

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
{{MeetingType }} MEETING
May 14, 2026 at 6:30 PM - District Main Conference Room
800 Devillen
Royal Oak, Michigan 48073**

MINUTES

PRESENT: President Tim Ciechorski; Vice President Erika Alexander; Secretary Deb Anderson; Treasurer Michelle Cook; Trustee Lauren Jasinski; Trustee Maryanne VanHaitsma; Trustee Matt Wickey; and Student Representatives Charles Francis and Leilani Hamilton

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Mary Beth Fitzpatrick; Executive Director of Finance & Operations Kathy Abela; Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction Joe Youanes; Executive Director of Staff & Students Services Patrick Wolynski and Executive Assistant to the Superintendent & Board Paula Sutterfield

ABSENT:

1. OPENING / CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. STANDING APPROVAL ITEMS
1. Acceptance of Agenda

The President asks for approval of the agenda, including all attached documents, which may be accessed on the Royal Oak Schools website. Are there any additions or deletions?

"The agenda is approved as presented."

OR

"The agenda is approved with the following additions/deletions" by consensus.

2. Approval of Minutes
- Recommendation:

Resolved that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education approves the following minutes:

April 7, 2026, Enhancement Millage Workshop

April 9, 2026, Regular Meeting

4. PROCLAMATIONS

1. Mental Health Awareness Month

Recommendation:

WHEREAS, mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being; it affects how we think, feel, and act; it also affects how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices; and,

WHEREAS, mental health allows us to maintain relationships, take care of ourselves and our families, take care of our physical bodies, and respond and adapt to daily life changes; and,

WHEREAS, 1 in 5 adolescents have had a serious mental health disorder at some point in their life; and

WHEREAS, 50% of all mental health disorders begin by age 14, and 75% of all mental health disorders begin by age 24; and,

WHEREAS, suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, talking about mental health can reduce stigma and increase awareness of the devastating consequences of unaddressed mental illness; and,

WHEREAS, evidence-based mental and behavioral health training teaches people how to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges and provides skills to assist people who may be facing a mental health crisis; and,

WHEREAS, mental health training for teens is proven to reduce stigma and teach teens how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among their friends and peers; and,

WHEREAS, investing in mental health and safety is critical to building strong workplaces, a thriving workforce, and strong communities; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education does hereby proclaim May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month.

2. National Foster Care Month

Recommendation:

WHEREAS, since 1988, each U.S. President has issued a proclamation to recognize that May will be known as National Foster Care Awareness Month in order to raise awareness of the needs of youth in foster care, and to celebrate the many supporters who are making a powerful and positive difference in their lives; and

WHEREAS, families are the primary source of love, identity, self-esteem and support for children, and they are the foundation of our communities; and

WHEREAS, in the State of Michigan, more than 10,000 children are in foster care; and,

WHEREAS, all children need a meaningful connection to a caring adult who becomes a supportive and lasting presence in their lives; and,

WHEREAS, foster parents and relatives who provide stability for children and support for their parents are unsung heroes; and,

WHEREAS, foster, kinship, and adoptive families who open their hearts and homes, and support children whose families are in crisis play a vital role in helping children and families heal and reconnect, launching young people into successful adulthood; and,

WHEREAS, there are many people in public and private organizations, the courts, and in the community who work to increase public awareness of the needs of children in and leaving foster care; and,

WHEREAS, we join with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to thank individuals, families, and public and private organizations that provide support and security to the children in their care, and welcome this opportunity to share the message that we are always in need of caring foster parents;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education does hereby proclaim May 2026 as National Foster Care Month.

3. Jewish American Heritage Month

Recommendation:

WHEREAS, May is Jewish American Heritage Month, a month that provides an opportunity for all people to appreciate the achievements and contributions of Jewish Americans throughout history, and

WHEREAS, in 1980, President Jimmy Carter adopted a proclamation annually recognizing Jewish American Heritage Week, and in April 2006, President George W. Bush adopted a proclamation that May would be recognized as Jewish American Heritage Month: and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans have made significant contributions to society and culture, including science, medicine, sports, entertainment, business, civil rights, government, military service, and philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans often face unspeakable discrimination and adversity, yet for hundreds of years, they have fought heroically in battle, pursued peace, and always persevered; and

WHEREAS, Royal Oak Schools reaffirms our commitment to combating antisemitism and discrimination against Jewish Americans; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education recognizes May 2026 as Jewish American Heritage Month.

4. Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Recommendation:

WHEREAS, the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education take pride in recognizing May 2024 as Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month, honoring and celebrating the many significant contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Island people who have enriched the history of our nation; and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans are the fastest growing population in the nation and Michigan, with approximately 377,181 Asian Americans in Michigan, making up 3.7% of the state's population; and,

WHEREAS, we celebrate all of those who are included within the AANHPI community, which is made up of culturally and linguistically diverse peoples, representing populations from many countries and islands; and

WHEREAS, the theme for this year's observance is Advancing Leaders Through Innovation, which pays homage to the visionaries and trailblazers who have shaped our AANHPI history and continue to influence our collective future; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education does hereby proclaim May 2026 as Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

5. National Gun Violence Awareness Day

Recommendation:

This proclamation declares the first Friday in June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day in the Royal Oak school district to honor and remember all victims and survivors of gun violence and to declare that we as a country must do more to end this public health crisis.

WHEREAS, every day, nearly 130 people in the United States are killed by gun violence, and 200 are shot and wounded, with an average of more than 19,000 gun homicides every year; and

WHEREAS, people in the United States are 26 times more likely to die by gun homicide than people in other high-income countries; and

WHEREAS, Michigan has 1,423 gun deaths every year, with a rate of 14.2 deaths per 100,000 people, a crisis that costs the state \$16.8 billion each year, of which \$380.5 million is paid by taxpayers. Michigan has the 28th highest rate of gun deaths in the US; and

WHEREAS, protecting public safety in the communities they serve is the school district's highest responsibility; and

WHEREAS, support for the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens goes hand-in-hand with keeping guns away from those who are a danger to themselves or others; and

WHEREAS, gun violence prevention is more important than ever as we see high levels of gun violence continue to plague our communities;

WHEREAS, in January 2013, Hadiya Pendleton was tragically shot and killed at age 15; and on June 5, 2026, to recognize the 29th birthday of Hadiya Pendleton (born: June 2, 1997), people across the United States will recognize National Gun Violence Awareness Day and wear orange in tribute to —
(1) Hadiya Pendleton and other victims of gun violence; and
(2) the loved ones of those victims; and

WHEREAS, the idea was inspired by a group of Hadiya's friends, who asked their classmates to commemorate her life by wearing orange; they chose this color because hunters wear orange to announce themselves to other hunters when out in the woods, and orange is a color that symbolizes the value of human life; and

WHEREAS, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to Wear Orange on June 5, the first Friday in June 2026, to help raise awareness about gun violence; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 5, 2026, people across the United States will raise awareness about gun violence and honor the lives of gun violence victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the hands of people who should not have access to them and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our families and communities safe.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Royal Oak School Board declares the first Friday in June, June 5, 2026, to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day. We encourage all schools to support their local communities' efforts to prevent the tragic impacts of gun violence and to save lives.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

If you would like to make a public comment:

- A person may address the Board on an agenda item by completing a note card located inside the Board Room and placing the card in the basket prior to the citizen public comment period. You will have an opportunity to comment on items *not* on the agenda at the end of the meeting.
- Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. If you need more time, you are offered a second opportunity to address the Board at the end of the meeting for an additional three (3) minutes.
- Please address the Board as a whole and not individually.
- Please avoid mentioning specific staff members by name.
- Public comment is not intended for the exchange of dialogue. This is a time for members of the public to express their views. We are paying attention to your comments and appreciate them. However, school board members do not respond to public comment during the meeting.
- Questions that arise from public comment shall be referred to the superintendent, or their designee, for review, study and possible future response.
- Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

6. RECOGNITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS

1. Presentation of ROHS Art Students

Alicia Duncan

Royal Oak High School student artists participated in the *Southeast Michigan Regional Scholastic Art Awards* and the *29th Annual National K-12 Ceramic Exhibition*.

2. Presentation of Royal Oak High School Ice Skating Academy Members

Matt Wickey

Members of the Royal Oak Skating Academy went to the Michigan High School State Championship in March, where both teams achieved third place overall.

