Do Not Resuscitate Orders (DNR) for Minor Students, new policy 5343–Physician Order for Scope of Treatment (POST), revised policy 7440.01–Video Surveillance and Electronic Monitoring, revised policy 8321–Criminal Justice Information Security (Non-Criminal Justice Agency), revised policy 8330–Student Records, revised policy 8400–School Safety Information, revised policy 8500–Food Services, revised policy 8510–Wellness, revised policy 1422–Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity, revised policy 1623–Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment, revised policy 1662–Anti-Harassment, revised policy 2260–Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity, revised policy 3122–Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity, revised policy 3123–Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment, revised policy 3362–Anti-Harassment, revised policy 4122–Nondiscrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity, revised policy 4123–Section 504/ADA Prohibition Against Disability Discrimination in Employment, revised policy 4362–Anti-Harassment, and revised policy 5517–Anti-Harassment. Motion carried unanimously.

For Future Action

- The Board will be asked to approve the course listings presented for Owosso Middle School, Owosso High School, and Lincoln High School for the 2012–2022 school year. Dr. Tuttle noted there have been very minor changes, but a few Edgenuity courses have been added.
- The Board will be asked to authorize the Superintendent to sign off on the permanent easement for the City to construct a canoe launch, boat lockers, and pedestrian walking path to and from the launch in the area specified in the Deed of Easement. Dr. Tuttle

added that Community Housing Network, the organization that is in the process of purchasing the middle school building, agrees with the easement.

- The Board will be asked to authorize the Superintendent to sign the proposed contract with ESS Midwest (formerly PCMI/Willsub) for the 2021–2022 fiscal year.
- The Board will be asked to adopt revised policy 5460–Graduation Requirements as their first reading. Dr. Tuttle explained that when OHS increased their number of class periods in one day to seven, students gained the opportunity to earn up to 28 credits. The current policy states students can graduate with 24 credits, and the update will increase the requirement to 26 credits starting with the Class of 2025. Dr. Tuttle explained there will be a personal curriculum option for students with extenuating circumstances, but they will still need to follow the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements.
- The Board will be asked to adopt revised policy 5460.01–Lincoln High School Graduation Requirements as their first reading. Dr. Tuttle explained that Lincoln High School is moving from six to seven class periods each day, and the new credit requirement reflects this change. The purpose of the increase in class periods is to give students more options, while also matching the schedule at OHS. If students would like to bus to OHS to take CTE classes in the future, this might be an option with a synched schedule. Trustee Quick asked if the Board already updated the policy this year. Dr. Tuttle confirmed the Board updated the policy earlier this year, but those changes only impacted this year’s graduates and were in response to the pandemic.

For Information

Superintendent Dr. Tuttle reported the following personnel changes:

- **Accepted Positions**
 - Mandi Hallett has accepted the Custodian II position at Owosso Middle School.
- **Resignations**
 - Maddie Krantz, Monitor at Central Elementary resigned effective March 26, 2021.
 - Charlene Gonyou, Paraprofessional at Bryant Elementary has submitted her letter of resignation effective at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year.

Public Participation

No participants addressed the Board.

Board Member Comments/Updates

Treasurer Keyes asked if the summer book program at Bryant is happening this year. Dr. Tuttle confirmed it is. Treasurer Keyes expressed her excitement and appreciation to Curriculum Director Steve Brooks for organizing it. Treasurer Keyes also stated that she would support a survey going out to students, parents, and teachers to gather their thoughts on next school year.

Trustee Easlick thanked the presenters. He also commended OHS Ag Sci Teacher Mrs. De’Nae Streeter for taking students outside to help clean up the school grounds in celebration of Earth Day. Trustee Easlick extended his thanks to the technology team, particularly Mr. Gunnar Stinson and Mr. Joe Watson for distributing new laptops to OPS staff. Concluding, Trustee Easlick shared that he has heard great feedback on the peer-to-peer program, which helps students improve their mental health and is led by Social Worker Kathryn Gosaynie and the OHS counseling team.

Trustee Quick thanked the presenters, adding that she enjoys hearing about different programs that are being implemented in the schools. She also thanked Mr. Hankerd for the time he has put into the Robotics Club and Mr. Hoag for adding a student perspective to the Board meetings.

Mr. Hoag welcomed Board members to assist in displaying “senior signs” which will be hung at OHS before graduation.

Vice President Ochodnicky thanked Mr. Hoag. She also thanked all those who have worked on the new secondary campus, encouraging everyone to drive by as construction comes to an end.

Secretary Webster thanked OPS educators for their tenacity and for continuously moving forward, even with constant pivoting this year. She stated how impressed she has been by the creativity, energy, and willingness put forth by the Owosso team and thanked all teachers, administrators, students, and parents.

Trustee Krauss thanked the presenters. He also extended a big thank you to Mr. Hoag for keeping the Board informed about what is on the minds of students. Trustee Krauss echoed Vice President Ochodnicky’s remarks on the secondary campus, excited that it is coming together and is in its final stage.

President Mowen thanked Mr. Hoag for his service to the Board and Owosso students. He said that he sees a very bright future for Mr. Hoag, and his preparation for each Board meeting speaks very highly of him. President Mowen wished Mr. Hoag the best at Alma College. President Mowen concluded the Board Member Updates thanking Mr. Hankerd for his years of service to Owosso students.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

May 24: Regular Board of Education Meeting, 5:30 pm

June 14: Committee of the Whole, 5:30 pm

June 28: Regular Board of Education Meeting, 5:30 pm

Important Upcoming Dates

May 18: OHS Blue & Gold Banquet / Academic Achievement Awards, 7:00 pm

May 24: OHS Athletic Awards Ceremony, 8:00 pm

May 24: Last Day of School for Seniors

May 25: OHS Honors Convocation, 8:00 pm

May 26: LHS Graduation, Owosso Performing Arts Center, 5:00 pm

May 26: OHS Graduation, Willman Field, 7:00 pm

May 31: No School, Memorial Day

Adjournment

Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky to adjourn at 6:36 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Alexa Stechschulte.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Webster, Secretary