

Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

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The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Gebara at 7:02 p.m.

Call To Order

Members Present: Tom Buffett, Katie Cavanaugh, Shulawn Doxie, Mary Gebara, Melanie Lynn, Andrew Phelps and Jayme Taylor

Administrators: Superintendent John Hood; Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey; Finance Director Elizabeth Lentz; HR Director Mario Martinez; DEI Director Lara Slee

Superintendent Hood reported on the following: Acknowledged the anniversary of 9/11; recent MTSS team meeting and training; upcoming discipline and attendance data presentation; upcoming bond update including design schematics; soft opening at the high school athletic complex and upcoming ribbon cutting ceremony during homecoming activities; expressed gratitude to Director Fargo and the Operations team, as well as Media & Tech for their efforts during the recent power outage; Hiawatha car line redesign; draft agenda planning calendar; congratulated Chief Plaga on his retirement and welcomed Chief Rick Grillo; student representatives; high school parking lot and painting of senior parking spots; and the recent band car wash fundraiser.

Superintendent Report

Director Martinez provided an update regarding the district's approach to our hiring and interview process.

Attorney William Shinoff of the Frantz Law Group provided information regarding a proposed nationwide lawsuit by schools against META and other social media platforms. The board will discuss/consider joining the litigation.

Social Media Litigation

Attorney Shinoff reviewed the following: Proposed timelines and outcomes; number of school districts involved in the case; whistleblower from Meta initiated the case; research studies documenting the harm to adolescents, proving the algorithm is promoting and pushing harming content; and proof that companies knew and did nothing to fix the issue. It was explained that litigation would force change though injunction relief. The case is seeking greater parental controls, time restraints, point of contact for school districts to help retrieve data and seeking funding for mental health resources. The most prominent social media platforms are names as defendants in the case. Board action to enter into the litigation would be required at the next meeting.

Members inquired about the following: how the litigation started; how would this impact the district's ability to use social media platforms; and number of Michigan school districts being represented.

Athletic Director Ken Hintze presented information regarding two potential MHSAA co-ops. A Ski Team co-op in collaboration with Davison Public Schools, and a Gymnastics co-op combined with Haslett Public Schools. The board reviewed agreements developed by the Michigan High School Athletic Association as a "co-op" solution. Fees, participation impacts, and coaching implications were reviewed. The board will consider the 2-year agreements for action at the next meeting.

Athletics Co-op Agreements

Members inquired about the following: any downsides; participation fees; and Title IX implications.

No one addressed the board.

President Gebara acknowledged correspondence from the following: Stephanie Oles regarding DEI issues; and Geoffroy Laumet concerning school start times.

Members reported on the following: Recent ISOA meeting including a legislative update from MASB; upcoming Jamie Vollmer presentation on October 2nd; recent OHS Open House; and OEF update regarding 1st Friday treats.

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh, SUPPORTED by Melanie Lynn that the board approve items 1 through 3 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 2, 2023; Item 2: Approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 15, 2023; Item 3: Approval of the minutes of the Executive Session meeting of August 15, 2023.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Tom Buffett, SUPPORTED by Shulawn Doxie that the board approve the employment of Lauren Hitze, Special Education teacher at OHS at Step 5, Division II; Cullen Lynch, 6th Grade Teacher at Kinawa at Step 1, Division I; and Palai Yang, 2nd Grade Teacher at Bennett Woods Elementary at Step 1, Division I; of the teacher salary schedule, effective September 11, 2023 in accordance with sections 1230 (2) and 1230 a (2) of the Revised School Code conditioned upon receipt of acceptable criminal history checks and criminal records checks.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Andy Phelps, SUPPORTED by Katie Cavanaugh that the board certify the following winter tax rates for collection on behalf of Okemos Public Schools from Meridian Township, Alaiedon Township, and the City of Lansing of 9 mills non-homestead, 3.5 mills debt, and .4925 sinking fund mills; and from Williamstown Township of 18 mills non-homestead, 7 mills debt, and .9850 sinking fund mills.

Roll Call Vote

Tom Buffett	Yes	Melanie Lynn	Yes
Katie Cavanaugh	Yes	Andrew Phelps	Yes
Mary Gebara	Yes	Jayne Taylor	Yes
Shulawn Doxie	Yes		

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Shulawn Doxie, SUPPORTED by Andy Phelps that the board waive the reading and adopt first reading of board policies 2301 Conflict of Interest; 2302 Board Code of Ethics; 2304 Gifting; 2306 Board Member Compensation; 3305 Sale or Lease of District Property; 5307 Homeless Students; 5705 Emergency Anaphylaxis; 5711 Toilet Training; and 5713 Immunizations and Communicable Diseases.

AYE: 7 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 **MOTION CARRIED**

Tom Buffett will serve as delegate and Jayme Taylor as alternate at the MASB delegate assembly.

There were no public comments.

There will be a closed session on September 25th at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of contract negotiations and personnel matters.

Other Matters

Board discussed a possible work session with MASB regarding recent legislation that is impacting public schools.

Acknowledged Principal Jody Noble, Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey, Assistant Principal Andre Ridley and Interim Assistant Principal Kim Floyd for their leadership fulfilling administrative duties at Hiawatha and CMS.

President Gebara adjourned the regular meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Adjourn

Jayne Taylor, Secretary