Coach Candace Kuk-LaFerle presents Peyton DePottey, Olivia Wandoff, and Luminitza Lundh.

3. Presentation of Adriana Alexander

Seventh grader Adriana Alexander has earned two "Best of Show" awards at the 58th Michigan Student Film Festival—placing her films among the top selections out of 460+ entries. Tonight we

are proud to be able to show her short film, *Fish for the Future*. 

4. Recognition of Student Board Members

Leilani Hamilton

Grace Hatton

Finance and Facilities Members:

Haneed Awada

Cameron Baylis

Aiden Brock

Owen Krueger

Broderick McDonald

5. Recognition of Optimist Club Members

Matt Wickey

Royal Oak Optimist Club members, Richard Bremer and Allen Pruner, are here, as well as Donna Bucciarelli, pediatric trauma nurse at Corewell Health.

The Safety on Wheels program has been in existence for many years. Initially, the Optimists would go to events around the city and sell youth helmets for \$5.00. In 2017, Richard Bremer coordinated with the school superintendent, the City of Royal Oak and Corewell Heath to bring the program into the schools. Richard Bremer, Allen Pruner and Donna Bucciarelli go into the elementary schools and give a 45-minute presentation to the third-graders on bike safety and proper bike helmet fitting. As the students are leaving the presentation, they are given a free bike helmet.

From 2017 through 2026, they have given around 4000 helmets to the Royal Oak third-graders. Fun fact — the first third grade class that received the helmets will be graduating from Royal Oak High School in two weeks.

About five years ago, they included St Paul's, St. Mary's, and Shrine elementary schools into the program. Three years ago they also included the Berkley schools. They are now giving helmets to about 800 students a year.

6. Presentation on Mental Health Awareness Month

Thomas Harwood

7. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Ashley Phillips

8. Student Representatives to the Board

Leilani Hamilton and Grace Hatton

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Board of Education Secretary

8. *CONSENT AGENDA (*Personnel / Instruction / Business*)

The consent agenda generally consists of routine matters as well as items we have covered during this meeting or another board or committee meeting. All items are documented in the minutes, which

are published following the meeting at which they were approved. All of our committee and board meetings are open to the public and public comment is an item on each agenda. We invite members of the public to join our committees.

1. *Payment of Expenses

Recommendation:

Resolved that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education hereby approves expenditures as processed in the amount of \$16,382,485.78, for the period of April 1, 2026, through April 30, 2026.

9. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION / ACTION

1. Superintendent

John Tafelski

1. Second Reading of Revised/Replaced and/or Recommended Policies on Nondiscrimination

Recommendation:

Resolved, that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education approves a **second reading** of the policies being revised, replaced and/or recommended as presented.

This first set of policies deals with nondiscrimination. In an attempt to streamline the complex collection of Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment, and related issues, several of the policies have been consolidated in order to provide a comprehensive approach to related employment issues. The definitions included are consistent with related policies, and the grievance process is designed to be consistent throughout the investigation, decision-making, and appeal stages.

Also included in this update are the technical corrections to five policies, correcting the address and contact information for the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

In total, this update includes fourteen policies (three replacement policies for adoption, six policies for deletion/rescission, and five policies with technical corrections).

2. Second Reading of Revised/Replaced and/or Recommended Policies

Recommendation:

Resolved, that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education approves a **second reading** of the policies being revised, replaced and/or recommended as presented.

These next four policy changes address the following:

PO0155 corrects a discrepancy between the board's procedural guide and our current policy regarding the time frame when appointing members to committees.

PO2240 replaces some language for clarification around contentious issues in the classroom.

PO4162 has been revised to reflect the statutory and regulatory changes to the Return-to-Duty process as required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, including evaluation by a qualified Substance Abuse Professional, education and/or treatment, and follow-up evaluation. This revision should be adopted to maintain compliance with current requirements.

PO2340 outlines the process by which field trips are approved. Adding "designee" to the policy language will expedite the approval times.

