

**Oxford Academy & Central School Board of Education
Special Meeting
August 28, 2023**

Mrs. Gates called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Mrs. Gates led those present in the flag salute.

Flag Salute

Additions: None

**Additions/
Deletions**

Deletions: 9.3 and 9.4 Approve Science Teachers

Present were Trustees: Julie Gates, John Godfrey, Nathaniel Emerson and Matthew Leach.
(*Brian Sheridan was not able to attend.*)

Present

Superintendent

John Hillis

School Business Manager

Erin Gramstad

District Clerk

Michele Rice

Visitors

None

Reports/Presentations

None

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Report

Capital Project – Mr. Hillis stated BCA started the building condition survey. Report results will be available within two weeks. The district will look at priorities for the next capital project. Some suggestions were a new PS gym, replacing windows in the MS, addressing structural concerns in the MS, a field house at the PS, resurfacing the tennis courts, and looking at the HVAC system. Mr. Leach suggested looking into energy efficient grants for window replacements. Mr. Hillis noted electric buses are on hold for now. Mr. Hillis reported the administration team will be interviewing a School Resource Officer candidate and 150 students have signed up for fall sports.

**Capital
Project**

Communications

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Leach made a motion, seconded by Mr. Emerson to approve resolutions G1-G2. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LITIGATION AGAINST SOCIAL MEDIA
COMPANIES**

08-23(2) G1

BE IT RESOLVED:

WHEREAS, the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service has issued an Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health which:

- “calls attention to the growing concerns about the effects of social media on youth mental health;”

**Social Media
Lawsuit**

- emphasized that “now is the time to act swiftly and decisively to protect children and adolescents from risk of harm;”
- “the onus of mitigating the potential harms of social media should not be placed solely on the shoulders of parents and caregivers;” and
- “technology companies play a central role and have a fundamental responsibility in designing a safe online environment and in preventing, minimizing, and addressing the risks associated with social media.”

WHEREAS, the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service has further concluded that:

- “Social media use by youth is nearly universal. Up to 95% of youth ages 13-17 report using a social media platform, with more than a third saying they use social media ‘almost constantly.’”
- “nearly 40% of children ages 8-12 use social media;”
- “in early adolescence ... brain development is especially susceptible to social pressures, peer opinions, and peer comparison;”
- “social media may ... perpetuate body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviors, social comparison, and low self-esteem, especially among adolescent girls;”
- “in a nationally representative survey of girls aged 11-15, one-third or more say they feel ‘addicted’ to a social media platform;”
- “over half of teenagers report that it would be hard to give up social media;” and
- there is a consistent relationship between excessive social media use “depression among youth.”

WHEREAS, the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service has specifically urged that it is “urgent that we take action.”

WHEREAS, it has been reported that students, “more than ever, were glued to [their cellphones] during class.”

WHEREAS, it has been reported that “a growing number of educators ... find themselves on the front lines of a fight to change how students use social media” and “there was been a push for more schools to ... develop programs to help educate students on the dangers of social media.”

WHEREAS, the Oxford Academy and Central School District (the “School District”) has and continues to experience significant problems with student use of social media, which use, among other things: (i) has created a substantial and ongoing interruption of and disturbance to its educational mission; (ii) has resulted in the diversion of substantial resources in an attempt to abate and prevent such use and its results harms; and (iii) poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of its students; and

WHEREAS, the School District is a leader in education excellence whose faculty and administrators care deeply about the education and well-being of its students;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT:

That the Board of Education authorizes the law firm of Wagstaff & Cartmell, LLP and Ferrara Fiorenza PC to initiate litigation and file suit against any appropriate parties to seek compensation to the School District for damages suffered by the School District and its students as a result of the development, operation, and marketing of social media platforms, and to seek any other appropriate relief. The School District hereby authorizes its Superintendent of Schools or their designee to sign all appropriate documents and fee agreements on behalf of the School District.

8-23(2) G2

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby approve the 2023-2024 School Bus Routes as given.

Bus Routes

Business Office

Mr. Godfrey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Emerson to approve resolution G3. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

8-23(2) G3

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby acknowledge receipt of the Internal Claims Auditor Report prepared by DCMO BOCES for July 2023.

**Internal
Claims
Auditor
Report**

Personnel

Mr. Emerson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Godfrey to approve resolutions C1, C2, C5, C6 & UC1-UC2. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

08-23(2) C1

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby accept **Deidra Bigelow's** letter of resignation from her position of Science Education Teacher, effective August 31, 2023.

**Science
Teacher
Resignation
D. Bigelow**

08-23(2) C2

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby approve the amended three-year Agreement with **Edward Holmquist** for the position of Full-time Middle School Transition Coordinator, as per individual contract as presented.

**Amend
MS
Transition
Coordinator
Contract
E. Holmquist**

08-23(2) C5

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby approve the appointment of the following Substitute Teachers for the 2023-2024 school year.

**Substitute
Teachers**

Haley DeJager - Uncertified
Jessica Henninge - Uncertified

08-23(2) C6

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby approve the appointment of the following 2022-2023 Fitness Room Staff, \$14.20 per hour, effective immediately.

**Fitness Room
Staff**

Amy Thorne

08-23(2) UC1

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby approve the appointment of **Debra Davis** to the position of Full-time Food Service Helper subject to successful completion of a probationary period as defined in the rules for the Classified Civil Service of Chenango County, effective September 1, 2023. (Vice: J. Richette)

**Food Service
Helper
D. Davis**

08-23(2) UC2

BE IT RESOLVED: Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that this Board does hereby approve the appointment of the following Substitute Support Staff for the 2023-2024 school year.

**Substitute
Support Staff**

Teacher Aides

Jessica Henninge

Esther Maceda (*pending fingerprint clearance*)

Audrey VanDeusen

Custodial Workers

Ethan Moore

Bus Drivers

Janette Ireland

Bus Attendant

Kevin Finnegan (*pending fingerprint clearance*)

Planning

Mrs. Gates noted the following reminders.

- September 4 – No School/Offices closed, Labor Day
- September 5 – No School/Staff Development Day (BOE serving breakfast)
- September 5 – BOE Meeting, 6 pm, MS Conference Room
- September 6 – No School/Staff Development Day and Building Meet and Greets, 2 pm
- September 7 – Welcome Back Students!

Reminders

Public Comment

None

BOE Member Comments/Concerns

Mr. Leach asked about providing flexibility with after school enrichment since some siblings need to go home together. Mr. Hillis confirmed flexibility will be provided.

**BOE
Member
Comments/
Concerns**

At 6:19 p.m., Mr. Emerson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leach to enter into executive session for the purpose of the medical, financial, credit and/or employment history of a particular person or corporation, and/or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

**Executive
Session**

Mr. Emerson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leach to appoint Mr. Hillis Clerk Pro Tem. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

**Clerk Pro
Tem**

At 6:50 p.m., Mr. Emerson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leach to come out of executive session. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

**Come out of
Executive
Session**

There being no further action to come before this Board, Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Emerson to adjourn. Yes-4, No-0, Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

**Meeting
Adjourned**



Michele D. Rice
District Clerk