Okemos Board of Education
Okemos, Michigan 48864
REGULAR MEETING November 9, 2026

The regular meeting of the Okemos Board of Education was called to order by President Tom Buffett at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members Present:	Tom Buffett, Andy Phelps, Katie Cavanaugh, Jason Burns, Shulawn Doxie, and Jillian Winn
Members Absent:	Leeni Shrestha
Administration:	Superintendent Matt Olson, Assistant Superintendent Stacy Bailey, Director of Media & Technology, Lauren Schefke, Assistant Director of Media & Tech Matt Wallinga

Okemos resident Finn Regan addressed the board regarding requirements for AP Business and Personal Finance courses.

President Buffett mentioned that the Okemos Education Foundation (OEF) has received a large number of nominations of educators to receive an Apple Award.

Hiawatha Principal Joe Corr and 4th grade teachers Robb Shubel and Adam Clements presented on the fourth grade project in collaboration with Michigan State University. The Operation Go Green extension field trip experiential hands-on learning takes place at the MSU Children's 4-H Gardens three days during the fall. This longstanding opportunity provides 4th grade students throughout the district with opportunities to explore beyond the classroom, work alongside experts in the field of horticulture, and engage in authentic scientific exploration investigation. These trips are funded by the Okemos Education Foundation. Four pillars highlighted were students as scientists, extended experiments, meaningful learning, and community connections.

High School Representatives Regan Finn and Maddy Idema highlighted activities and events at Okemos High School. The Theater Department presented its first production of the year, Almost, Maine. The volleyball team won districts and advanced to regionals, and winter sports are beginning. ACTION continues to host events each week, with approximately 70 events held so far this school year. The representatives also shared information about Crunch the Hunger, OHS's annual food drive, scheduled for November 16–24. This year, OHS will partner with Chippewa and Kinawa Middle Schools. Activities include a movie night to raise awareness of food insecurity and support the Okemos Community Food Pantry, as well as Community Grocery Night on November 30. A WILX interview about Crunch the Hunger is scheduled to air November 20. The Principal Advisory Group, comprised of student leaders, building administration, and Superintendent Olson, also met this week. Discussion topics included fundraising for student clubs, Spirit Week, and making morning announcements accessible to all students.

Superintendent Olson provided an update on the Portrait of a Learner and highlighted the Communications Report, including the new district newsletter featuring video production by Nathan Brown, Digital Communications Specialist. He also shared that a fiscal path forward has been identified for the Edgewood Infant/Toddler Program based on the data presented at the October 12, 2026 Board meeting. Superintendent Olson formally rescinded his recommendation to close the program. This decision will be communicated to the Edgewood community by Coordinator

Christina Alighire and Superintendent Olson. Additionally, Superintendent Olson reported that a new administrative guideline for facility use is being developed through collaboration with the Facilities Committee, athletic staff, and Operations. The updated guideline will be communicated directly to current facility users and shared with the broader community through additional communication channels.

President Buffett acknowledged correspondence from the following: Leslie Pico, regarding accessibility barriers with the Okemos High School elevator; Vanessa Nahat; regarding the dance team's experience running youth clinics through Okemos Athletics; and Finn Regan requesting clarification on a policy regarding the AP Business exam requirement; and Alexander Lorenzen, regarding USP drives and school-related devices.

Trustee Phelps provided an update from the Facilities Committee, including discussions regarding current and future bonds. The steering committee is scheduled to present on this topic at the December 7 Board meeting. The committee also discussed upcoming reviews of long-term cell tower leases on district property. Trustee Burns provided an update on behalf of the Policy Committee, reporting that approximately one-third of the policies incorporating Thrun updates have been reviewed, with policies to be brought forward to the Board for first reading. Trustee Cavanaugh reported that the Finance Committee reviewed and discussed the budget development process and whether the Finance Committee should become a standing committee.

MOVED by Andy Phelps, **SUPPORTED** by Katie Cavanaugh, that the board approves Item 1 for immediate implementation and appropriate action. Item 1: Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on October 26, 2026.

AYE: 6 **NAYS: 0** **ABSENT: 1** **MOTION CARRIED**

MOVED by Katie Cavanaugh**, SUPPORTED** by Andy Phelps, that the board accept the Emergency Operation Plan for the district as presented.

AYE: 6 **NAYS: 0** **ABSENT: 1** **MOTION CARRIED**

Superintendent Olson provided an update on the purchase of a classroom set of Chromebooks for fifth-grade students at Kinawa Middle School. He discussed the district's limited supply of available laptops and the increasing cost of laptop devices, noting that the district is exploring the potential use of Chromebooks as a future alternative.

President Buffett shared the Okemos Board of Operating Procedures.

No public comment.

President Buffett adjourned the regular meeting at 8:29 p.m

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Shulawn Doxie, Secretary