



Orono Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition and a Goal

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District News • May 24, 2024



From the Superintendent

Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

Dear families and staff:

As we approach the end of another remarkable school year, I am filled with pride for the incredible accomplishments of our students and staff. Our students have embraced the opportunity to explore their interests and creativity through passion projects, guided by our dedicated educators. These projects have allowed students to showcase their remarkable talents and innovative thinking. Please read on to learn more about these culminating experiences across all our buildings.

In addition, our performing arts groups have continued to bring awe and joy to our entire community. The talent and dedication of our theater, choir, and band directors—and students!—have been nothing short of inspiring. Their performances have been a highlight of the year! Thank you to our educators who, in just a few short years, develop in our students both exceptional talent and lifelong passion for drama and music.

Let's also rally together to support our Spartans as they head into their season-ending competitions. Our student-athletes have shown tremendous effort and sportsmanship, and we are eager to cheer them on to victory these last few weeks of the year.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our educators, staff, and families for their unwavering support and commitment to our students' success. Together, we have created an environment where creativity, exploration, and achievement thrive.

Sincerely,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Decision Day 2024!

It's the final countdown for the Class of 2024 and I was so *excited* to connect with students this week on Decision Day. This was an afternoon of celebration for our seniors to share their post-graduation plans. Whether our students are headed to college, trade school, gap year, work, internships or... we wish them an incredible journey of self-discovery and success in all they do. Thursday, June 6, is the Class of 2024 Commencement at Pesonen Stadium beginning at 7 p.m. The public is welcome to attend; no tickets necessary. Please share the livestream link with family and friends near and far:

<https://youtube.com/live/BKMHZ6ixyGA?feature=share>. Thank you to Lake Minnetonka Communications Commission for livestreaming again this year. **Congratulations to all!**



Juniors and Seniors Honored During Awards Ceremonies

In May each year, students, families, and community members gather to honor the achievements of Orono High School students. On May 2, we held our annual **Junior and Senior Awards ceremony**. Here are just some highlights from the event:

- 94 **juniors** were honored for achieving a GPA of 3.5 or higher
- Junior Book Awards were announced for the first time:
 - Dartmouth Book Award, **Henry Shafer**
 - Harvard Book Award, **Quinn Martini**
 - St. Lawrence Book Award, **Alex Paulsen**
 - and Yale Book Award, **Ashley Ishaug**
- 108 **seniors** were designated Honor Graduates, with 54 already earning one of three AP Scholar honors. Additional graduates will be designated AP Scholars after their final, senior-year exam scores are released this summer.

Senior Scholarship Night

At Senior Scholarship Night held last evening, Dr. Steiner and School Counselor Kayte Haagenon reported that, to date, the Class of 2024 has received more than \$4 million in merit-based scholarships from their colleges, universities, and other outside organizations. Many of these scholarships are based in our community and we are grateful to partner with businesses and families as we support our students. At the event, **\$87,000 in locally raised scholarships** was awarded to 97 different students. Each organization or donor sets clear criteria by which to select the award recipients. I would like to share my immense gratitude to the individuals, families, and organizations who sponsor their own scholarships.

Event Programs

Download the [Junior and Senior Awards Program](#)

Download the [Senior Scholarship Night Program](#)

Thank you Dr. Steiner, Jeff Aman, Shana Borgen, Kayte Haagenon, Lauren Handrick, Brandy Randall, and Sue McCabe for organizing these wonderful recognition events!

Henry Shafer: National Student Auditions Semifinalist

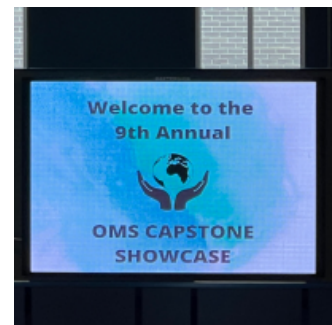
The National Association of Teachers of Singing has named OHS junior Henry Shafer one of 15 Semifinalists in the National Student Auditions. Henry will be competing in Knoxville, Tennessee, on June 27-July 2. The top three students in the Semifinal round of live auditions will move on to the final round.

