

# ORONO SCHOOLS

## TODAY



October 2022



*Eighth-grade students engage in mock job interviews, only one component of their career exploration project in the Academic Planning class.*



*Dashing to class on the first day...!*



*The Homecoming Parade and Pepfest on September 30 brought the community together!*



*Seniors gathered in Pesonen Stadium for a class photo.*



*Orono Early Learning students and families tour classrooms, enjoy some ice cream and meet first-responders at the back-to-school Discovery Center Open House.*

### IMPORTANT DATES

November 4 - Professional Day (No school K-12)  
November 22 - Parent-teacher conferences (No school K-12)  
November 23-25 - Thanksgiving break (No school K-12)

December 19-30 - Winter break (No school K-12)

January 2 - New Year's holiday observed (No school K-12)  
January 3 - Classes resume  
January 16 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No school K-12)  
January 30 - Professional Day (No school K-12)

# Technology Updates 2022

Over spring and summer 2022, the Orono Technology team worked hard to prioritize improvements that impact three key areas: safety and security, reliable access, and classroom learning and support.

**Safety and security.** Putting student and staff safety first, the Technology team completed an upgrade of phone systems to the Enhanced 911 (E911) service. When a caller dials 911 from a district phone, first responders know exactly where the call is coming from and which door to enter. This upgrade brings a significant improvement in efficiency and overall campus safety.

In an ever-changing digital world, it's critical that the district stay on the cutting edge of cybersecurity measures to ensure that the network is secure to support student learning and protect student data privacy. The district has added cybersecurity protections, like two-factor authentication, to mitigate cybersecurity incidents.

**Reliable access.** The school district installed wireless infrastructure improvements this summer, laying a foundation for future network improvements. To address network issues at Orono High School, Technology staff

have conducted an in-depth study to evaluate areas of the building with less optimal connectivity. The team is increasing the number of access points by nearly two-fold, placing devices in areas of need and monitoring network performance.

**Classroom learning and support.** At the end of the 2022 school year, the technology team called back all district-owned Chromebooks and iPads. They reset the devices and removed all identifiable student information. Those deemed beyond repair after heavy use the last two years were replaced.

These efforts are funded by the Technology Levy that has been a dedicated funding stream for 20 years. The state requires that districts seek voter approval to renew capital projects levies (like the Tech Levy) every 10 years. **On your November ballot is a flat renewal of this expiring levy, meaning no tax increase if approved by voters.**

Please learn more at [www.ornoschools.org/techlevy](http://www.ornoschools.org/techlevy)

Vote November 8

**TECH LEVY RENEWAL**



## ORONO TECHNOLOGY LEVY



## HOW DOLLARS ARE ALLOCATED

### Classroom Learning & Support

Orono's technology levy provides the **equipment** and technology-based **academic software tools** and **teacher training** to support excellence in teaching and learning and ensure students are **future ready**. Academic software enriches student learning and provides platforms for research, collaboration, presentations, coding, design and more. Digital classroom tools, like Seesaw and Schoology, offer a unique view into curriculum, assignments and progress. The district's **instructional technology support specialists** help keep our teaching staff on the cutting edge so students can develop in-demand skills.

**45%**  
of annual technology budget



### Reliable Access

Levy dollars support the technology infrastructure required to provide **reliable access** on campus to students, teachers and staff. This includes hardware (fiber, routers, switches, access points) and software needed to support district operations and provide on-demand access to networks and learning tools. Maintenance and upgrades are managed on a predictable, yet conservative cycle required to meet changing system demands.

**17%**  
of annual technology budget

### Security & Technical Support

The technology levy funds **physical security and cybersecurity** solutions districtwide. This means cameras, building access and visitor management systems in all school buildings. The recently upgraded phone system is now connected to E911 for enhanced emergency response. The levy also funds highly skilled **technical support specialists** (our IT department) who provide daily expertise to teachers, students and families, and manage thousands of devices on campus.

**38%**  
of annual technology budget

The 2022 Technology Levy is a flat renewal of an expiring levy, with no tax increase if approved by voters November 8.

