

# ORONO SCHOOLS

## TODAY



August 2022

## Message from the Superintendent

Summer Greetings from Orono Schools.

I hope you are enjoying the warm weather and all the wonderful opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities. From my office, I hear the joyful shouts of students enrolled in our summer programs through Community Education—the *largest enrollment in program history*—and their exuberance is so welcome.

During mid-summer, we spend time reflecting on our previous school year and planning for the future. 2021-22 was exceptional in so many ways! Our students, staff, clubs and teams supported each other and enjoyed outstanding results. We are excited to share *just a sampling* of our 21-22 Points of Pride in this edition.

Our students also demonstrated exemplary character in classrooms, in

competition, and during events taking place across the state and nation. It's noticeable... and remarkable.

Our graduation celebration in June was a highlight of our year. We enjoyed outstanding student speeches, musical selections, and emotional moments as our seniors became our newest alumni. Decision Day at Orono High School was another wonderful reminder that we are preparing Orono graduates to continue their journey through college, trade school, Transition programs, gap years, and career opportunities.

We are looking forward to the fall when our students will return to campus for the 2022-23 school year.

It will be a busy fall season as Orono Schools will be on the November 8 ballot for the purpose of electing three school board members (page 8) and seeking voter approval for a Technology Levy renewal with no tax increase (pages 2-3). The technology levy, in place for 20 years, is expiring. It provides a dedicated funding stream for campus and cyber security, classroom learning, teacher training, and reliable networks and access. Please learn all you can from our website, informational materials, and discussions before election day.

My best wishes for a wonderful August,



Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

## 2022-23 ENROLLMENT

We are pleased to report that enrollment in Orono Schools continues to be strong for the 2022-23 school year with a robust number of inquiries and tours this summer. If you have recently relocated within district boundaries, please reach out so we may welcome you and begin the resident enrollment process.

Open enrollment applications are accepted and placed on a waiting list. Students will be invited to enroll on a space-available basis. Thank you!

Please learn more:

[www.orono.k12.mn.us](http://www.orono.k12.mn.us)

Contact us:

[enrollment@orono.k12.mn.us](mailto:enrollment@orono.k12.mn.us)

telephone: 952-449-8312

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ORONO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# 2022 TECH LEVY RENEWAL

Funding for the next 10 years to ensure Orono students are ready for the future

On November 8, 2022, Orono Public Schools residents will vote whether to renew the district's Technology Levy. Because this is a straight renewal, there would be **no tax increase** if approved by voters.

## Why now?

The district is grateful for community support over the last 20 years. This technology levy was originally approved by residents in 2002, renewed in 2011 and is now up for renewal again. If not renewed by voters in November 2022, the **levy will expire** and the district will **lose \$1.2 million** annually in local funding.

## What is the tax impact?

There is **no tax increase** if voters approve the levy, because it is a straight renewal of an existing locally approved levy.

## What is the levy for?

If voters approve the levy renewal, it would provide a predictable and dedicated funding stream for:



### Classroom learning and support

Tools and teacher training to support excellence in teaching and learning and ensure Orono students are future ready



### Reliable access

Regularly updated networks, systems and software to support classroom teaching and learning



### Campus security, data privacy & technical support

Campus security, visitor management systems, a secure internet environment and technology support staff

## What is the impact of a "no" vote?

If voters **do not approve the renewal**, the levy will expire and the district would be faced with **\$1.2 million in annual budget cuts**, impacting teachers, programs and technology districtwide.



### Overview video: <https://bit.ly/LEVY-VIDEO>

The Tech Levy video summarizes the financial need and the impact of technology on teaching, learning and security.

**89% of Orono School District residents believe the ability for students to use computers and other technology effectively and efficiently is absolutely essential or very important.**

— October 2021 community survey

"This technology levy brings in critical funding that supports how our teachers teach and how our students learn."