3. Oakland Schools Board of Education Biennial Election

Recommendation:

WHEREAS, Public Act 419 of 2004 amended the election procedures for Intermediate School Districts that elect board members at a meeting of representatives from constituent district school boards, and

WHEREAS, Public Act 419 of 2004 requires a constituent school board to designate its representative and identify the Intermediate School Board candidate the board supports by a resolution adopted not earlier than 21 days prior to the date of the election, and

WHEREAS, Public Act 419 of 2004 prescribes the method for passage of a resolution including the requirement to consider the resolution at not less than one public meeting before adopting the resolution, and

WHEREAS, the Board previously considered the resolution at an open meeting conducted in a manner prescribed under the Open Meetings Act on May 14, 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Board designates _____ as its representative and _____ as its alternate representative to serve on the 2026 electoral body responsible for electing members to the Oakland Schools Intermediate School District Board of Education.

2. The Board supports candidate Gary Hauff for the one (1) position on the Oakland Schools Intermediate School District Board of Education each for a term of six (6) years ending June 30, 2032.

Choose one candidate:

* Gary Hauff

3. The Board directs its representative _____ to vote for candidate Gary Hauff at least on the first ballot taken at the June 1, 2026, election.

4. Updates and Remarks

2. Curriculum & Instruction

Joe Youanes

3. Finance/Facilities and Bond

Kathy Abela

1. Oakland Schools FY27 Budget

Recommendation:

Resolved, that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education approves the Oakland Schools ISD Budget as presented in the board packet.

2. Chartwells Renewal 26/27

Recommendation:

Resolved that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education authorizes the superintendent to finalize and sign a one-year renewal of the district food service management contract with Chartwells. On March 14, 2024, the Board approved a one-year contract with four optional one-year renewals; this would be the second of four optional one-year renewal agreements.

3. Lease Agreements

Recommendation:

Resolved, that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to finalize and sign agreements with Royal Oak Youth Assistance, YMCA ROMS After-School Program, and with the City of Royal Oak for Arts, Beats & Eats, Grant Park, and the Center Street Garage.

1. Royal Oak Youth Assistance 2026-27

2. City of Royal Oak Arts, Beats & Eats Parking 2026

3. City of Royal Oak Grant Park 2026-27

4. City of Royal Oak Center Street Garage 2026-27

5. YMCA After-School Program

4. Oak Ridge Contract Award

Recommendation:

Resolved that the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to finalize and sign a contract with A.F. Bellisario, Inc, in the amount of \$122,520 for work at Oak Ridge Elementary School. Additionally, 10% contingency to address any unforeseen conditions.

5. Kubota Purchase

Recommendation:

Resolved that Royal Oak Schools Board of Education approve the purchase of one utility vehicle (Kubota) in the amount of \$37,078.16. The purchase is being made utilizing cooperative bid pricing.

6. Yeo & Yeo Contract Award

Resolved that the board authorizes the superintendent to finalize and sign the quote from Yeo and Yeo for audit pricing from 2026-2030; be it further resolved that based on satisfactory audit work in each year, the superintendent be authorized to sign the annual engagement letter for each subsequent year through 2030.

4. Staff and Student Services

Patrick Wolynski

1. Personnel Changes

Recommendation:

Resolved, the Royal Oak Schools Board of Education approves the regular personnel changes as presented in the board packet.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

If you would like to make a public comment:

- A person may address the Board on any non-agenda item at this time.
- Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes.
- Please address the Board as a whole and not individually.
- Please avoid mentioning specific staff members by name.
- Public comment is not intended for the exchange of dialogue. This is a time for members of the public to express their views. We are paying attention to your comments and appreciate them. However, school board members do not respond to public comment during the meeting.
- Questions that arise from public comment shall be referred to the superintendent, or their designee, for review, study and possible future response.
- Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

11. BOARD COMMENTS / LIAISON REPORT

Safety Committee, Lauren Jasinski

Arts & Preservation, Deb Anderson

Staff Relations, Erika Alexander

May 19 (all elementary schools), Kindergarten Signing Day @ 6:00 p.m.

May 28, Jazz on the Lawn (Royal Oak Middle School) @ 5:00 p.m.

June 3, Churchill High School Graduation @ 7:00 p.m.

June 4, Finance & Facilities Meeting @ 6:00 p.m.

June 10, City Schools Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.

June 11, Board of Education Meeting @ 6:30 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT (approval by consensus)

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Anderson

Secretary, Board of Education