# Commitment to Continuous Improvement

by Aaron Ruhland, Ph.D., Executive Director of Learning and Accountability

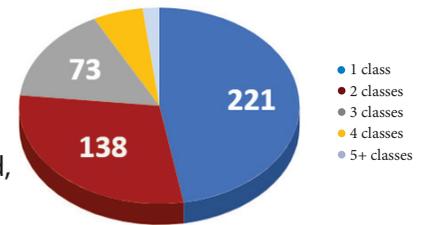
What a wonderful start to the school year! We are proud of the efforts of our students, teachers, and staff to maintain excellence in student achievement over the past two years. We are committed to continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence for all students across outcomes. Our student data is rebounding and we saw some best-ever results, but there are also areas we are working to improve. We honor the resilience of our students, families and staff and believe our Continuous Improvement efforts will positively impact children's growth and goal attainment into the future.

Orono students continue to demonstrate strong preparation for post-secondary success demonstrating scholarship, character, and leadership skills aligned with success in any post-secondary setting. You may be familiar with the principle, "Begin with the end in mind." That philosophy guided the district's strategic planning work five years ago which resulted in development of the Orono Schools "Profile of a Graduate" (see [oronoschools.org/about](http://oronoschools.org/about)). The Profile sets high standards for our PK-12 staff and students as they strive to build exemplary skills in scholarship, character and relationships. Our ultimate goal as educators is to prepare students to "maximize their potential in life because of their experiences in Orono Schools."

One of the most important ways we support and evaluate this work is through a robust post-secondary planning process, which ultimately leads to a plan for each student. College matriculation rates continue to be strong with increasing trends of students engaging in post-secondary education. For the Class of 2022, college matriculation is 91% and college readiness measures are strong. We have opened doors for more students to engage in rigorous courses, with 65% of our 2022 graduates passing at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam.

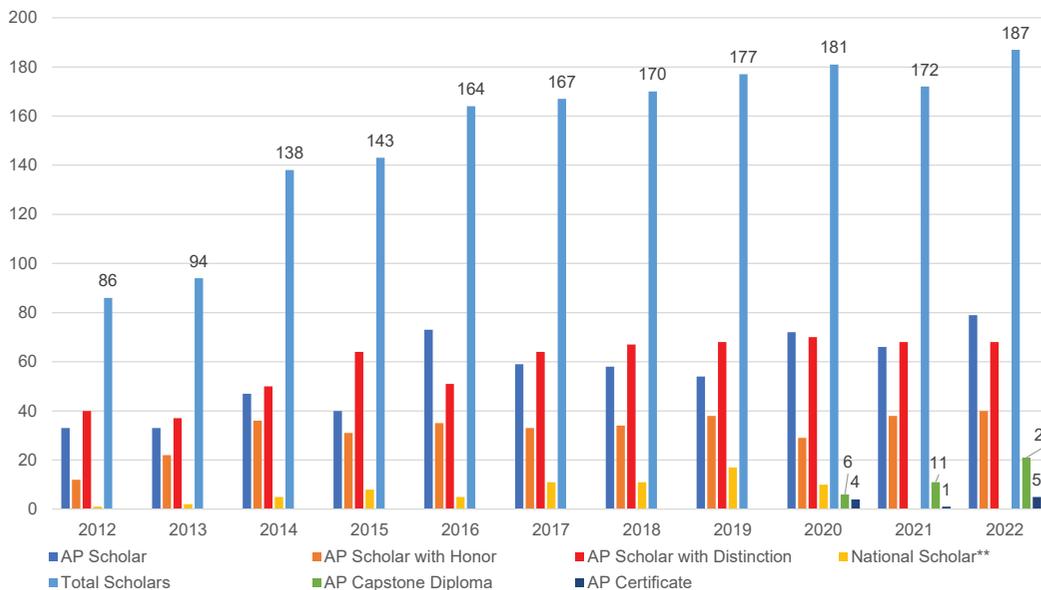
Engagement in AP coursework has been a long-standing goal in the district, with staff encouraging all students to take at least one AP course as part of their four-year plan. Working under unprecedented circumstances the last two+ years, our high school students remained focused and engaged, with an 83% pass rate on AP exams taken in 2022. This summer, the College Board reported that 187 OHS students had achieved an AP Scholar designation, the largest number in school history. (For reference, the initial AP Scholar level is granted to students who earn scores of 3 or higher on 3 or more AP exams.)