— School Board Chair Bob Tunheim



## How do we compare?

### Technology Levy Comparisons, 2021-22

#### ANNUAL REVENUE

District	Total Tech Levy	Per Pupil
Hopkins	\$11,924,180	\$1,613
Eden Prairie	\$7,599,850	\$805
Bloomington	\$8,685,049	\$785
Edina	\$6,490,673	\$707
Wayzata	\$8,385,892	\$585
Minnetonka	\$6,916,127	\$568
Westonka	\$1,576,199	\$588
<b>Orono</b>	<b>\$1,122,409</b>	<b>\$454</b>

## Finance facts

- Orono Public Schools ranks in the **top two percent** of all Minnesota school districts for its Aa2 long-term credit rating.
- The district has earned Certificates of **Excellence in Financial Reporting** for many years.
- 94% of residents believe they receive a good value for their **investment in our schools**.

## Points of pride

According to a fall 2021 community survey of our residents:

- 94%** rate the quality of Orono Public Schools as excellent or good
- 96%** believe Orono Public Schools increase property values in the community

In 2022, *U.S. News and World Report* ranks **Orono High School #1** in Minnesota among traditional high schools



## Where do I vote?

Because this is a general election, residents will vote at their regular polling location on Election Day, November 8, 2022. Early voting begins September 23, 2022.

To find your polling location or learn more about voting, visit **[www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org)**.

## Learn more:

The 2021-22 school year was highly successful with many “firsts” and outstanding results in **academics, arts, athletics, activities and service**. The following achievements represent *only a few* highlights from the year, including state-level results in athletics. We celebrate the many outstanding achievements and performances along the way. Way to go, Spartans!

## ACADEMICS

- **Nolan Naughton**, a rising third-grader, earned top honors as a Continental Math League (CML) National Champion.
- **Luke Mitchell**, rising sixth-grader, earned Grand Honors from Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth for his exceptional performance in math.
- **Gigi Martin '22** earned a Rising Star Award through the 2022 Minnesota Aspirations for Women in Computing Awards program.
- Class of 2022 **National Merit Finalists** were Angelo Fiataruolo, Nova Tseng and Martin Weiss.
- Reporters from *The Spartan Speaks* earned five awards through the **Minnesota High School Press Association Gold Medallion Awards** competition. The staff earned a first-place award for a multimedia story package. Individuals earning top honors were Mikayla Burns '21, Cate Challgren '21, Grace Hornbaker '21, and Lauryn Pietrzak '21.
- *U.S. News and World Report* published its “2022 Best High School” rankings. Orono High School maintained its ranking as **#1 traditional high school** in Minnesota and advanced one position to #4 overall.
- Readers of the *Wayzata Sun Sailor* once again selected Orono High School as the **Best Public School**.
- 92 students in the Class of 2022 were awarded \$101,450 in **scholarships**. Thank you to the generous donors who fundraise year after year to support Orono students!

## ARTS

- Orono High School **Chamber Choir** participated in the State Solo and Ensemble competition. All 23 entries received a Superior rating—a first in school history.
- Mamma Mia! earned nine Honorable Mentions from the **Hennepin Theatre Trust Spotlight Education** program. Three students earned “Outstanding” honors: Actor Jakob Waller, “Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role”; set designers Gracie Stromberg and Amelia Shafer, “Outstanding in Technical Leadership.”
- **Aliza Botzet-Johnson's '24** ceramic artwork, “So Sweet,” won top honors in

the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts K-12 Exhibition.

- Three of five pieces submitted to the Scholastic Art Awards earned honors: **Natalie Shatzer '23**, Silver Award for “Mother Nature’s Eternal Hand,” and **Amelia Shafer '23**, two Honorable Mentions.
- Two students were honored through the MSHSL art contest: **Sydney Mathias '22** earned an Award of Excellence for her ceramic triptych, “Nocturnal Nature.” **Amelia Shafer's** ceramic sculpture, “Melvin,” earned a Merit Award, the second highest honor.

