



Orono Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition and a Goal

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District News • April 26, 2024



From the Superintendent

Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. In Orono Schools, our staff and administrators work very hard to foster an environment where students and families feel supported and empowered to prioritize their mental wellness. In line with this commitment, I want to remind everyone of the wealth of resources available to students and families through our district.

Our website serves as a hub for valuable information on mental health and well-being. I encourage you to visit these webpages: [Support](#), with staff contact information; [Well-being Resources](#) to help you *balance, belong* and *be well*; [OMS Student Support](#); and [OHS Counseling](#). I also encourage you to read OHS Social Worker Marie Techam's newsletter titled, "[Mental Health Matters](#)."

For direct support, our counselors, school psychologists, and social workers provide a safe space for students to express themselves, seek guidance, and access the resources they need to thrive academically and personally. Our Family Support Services Coordinators help families make important connections in the community related to food, scholarships for extracurriculars, and more.

All are welcome to attend the third annual [Community Wellness Expo](#) returning to the Orono Activities Center on Thursday, May 2 from 5-7 p.m. More than 50 community organizations will be on hand to discuss their role in supporting student and family well-being. You can also participate in hands-on service activities! This event is free and open to the public.

Together, let us continue to prioritize mental health awareness and support, ensuring that every member of our community feels valued, heard, and equipped to navigate life's challenges with resilience and strength.

Warm regards,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Please Welcome Nick Taintor, CPA, Director of Business Services

I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Mr. Nick Taintor** as Orono's new Director of Business Services. Mr. Taintor brings a wealth of expertise in school financial management and strategic planning, making him an outstanding addition to the district leadership team. Please join me in welcoming Nick! His official first day on campus is Monday, April 29.

Since 2020, Mr. Taintor has held the role of Director of the School Services group at Creative Planning Business Services. Prior to assuming the Director role, Nick served as a Senior Advisor for 11 years to school clients. He specialized in strategic budget development and oversight, cash flow analysis, monthly financial reviews, and board trainings. I invite you to [read the press release](#).



I am deeply grateful to Mr. Jim Westrum for faithfully serving the district over the last three years in the Director of Business Services role. He was a key partner in guiding the district through a successful technology levy in 2022. This, along with his long-term dedication to prudent financial stewardship, will have a positive, lasting impact on our learning community. Thank you, Jim!

Good Luck, DECA International Qualifiers!

The DECA International Career Development Conference (ICDC) is the culmination of the DECA year. More than 23,000 high school students, teacher-advisors, business professionals and alumni are expected to attend the conference April 27-30. **Congratulations** to the following students who qualified for internationals and to those selected to attend the DECA Leadership Academy. We are incredibly proud of our DECA program that continues to impact so many students in the district. Thank you to Mr. Keith Jurek for his amazing support over many years. **Congratulations to our international qualifiers and good luck to those competing at ICDC...**

- Joey Mariani, Business Services Marketing
- Community Giving: Drew Anderson, Grace Bicket, and Natalie Close
- Franchise Business Plan: Grace Johnson, John Engerbretson, and Matthew Kasbohm
- Independent Business Plan: Danielle Pearson, Ryan Perman, and Ellie Wheaton
- International Business Plan: Mitchell Kauch, Katie Mahoney, and Alex Paulson
- School Based Enterprise: Riley Ecker and Chase Schlobohm
- Luke Tufvander, Restaurant & Food Service Management
- Attending the DECA Leadership Academy: Lily Nick, Trevor Stundahl, and Eliana Will



Student Voice Club Leads Workshop at National Youth Leadership Council Conference in St. Paul

Congratulations to Gya Casado, Naomi Reyes, Alondra Gonzalez, Bella Nikolov, Oliver Rowan, and Aliyah Davis on their outstanding achievement! These six students, representing the Student Voice Club at Orono High School, led a workshop at the National Youth Leadership Council Conference earlier in April. Their presentation focused on the crucial topics of increasing student agency through student voice and employing the human-centered design process.

In front of a large audience at the Saint Paul RiverCentre, these students shared their experiences and insights, inspiring both adult and student leaders from across the nation. Their presentation showcased the impactful work they have undertaken to foster inclusion and a sense of belonging for all students at Orono High School.