For the 2022-23 school year, the number of students enrolling and registering for AP courses and exams has rebounded, with 468 students registering for 888 exams.



As college admissions moves toward "test optional" policies that no longer require an ACT or SAT score, there is even more emphasis on a student's high school transcript and level of rigor. Orono students are rising to the challenge.

Orono High School AP Scholars 2012-2022



\*\*discontinued 2021

## Class of 2023 | Nine National Merit Scholars

In September, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) named four Orono High School seniors as **Semifinalists** and five students **National Merit Commended Scholars**.



*Semifinalists: Zara Coakley, Eli Hamer, Rylan Hunt and Michael Rascher*

These students entered the National Merit competition by taking the PSAT/NMSQT in fall of their junior year.



*Commended Scholars: Angus Muldoon, Roxanne Neset, Brock Peyton, Rachel Pusch and Caleb Vaughan*

National Merit Semifinalists may advance to Finalist standing after submitting a detailed application that includes an essay, high school academic record, activities, leadership, employment, honors received, and more.

Three types of Merit Scholarship awards are offered to Finalists: National Merit Scholarships, corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarships, and college-sponsored scholarships. Special Scholarships are awarded to other outstanding

students who meet a corporate sponsor's criteria. Students will be notified in winter/spring 2023 regarding Finalist status and scholarship awards.

"We are so very proud of these students," said Dr. Kristine Flesher, Superintendent of Schools. "This incredible accomplishment for our semifinalists and Commended

Scholars reflects years of hard work, study and perseverance. We recognize that these students have persisted in keeping their academic and personal goals in focus through very challenging times. Congratulations on behalf of the entire learning community."



## AP U.S. History | A Perfect Score

**"How does it feel to be one of only nine in the world?"**

It's the first question we asked Emily Middleton, who earned a perfect score on her AP U.S. History exam last spring. That score, combined with top scores on three other AP exams, earned her the AP Scholar with Honor designation as a sophomore.

"It's so cool!," Emily said. "But I know that many other students were just as prepared." Emily is a dedicated student with a passion for history, world languages and culture. To prepare for the exam, she reviewed prep books, sought free resources online, and used digital tools like Quizlet to review

facts and historical connections. She also worked closely with her AP U.S. History teacher, Mr. Dennis Lynn. "Emily is the perfect combination of work ethic and academic curiosity," Mr. Lynn said. "She would work diligently to understand core concepts and would then go back over her work. She would often meet with me on her own time to ask for feedback. Students who do well in AP U.S. History must analyze history on a very deep level. It is so much more than remembering names and dates. Emily's efforts took her to that level and as a teacher I could not be more proud of her."



*Congratulations to Emily Middleton '24*



## Continuous Improvement Around the District

### Focus on Academic Excellence

#### Summer 2022 Learning and Support

The staff at Orono Schools has been working diligently to address the impact of pandemic-related discontinuity on student learning. During summer 2022, Orono educators planned a robust summer experience for students impacted last year and in need of further support.

Orono High School held a credit recovery program to support students in grades 9-12. Forty-six OHS students were served, earning 83 credits to ensure a positive start to the school year. An additional 10 OHS students worked with staff on support for personal well-being.

K-8 educators served 167 students through a 9-week, targeted services session and served 67 students in an innovative, 4-week reading camp. In addition, 87 K-8 students attended engaging programming to support positive mental well-being.

#### 2022-23 Continuous Improvement (CI) Process

This year, the district is implementing a strengthened process involving additional leadership development efforts and enhanced interventions for students. The CI team has engaged in analysis of data points, review of multiple measures of growth, trend comparisons, contextual analysis, and understanding of student- and system-level implications.

Our current student achievement data, including state MCA results, is variable, but rebounding. As part of the CI process, the district is evaluating a multi-year test “opt-out” trend which has impacted proficiency scores on all high school exams. Strategies for engaging students and supporting student success on those exams are being implemented at each school. We believe our efforts will positively impact all children.