## ACTIVITIES

- The Orono Elementary **Chess Club K-3 Team** won the State championship title at the School Chess Association statewide primary and elementary tournament.
- Isaac Hess, Maya Haugen, Sophie Middleton, and McKenna Monger competed at the Speech and Debate Association Junior National tournament. **Maya Haugen** earned 1<sup>st</sup> place and National Championship honors. McKenna Monger was a semifinalist in Drama and earned 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Program Oral Interpretation.
- 29 DECA members qualified for the International Career Development Conference. A longtime Community Giving project, “Care for Troncones, Mexico” raised \$11,000 – nearly double the goal – to help the community repair building damages, fund school transportation, and form a soccer club.
- The Boys Table Tennis team, through Orono Community Education, took home the State Championship title. The girls team placed second.
- The Orono High School **Math Team** finished first in the Metro Alliance

Division and 2<sup>nd</sup> of 53 AA teams. The team finished 4<sup>th</sup> in AA at State. **Michael Rascher** was the highest scoring individual in the division, qualifying for State.

- The Orono High School Novice Trap Team, through Orono Community Education, took 1<sup>st</sup> place at the Minnesota State High School Trap Shooting Championship. Individual honors went to Austin Pikula '23, Novice Overall 1<sup>st</sup> Place; Will Petrie '22, Novice Overall 3<sup>rd</sup> Place; Olivia Monger '24, Novice Female 3<sup>rd</sup> Place.
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade Orono Middle School **Destination Imagination** team, “Musical Mayhem,” competed in the global finals and earned 8<sup>th</sup> place in their category.







# CELEBRATING

## Points of Pride

### ATHLETICS

- The **Boys Cross Country** team finished 4<sup>th</sup> at the Class AA State meet. All-state honors: Owen Chapman '25, Owen Hirt '24; and Angelo Fiataruolo '22.
- **Varsity Football** won the State Class AAAA quarterfinal game against Grand Rapids but fell to Hutchinson in the semifinal.
- **Boys Soccer** won the Class AA State Championship.
- **Girls Swim & Dive** team placed 4<sup>th</sup> overall at the State meet. All-state honors went to Mallory Knutson '25, Kaelyn Knutson '23, Skylar Thalhuber '23, Addison Thalhuber '23, Sydney Govrik '22, Caroline Close '22, Lila James '24, and Graycin Andreen '26. All-State divers were Makena Rasmussen '22, 3<sup>rd</sup> place; and Sophia Capece '22, 4<sup>th</sup> place.
- **Carli Olsen '22** placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the State Class AA Girls Tennis Individual tournament.
- In **Alpine Ski**, four skiers qualified for State as individuals: Riviera Wock '22 (earning 6<sup>th</sup> place), J.T. Burns '25, Harper Randolph '22, and Jack Shideman '24.
- **Nordic Ski** sent Miles Miner '24 and Sindri Bonner '24 to the State meet. Miles placed 13<sup>th</sup> overall earning All-State recognition.
- The Orono Girls **Dance Team** finished their competitive season with the highest placements in school history. The Jazz team earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place at State and the High Kick team finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place.
- **Girls Hockey** team competed in the State tournament for the first time, finishing in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Iyla Ryskamp '22 earned the Class A Herb Brooks Award and was a Ms. Hockey Semifinalist. **Coach Sean Fish** was honored with the 2022 MGHCA Class A Coach of the Year Award.
- **Boys Swim & Dive** team placed 8<sup>th</sup> overall at State. Individual top-10 finishers were Nick Fogle '22, John Fort '22, Owen Gagne '24, Walter Royal '24, and Kaden Starcznski '23.
- The **Boys Tennis** team advanced to the Class 2A State final for the first time in school history, defeating defending champion Edina to win the State title.
- In the Tennis Doubles competition, **Matias Maule '22** and **Sam Skanse '22** won the Class 2A State title. **Preston Perrill '22** and **Jack Tanner '22** also qualified as individual doubles at State.
- **Jack Fischer '23** earned the Track & Field State championship title in the 300-meter hurdles. All-state Track & Field honors went to Estelle Atkinson '24, and Owen Chapman '25.
- **Ava Hanneman '25** competed in her second State finals competition for Girls Golf.
- Three students in Orono's Unified Club brought home the gold (and other medals!) from the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games: **Pierce Pennaz**, gymnastics; **Anna Stankevitz**, gymnastics; **Peyton Libby**, 3x3 half-court basketball. Minnesota will host the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games. Orono High School graduates **Jenna Perkins '22** and **Danny Striggow '20** have been named Honorary Chairs.
- Class of 2023 athletes **Nora Chouanard** and **Charlie Kraus** were selected for ExCEL Awards.

