

World's Best Workforce
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Assistant Superintendent

As I reflect on the challenges of the last few school years, I couldn't be more proud of our staff and their hard work, resiliency and "do whatever it takes" attitude. Owatonna Public Schools is committed to fulfilling our vision to inspire a community of learners with equitable access to high quality, innovative learning opportunities ensuring all students are college, career and life ready.

Annually, we present a World's Best Workforce Plan that aligns to current district strategic directions and provides updates in curriculum, instruction, and goals around student achievement. The World's Best Workforce was presented to the public on November 14. The meeting outlined the progress from the 2021-22 school year and the goals for this school year (2022-23).

The World's Best Workforce plan outlines the following five goals:

- All children are ready for school.
- All third-graders can read at grade level.
- All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- All students are ready for career and college.
- All students graduate from high school.

The first district goal centers around preparing all students to be successful kindergarteners socially, emotionally and academically. Research has shown education begins long before a child reaches kindergarten. Our goal is to ensure all children have a quality preschool experience. We have a robust early learning program in our district. Our 4-year-old preschool is free and staffed with highly qualified, licensed teachers. The district's investment in our early learning program creates an environment of success for our early learners, closes the achievement gap, and prepares children for continued success.

The second goal area addresses students' reading proficiency. Our goal is to continue to increase the number of students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Literacy is the cornerstone of all learning. Students need a solid foundation of literacy skills to continue to expand their understanding of what they read, make meaning, and transfer that learning across all subject areas.

The third goal focuses around closing the achievement gap. Three years ago, we qualified for an Achievement and Integration Grant and we focused these new resources on reducing the reading and math achievement gap for students. We have been closing the gap in reading and maintaining the gap in math, while

state achievement gaps continue to widen.

Our fourth goal is to ensure all students are college and career ready. Students entering grade nine create a college and career readiness plan. Through career pathways, we continue to increase access to college credit courses with 34 current offerings. We are proud to offer 32 advanced career and technical courses including mentorships and internships. We are proud to report that 85% of our graduating students were enrolled in college credit bearing classes. These opportunities ensure that students are college and career ready.

Lastly, we have a goal to increase our four-year graduation rate. We are committed to increasing academic support for students and enhancing opportunities for credit attainment. The continued work around career pathways programming and course development helps students determine a path and choose classes that align with their strengths and interests.

It is through collaboration and unwavering commitment that we will continue to make progress toward our WBWF goals and realize our mission, *“Inspiring Excellence. Every Learner, Every Day.”*

The World’s Best Workforce presentation and annual report can be found on our website at [.isd761.org](http://isd761.org).