

**ONEONTA CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 26, 2022**

The Oneonta City Board of Education met in regular session September 26, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the Oneonta High School Library. Members present were Patrick Adams, President, Don Maples, Ricky Hicks, Sharon Breaseale, and Matthew Taylor.

AGENDA APPROVED:

On a move from Mrs. Breaseale and a second from Mr. Maples, the board unanimously approved the agenda.

MINUTES APPROVED:

On a move from Mr. Hicks and a second from Mr. Maples the board unanimously approved the minutes of Work Session and Regular Board Meeting August 29, 2022; Special Called Board Meeting September 12, 2022.

AUGUST FINANCIAL STATEMENTS APPROVED:

On a move from Mr. Maples and a second from Mr. Taylor, the August financial statements were unanimously approved. The financial data and/or cash balances presented to the Board on September 26, 2022, are based on the reconciled bank statements to the general ledger as of August 31, 2022.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Affirmation of the Principles of Educational Governance were signed and Judge Sherry Burns administered the Oath of Office to re-elected board members Patrick Adams and Matthew Taylor.

SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

On a move from Mr. Hicks and a second from Mrs. Breaseale, the board unanimously approved Superintendent Sosebee's recommendation 1A.

1. Personnel
 - A. Approved teachers for OES After School Tutoring Program for the 2022-2023 school year:
 - Kellie Dailey
 - Jana Hollingsworth
 - Kalle Killough
 - Brooke Murphree
 - Hannah Maze
 - Brenda Nash
 - Cheryl Phillips
 - Catey Presley
 - Brittani Scott
 - Amanda Wood

On a move from Mr. Taylor and a second from Mrs. Breaseale, the board unanimously approved Superintendent Sosebee's recommendation 1B.

1. Personnel
 - B. Approved the catastrophic leave request for Wendy Smithson, OMS Social Science Teacher, for the remainder of the 2022-2023 academic school year.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On a move from Mr. Maples and a second from Mr. Hicks, the board unanimously appointed Sharon Breaseale as Oneonta City Schools' representative at the AASB Delegate Assembly, December 1, 2022.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

Superintendent Sosebee stated ACAP data, which is state assessment for elementary and middle school students up through 8th grade, was released for public review and we were very pleased. The entire school plays a role in reaching this level of achievement. We ranked within

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the top 20 school districts in multiple areas with our best area ranking us within the top five districts out of the 139 districts in Alabama. This is all data that we have already reviewed, but we had no idea how we actually compared to other school districts until this recent release. Thanks to all our staff from the Principals to the CNP staff, because they all play a part in making this school what it is. The outstanding students were recognized for their accomplishment and the community for their efforts to support this achievement.

MTSS media day this Thursday, 10:00, here in the library. We're very excited to be 1 of 34 school systems to be selected. MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports) is a comprehensive framework comprising a collection of research-based strategies designed to meet the individual needs and strengths of the whole child. It intentionally interconnects the academic, behavioral, physical, mental health, wellness, and social-emotional needs of the whole child. Immediately following this event, we will have Phillip Lutzenkirken's father, Mike, speaking to a group of high school students telling his son's story and challenging our students to make good decisions.

Our new SRO, Stephanie Garcia started her full time hours with us Monday and has been circulating campus speaking with students and employees, getting familiar with our school.

Superintendent Sosebee wants to organize a group of stakeholders to help develop a communication plan that would involve developing public statements that would be appropriate to inform our parents when we have emergency situations in an effort to get needed information to our parents.

Our first district level social media account was release on Facebook. This past week we posted our OCS promotional video, an informational post about the CNP program and posted about our Retiree reception. We're hoping to build a strong base and can foresee this as a good tool for not only sharing highlights, but also a way to keep our stakeholders informed during crises with situational information.

Threat Assessment Training has been scheduled for our Board administrators, school administrators, SROs and counselors so that we are better equipped to assess the seriousness of a threat and appropriate responses using a Threat Assessment Team model. This training will be presented by Mike Cowart, who serves on the School Safety Task Force that is appointed by the Governor, is a State Department of Education employee, and has years of experience as a school resource officer here in North Alabama.

Our board administrators and CSFO reviewed our ESSER II and ESSER III funds and plans so that we are ready to kick start spending again after the new fiscal year begins.

An administrative meeting was held and a variety of topics were discussed. A review of case law relating to student search/seizure was presented and procedures provided to use when student searches are necessary in discipline issues.

The tragedy last week of the two year old has affected some of our students and employees as we did have some connections. Our administrators, counselors and teachers are commended for their attentiveness to their staff and student needs. Lots of support behind the scenes that people can't see. I'm thankful to work with such outstanding, caring individuals!