Their dedication, passion, and leadership serve as a shining example for students everywhere, demonstrating the transformative power of youth-driven initiatives in creating positive change within school communities. Once again, congratulations to Gya, Naomi, Alondra, Bella, Oliver, and Aliyah on their remarkable accomplishment!



IS Math Masters Celebrate Achievements

The Orono Intermediate School Math Masters team, advised by Ms. Angie Kalthoff, had a great competitive season. Angie is proud to report that a **record 34 fifth-grade students** joined this year. She was able to form seven teams of hard-working mathematicians who competed against 34 teams this year. I am pleased to share the following top-5 results.

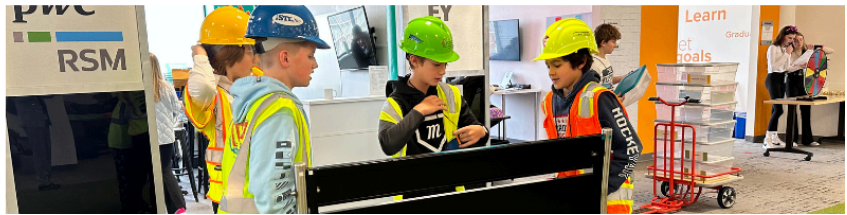
- **Fast Fact Competition:** Linden Hermansen, 5th place
- **Individual Round Winners:** Leo Phillips, 1st place; Nathan Ratcliffe, 2nd place; Tommy Menozzi, 5th place
- **Team Round Winners:** **1st place** - Linden Hermansen, Nathan Baird, James Vossen, Frank Whiting, and Leo Phillips; **3rd place** - Henry Masica, Nathan Ratcliffe, Jacob Severtson, Tommy Menozzi, and Wyatt Blanchard; **5th place** - Nolan Naughton, Harold Campbell, Jake Johnson, Henrik Nohre, and Henrik Swenson

Congratulations to all our outstanding mathematicians!



OMS Sixth-graders Run BizTown

On April 22, Orono Middle School sixth-graders traveled to St. Paul to run a real (simulated) town... **BizTown!** This is a fully immersive experience that links academics to real-world, hands-on experiences. The journey began with 12 classroom lessons and culminated in a trip to BizTown. While there, students operated banks and businesses, managed restaurants, wrote checks, deposited paychecks, and even vote for mayor! Students played roles as citizens, city workers, and consumers within a bustling community, learning practical economic concepts, building money-management skills and relating these roles to free enterprise. Special thanks to Orono parent Kasey Beeler, Principal Kim Van Eyll, Sarah Hunstiger, and grade-level leader Laurie Jenson for all the planning and preparation. We are also grateful to all the OMS parents who volunteered to participate in the field trip. It was an amazing day!



Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, April 8, 2024 | [Agenda](#)

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Board Reports & Comments | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Radon Safety Presentation | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Construction Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Q-comp/ATPPS Report Approval | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- MSHSL Boys Volleyball Co-op Agreement | [Watch the Presentation](#)

Monday, April 22, 2024 | [Agenda](#)

Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)

Board Reports & Comments | [Watch the Presentation](#)

Termination and Non-Renewal of Probationary Teachers | [Watch the Presentation](#)

Strategic Planning Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)

The next meeting of the [Orono School Board](#) is scheduled for Monday, May 13, 2024, at 7 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. If you are interested in participating in the Public Comment session at 7 p.m., please learn more and register on the School Board's [Public Comment webpage](#).

Upcoming **SPRING** **PERFORMANCES**

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/PERFORM24](https://bit.ly/perform24)



Calendars & Announcements

- May is American Indian Month in Minnesota
- Wednesday, May 1 is National School Principals Day
- Friday, May 3 is School Lunch Hero Day
- May 6-10 is Teacher Appreciation Week
- Wednesday, May 8 is National School Nurse Day
- Monday, May 27 is Memorial Day | No School E-12
- Thursday, June 6 is the last day of school | Class of 2024 Commencement at 7 p.m. in Pesonen Stadium

Please see the [Calendars page](#) on the Orono Schools website for more information.



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