



Orono Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition and a Goal

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District News • November 21, 2023



From the Superintendent

Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

Dear families and staff,

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, I am filled with gratitude for our wonderful district. This is a special time to reflect and express my appreciation for our hard-working students, families, teachers, staff, volunteers, Board members and community. That's an incredible list of individuals who contribute to a positive and nurturing environment. Together, we form a collaborative community that is truly invested in the success and well-being of each student!

Strategic Planning Survey. As we look ahead, I am excited about the opportunities for growth and improvement within our district. Your input is invaluable in this process, and I encourage everyone to complete the strategic planning survey: <https://bit.ly/ORONO-STRATEGIC-SURVEY>. Your feedback will help shape the direction of our district, ensuring that we continue to provide the best possible education for our students. Please see below for more information.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the success of Orono Schools. Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and restful Thanksgiving holiday.

Gratefully,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Student Achievement Celebrated

We enjoyed a great night of recognition November 13 to commemorate the achievements of our National Merit Semifinalists, National Merit Commended Scholars, Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars with Distinction, and AP Capstone Diploma recipients. These students have taken full advantage of the academic opportunities offered by the district. We are so proud of their great work and far-reaching plans for the future!



Front row (l-r): Lily Munsch, Carys Summers, Sarah Robson, Leah Barry, Grace Bickett, Elsa Throldahl, Spencer Bowe and Jack Eugster

Back row (l-r): Alexander Engle, Jonah Cowden, Natalie Close, Joseph Mariani, Luke Wendling, Dexter Benson, Max Hultmann and Stewart Royal

Unable to attend: Madeleine Dore, Owen Hirt, Kaavya Kokate, Emily Middleton, Miles Miner, Lydia Muldoon, Nora Redding, Walter Royal, Hazel Solie and Aiden Ward



Faculty Tenure

Congratulations to these nine excellent educators on receiving tenure in Orono Schools this year. They were honored and celebrated by the School Board, district administrators, and their mentors at the November 13 recognition event. **Thank you** for your contributions to excellence in teaching and learning!

Top row: Kendall Johnson, OMS Special Education; Chelsea Palmer, MAC Grades 1 & 2 Teacher; Jamie Bishop, Kindergarten Teacher

Middle row: Kerri Olson, Intermediate School Music Teacher; Cassandra De Leon, Grade 4 Classroom Teacher; Angela Kalthoff, Elementary Challenge Teacher

Bottom row: Ashley Price-McManus, Grade 7 Math Teacher; Dr. Shelagh Gamble, OMS Art Teacher; Abby Perrin, OHS Math Teacher

Fall Sports Wrap-Up | Section Champs and State Competition

Girls Swimming & Diving

The Orono Girls Swimming & Diving team completed an historic season with a **second-place overall finish** at the MSHSL Class A State Championship. **It is the best finish in program history.** The Spartans won State Championships in: **200 Free**, Graycin Andreen; **200 Free Relay** (All-American consideration, school record), Elle Davis, Lila James, Mallory Knutson and Graycin Andreen; **400 Free Relay** (school record), Elle Davis, Lola Schottler, Mallory Knutson and Graycin Andreen. Additional season accomplishments: Metro West Conference Champions, True Team Section Champions, True Team State Champions and MSHSL Section Champions. Congratulations to swimmers, divers and coaches!

Boys Soccer

- 2023 Class AA State Runner-Up. Wonderful season filled with exciting matches! Congrats!

Boys and Girls Cross Country

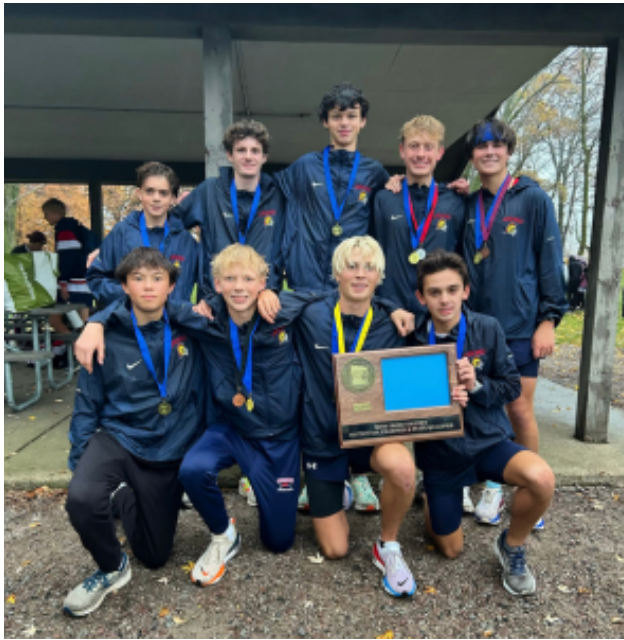
- The Orono Boys Cross Country team finished in 4th place at the MSHSL Class AA State Meet! Gabe Hallen placed 15th individually, earning a spot on the All-State Team. Congratulations!
- For the first time in school history, the Orono Girls Cross Country team qualified for the MSHSL Class AA State Meet. The girls finished in 12th place. Congratulations on a **fantastic** season!