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Adams reviewed the public participation policy and opened the floor to three parents to address the board and voice their concerns.

Crystal Beasley thanked the board for the opportunity to speak. She proposed the student handbook be updated with stricter punishment for bullying. It is currently a Class 2 offense.

She feels bullying leads to other threats, there should be strict punishment, fast action and a zero tolerance policy.

Angela Hyde proposed the student handbook be changed. There are several entries referencing bullying/threats as class 2 and class 3 offenses. She wants to see no tolerance on certain threats, but leniency on other threats not as severe. The handbook is vague and broad in these areas, and it can be questionable which area it would fall under. She feels it would be safer if staff would be notified through email system wide of the steps to take if something happens, so they are prepared and not caught off guard. The policy in the board manual prohibits any and all forms of bullying. Society uses the term too often, we have become desensitized. We need to take threats more serious and have zero tolerance. The board, parents, community, and administrators have a responsibility to kids to be safe and feel safe. She has spoken with students that feel they cannot address the issue with teachers and are not taken seriously. Kids need to know they are safe.

Samantha Taylor's concern is no transparency between parents-teachers-board. She feels information is not being told. First, teachers should be notified so they are prepared and know what to do. Second, parents needs to be made aware of situations. They want to know if kids are safe, taken care of, and have the right to know if there is a threat. The handbook is too vague, off track of what kids should or should not be punished for. Disciplined for things too petty versus not taking things seriously. We should be attentive when there is a large number of people saying the same thing. We should listen to what the kids are saying. Bullying happens all the time and is shooed away. Whoever is involved should be made an example of and needs to be punished if they are making a threat or threatening bodily harm. We never know when or if something will happen. We don't want to take a chance that nothing happens. We need to cut down on bullying and threats and take them seriously, take a look at the handbook and cut down on the petty things, consider their education and safety.

President Adams made the following statement: The Oneonta School Board focuses on providing a quality learning environment that produces graduates with tools to be successful in a career or as a college student. We do this ensuring we attract the best teaching talent, and we have some of the best teachers in the state. The board also strives to utilize resources efficiently and effectively. We want to maximize the benefits from our resources to support the overall achievement of our school system. We strive for a safe learning environment where all students, faculty, and staff can confidently meet their potential. We do not tolerate anything that jeopardizes the safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

The Board and school system is process and data driven; furthermore, we have developed procedures to address various situations and circumstances. The Board approves policies and codes of conducts for our system. The policy you have mentioned is limited to bullying but our student handbook provides specific details on various levels of infractions and the associated punishment options for these infractions. The punishment options provide a degree of latitude for administrators based on the circumstances of each situation.

In terms of student and school safety, we have a comprehensive plan to address potential issues that may arise. Craig has touched on the training and systems we have in place on several occasions at other board meetings and work sessions. Everyone in this school system understands their roles and the procedures based on the potential circumstances. We have held simulations and training with OPD, OFD, and other emergency agencies.

We do not make known all the details surrounding our protocol because it would not be prudent to publicize our response to various situations. It is sufficient to know that we have measures in place to address various scenarios and our faculty and staff understands these protocols.

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As Board members we take an oath to serve this system and abide by the U.S. and Alabama Constitutions. We are bound by laws to conduct ourselves in such a way to protect the integrity of this school system, students, faculty, and staff. We take this responsibility very seriously. We must adhere to privacy, confidentiality, and legal statutes as it relates to personnel and student matters. We live in a world where everyone wants to know everything all the time. Everyone wants to know all the details regarding various circumstances they hear about second hand regarding activity within our school. Like it or not, the Board and administration cannot share the details and specifics of certain issues that occur within our school system because of the potential legal, privacy, and confidentiality of certain items. However, parents can know that we address issues immediately that come to our attention and follow procedures to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We work very closely with our SROs, OPD and juvenile services to ensure we thoroughly vet issues with proper authorities.

Lastly, as a Board we view ourselves as the “conscious of the community,” we want to ensure our actions are in the best interests of all our stakeholders. To that end we are open and available to anyone with questions our concerns. All our numbers are available, and we are responsive to any requests, questions or needs. If I get a call from a parent regarding a concern, my next call is to Craig to get the specifics or clarifications. We live in a small community, and we are accountable to each other and open to concerns when brought to our attention. We all want our school system to be the best it can be, and we will constantly strive to meet this objective.

On a move from Mr. Hicks and a second from Mrs. Breaseale the meeting was adjourned.



SECRETARY



PRESIDENT