### SERVICE

- Custodial staff and Special Services teams filled **60 food baskets** for local families in need, providing all ingredients needed for a full holiday meal.
- Orono High School **Student Senate** sponsored a "Month of Service" with a blood drive, service auction, and fundraising for TeamSeas and DECA's Care for Troncones project.
- Thank you to all organizers, representatives and volunteers who participated in the May **Community Wellness Expo**.
- Returning for the first time in two years, the **Empty Bowls** program raised \$2,000 for Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners (IOCP) and WeCAN.
- Orono **Youth in Action** participants provided 564 hours of service by mentoring at the after-school SPARKS program, creating a program to make dance attire accessible, organizing the WE Scare Hunger food drive, and helping with community events.

### FINANCE

- The Association of School Business Officials awarded one of four 2022 Pinnacle of Achievement Awards to Mr. Jim Westrum, Executive Director of Business Services. The award recognized Mr. Westrum's work, in conjunction with the Orono School Board Facilities and Finance Committee, negotiating a successful, cost-saving transportation contract.
- The district was issued a clean financial audit from Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich & Co., P.A. the highest opinion an auditor can issue for school districts.
- Moody's Investors Service affirmed Orono Schools' Aa2 rating in November 2021, which places Orono in the top 2% of all Minnesota school districts.

# CONGRATULATIONS, Graduates



## Orono High School **HONORED**

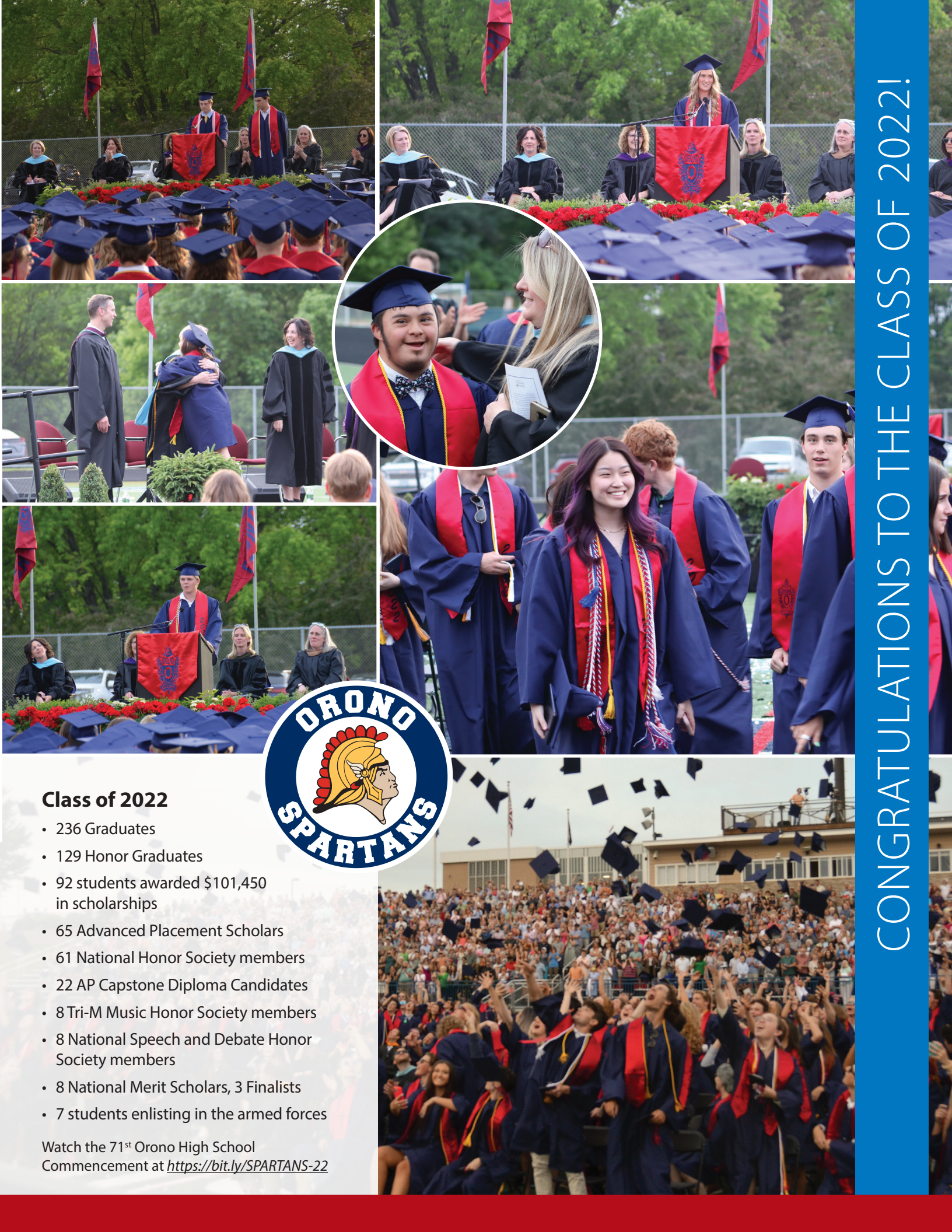
**Orono High School** is honored to receive, once again, outstanding recognition at the local and national level.