Football

- The Spartans were Section Champions and competed in the Class 4A State quarterfinal, losing to Ricori. We are so proud of this team. Congratulations on a great season!

For updates on winter sports and activities, [follow the Orono Spartans on Facebook!](#)



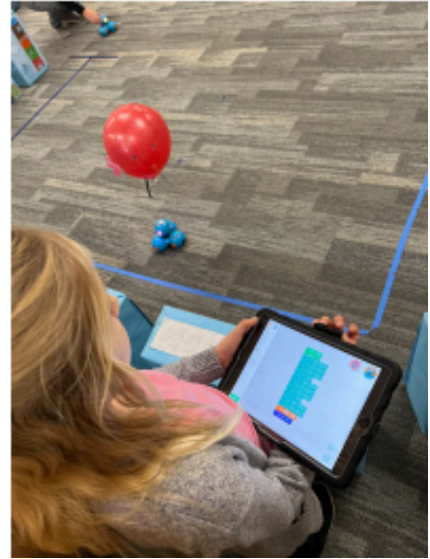


Engaging STEM & Character Project on Parade

It was a remarkable afternoon in the Elementary Media Center as Laura Young's Language Arts students gathered together for "Balloons Over Schumann: A Parade of Character." With vision and support from Bailey Nett, Instructional Technology Coach, students applied an amazing set of skills to imagine, plan, build, and program their Dash robots—complete with colorful balloon characters—to move along a parade route of skyscrapers. Student teams...

- were assigned a unique number of base-10 blocks (flats, longs, cubes) to create a varied skyline for the parade route (mathematics)
- selected a book character and explained how that character demonstrated a Pillar of Character (literacy & Character Counts)
- planned, designed and decorated a balloon to attach to their robot (design & engineering)
- used Blockly code to program Dash robot "floats" to follow the parade route (programming)

The students invited family members, guests and first-grade students to enjoy the show. **Well done!** Thank you to our students, Ms. Nett and Ms. Young.



Strategic Planning Community Survey

This is a [strategic planning year](#) for Orono Schools. Over the summer and early fall, we completed the Pre-planning Phase and are now in Phase 2: Stakeholder Input. The strategic-planning process gives us one more opportunity to involve our community in setting the direction for the district. Your input will be invaluable in shaping our priorities and making decisions that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of our district. If you haven't already, please complete the Strategic Planning community survey by November 30, 2023. Thank you!

Complete the Strategic Planning Survey



Enrollment for the 2024-25 School Year

Enrollment is underway for the 2024-25 school year! Here are some details depending on whether you are...

- a **resident family** with an incoming Kindergartener -- please look for more information in December on next steps
- a **potential open-enrolled family** with an incoming Kindergartener -- please complete and return the online [Open Enrollment \(OE\) Application form](#) by the state deadline of January 15, 2024, to be included in the first round of

consideration. **NOTE:** An OE application is required to be on file by the deadline for each child, even if you already have a child enrolled in Orono Schools.

Early Childhood Screening Required. All children in the state of Minnesota are required to complete an Early Childhood Screening prior to Kindergarten enrollment. Early Childhood Screening is a free check of your child's development including hearing, vision, communication skills, motor skills, etc. Documentation of an Early Childhood Screening, completed by our district or a different district, is required. To schedule an Early Childhood Screening appointment in Orono, you can:

- Email ecscreening@orono.k12.mn.us or
- Call [952-746-5815](tel:952-746-5815) and leave a message with your name, email address, and your child's name

Questions? Please email enrollment@orono.k12.mn.us

Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, November 13, 2023 | Agenda

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Board Member Reports | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Policy Action (701-706) | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Policy Review (707-710) | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Resolution to Support the Application to the MSHSL Foundation for a Form A Grant to Offset Student Activity Fees | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Navigating the College Admissions Landscape Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)

The next meeting of the [Orono School Board](#) is scheduled for Monday, December 11, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. The public is invited to register to participate in a [Public Comment Session](#) beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. The [registration form](#) will be open from Friday, December 8 at 9 a.m. through 12:00 (noon) on December 11, 2023.



Nov. 21-24 ● No School K-12, Thanksgiving
Dec. 20-Jan. 1 ● No School K-12, Winter Break

Upcoming Events

See the [Calendars page](#) on the Orono Schools website for more.

- **November 20**, Parent-Teacher Conferences (afternoon/evening)
 - **November 21**, Parent-Teacher Conferences, No School K-12
 - **November 22-24**, Thanksgiving Break, No School K-12
 - Visit oronoschools.org and look for "Student Performances" in the District News area for upcoming musical performances. Enjoy!
 - **December 20, 2023 through January 1, 2024**, No School K-12, Winter Break
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