### Facilities & Finance: Long-range Facilities Review



The Orono School Board, in conjunction with Mr. Jim Westrum, the Facilities and Finance Committee, and WOLD Architects & Engineers, is leading a long-range facilities review. This comprehensive evaluation of the overall use and

condition of district buildings will help prioritize repairs and improvements based on need, proposed budget, and opportunities to provide students with the best possible academic environment.

### Safety & Security:

#### Partnership with Minnesota School Safety Center

School safety is a top priority in Orono Schools. Last summer, Corinna Graner, Director of Special Services (left) and Kim Van Eyll, Orono Middle School Associate Principal,



were invited to attend the first School Based Emergency Pilot program hosted by The Minnesota School Safety Center (MnSSC). The MnSSC provides training and resources to schools and districts around the state to help them prepare, respond, mitigate and recover from emergencies. The pilot program included a requirement of the completion of five FEMA emergency management courses as well as a two-day intensive training at the Minnesota School Safety Center.

Ms. Graner and Ms. Van Eyll returned to campus with confirmation of Orono’s strong history of crisis planning and emergency preparedness. Following the summer training, they worked to update the district’s crisis procedures manual and led administrators in tabletop scenarios and in-depth discussion of coordinated, crisis response.

### Orono Activities Center: Wellness is Just Up the Road!

Exciting changes are in store at the OAC with affordable memberships available to the community! Beginning 11-1-22:

<b>Expanded Hours</b>	Monday-Saturday 6 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
<b>Lap Swim Hours</b>	Monday-Wednesday-Friday 6:15-7:30 a.m. <b>NEW!</b> Tuesday and Thursday 12-1 p.m.
<b>Coffee Connections &amp; Games</b>	Members can enjoy complimentary coffee 7 days a week (2 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. on weekends). Board games available!
<b>Tech Buddies</b>	Details to come! This will be a monthly opportunity to get technology training and support from Orono High School students.
<b>Early Learning Hour</b>	Fridays 10-11 a.m. Families with children under age 5 can enjoy age-appropriate equipment on a designated court. The tracks are also available and are stroller accessible.

Community Education Winter/Spring 2023 registration opens Tuesday, December 13 at 8 a.m. at [www.oronocommunityed.com](http://www.oronocommunityed.com). Fitness classes, pickleball offerings, adult open gym, and more!



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Let's give a warm welcome to new teachers in Orono Public Schools. They started the 2022-23 school year with several orientation days in August.

Front row: **Robert Bevars**, Orono Schumann Elementary Reading Interventionist; **Emalee Farley**, Orono Schumann Elementary Grade 1 Teacher; **Alicia Grochowski**, Orono Schumann Elementary Special Education Teacher; **Abby Perrin**, Orono High School Math Teacher; **Kerri Olson**, Orono Intermediate School General Music Teacher

Row 2: **Bryan Norman**, Orono Middle School Special Education Teacher; **Paige Roth**, Orono Middle School Math Teacher; **Angie Kalthoff**, Orono Intermediate School Challenge Teacher; **Rebecca Kleive**, Orono High School Transitions Teacher; **Kathryn Hyams**, Orono Schumann Elementary Special Education Teacher; **Quinn Montgomery**, Orono High School Social Studies Teacher

Back Row: **Michael Anderson**, Orono Middle School Special Education Teacher; **Tatum Fjelstad**, Orono High School English Teacher  
\*not pictured, **Peter Sherman**, Orono High School English Teacher; **Mallory Purdy**, Orono High School Special Education Teacher; **Brett Beaudry**, Orono Middle School Computer Applications Instructor



## NOW HIRING! Find Your Purpose. Support Our Kids.

Orono Schools is still seeking staff for a variety of positions. Consider joining our supportive and collaborative team!

- Child Nutrition Cooks and Servers
- Special Education and Classroom Paraprofessionals
- Before- and After-school Childcare
- Custodians

### Orono offers flexibility!

Shifts range from 4 to 8 hours. If you're looking for full-time work, we will work to combine positions whenever possible. *Many positions are benefit-eligible!*

### Let's talk!

Please call 952-449-8300 and we will connect you directly to a hiring manager who will discuss your specific interests and provide more information regarding work schedules and pay rates.

Please pass this information along if you know someone who might be interested. Thank you!

[www.aronoschools.org/careers](http://www.aronoschools.org/careers)