- *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Orono High School the **#1 traditional high school** and #4 overall in Minnesota
- Thank you to readers of the *Wayzata Sun Newspapers* for choosing Orono High School as the **Best Public School**

At every grade level, the district is committed to fostering academic excellence, building strong relationships, and weaving the principles of character into the fabric of student life.







CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2022!

## Class of 2022

- 236 Graduates
- 129 Honor Graduates
- 92 students awarded \$101,450 in scholarships
- 65 Advanced Placement Scholars
- 61 National Honor Society members
- 22 AP Capstone Diploma Candidates
- 8 Tri-M Music Honor Society members
- 8 National Speech and Debate Honor Society members
- 8 National Merit Scholars, 3 Finalists
- 7 students enlisting in the armed forces

Watch the 71<sup>st</sup> Orono High School Commencement at <https://bit.ly/SPARTANS-22>







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## 2022 ORONO SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION Candidate Filing Information

The Orono School Board has a long history of committed members representing the community in the district's mission to meet the needs of all children. This November, voters will elect three school board members to serve on the six-member Orono School Board.

If you are interested in running for school board, please download the Affidavit of Candidacy form from the Minnesota Secretary of State website or request the form from the District Office (DO). You can submit your form and \$2.00 filing fee to the DO during the filing window: **Tuesday, August 2 through Tuesday, August 16** (open 8-4 p.m. with extended hours 8-5 p.m. on August 16). Once you have submitted the Affidavit and fee, your name will appear on the ballot as an official candidate for a seat on the board. **Early voting begins**

**September 23, 2022; election day is November 8, 2022.**

Curious what the role entails? The district is hosting an information session detailing the roles and responsibilities of a school board member the evening of Thursday, August 25 at the DO. Additionally, candidates for school board will be asked to participate in an all-candidate forum—hosted by the League of Women voters—on **Thursday, October 6** in the Orono High School auditorium. The time of the event will be set as soon as the number of candidates is determined. This event will be an opportunity for each candidate to engage with the broader community and speak to their objectives should they be elected. Questions? Please reach out to [info@orono.k12.mn.us](mailto:info@orono.k12.mn.us). Thank you.

Orono Schools Today

## **KIDS** **SWIM, BIKE, RUN EVENT**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 11**



**Recommended for kids ages 4-15**

Three divisions with different durations of swimming, biking, and running

**Thursday, August 11**

Check-in 6 p.m. | Events start 7 p.m.

Information & Registration  
<https://bit.ly/ORONO-SBR>

## LOOKING AHEAD

- Community Education fall catalog and registration beginning August 16
- Updated district website, mid-August
- Orono Activities Center celebration in September
- First day of school grades 1-12, September 6
- First day of Kindergarten, September 7
- Art in the Park at Veterans Memorial Park, Maple Plain, September 22 from 5-7 p.m.
- Early voting begins September 23, 2022
- Professional Day, no school K-12, September 26
- State MEA convention, no school K-12, October 20-21
- Election Day, November 8, 2022