Henry was also selected as a baritone in the Minnesota All-State Choir for the second year in a row. He will participate in a week-long camp at St. John's University this summer and perform again at Orchestra Hall in February as part of the Minnesota Music Educators Convention. Congratulations, Henry, and best wishes in Knoxville!



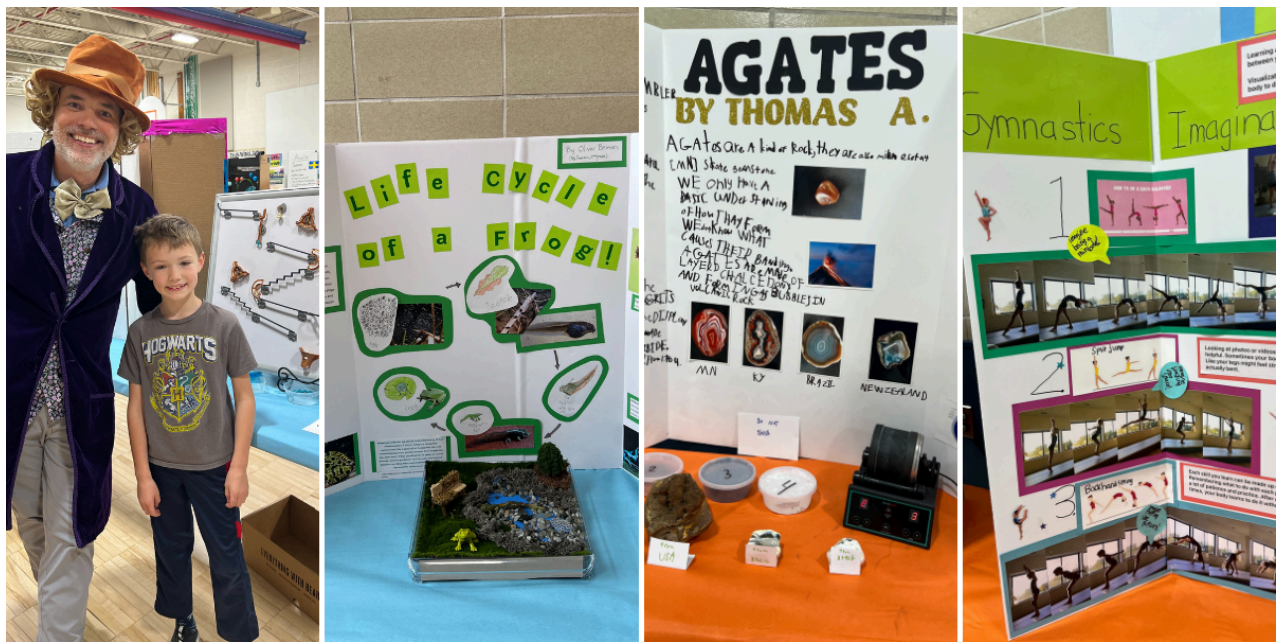
9th Annual OMS Capstone Showcase

Orono Middle School 8th graders did an amazing job working in groups to develop and present their research on a global issue based on the theme, "Breaking Barriers." Through the school year in their Capstone class, students developed feasible, sustainable, and innovative solutions to their issue. Student groups had the choice of topic and project format (visual displays, presentations [TED Talk], website, and documentaries). Each group presented their project to OHS junior and senior judges who placed in previous World Savvy Regional Festivals. Awards were given to the top 10 projects. Great work, eighth-grade students! Thank you to eighth-grade social studies teachers Mr. Bryan Buzard and Mr. Jay Nelson for their guidance and encouragement through this effort.



Imagination Fair at Schumann Elementary

Earlier this month, 156 second-grade students at Orono Schumann Elementary participated in the annual Imagination Fair! Thank you to students and families for an *amazing* collection of creative and inspired passion projects that were all completed outside school hours. Thank you to organizer and educator Ms. Jane Smith for her guidance, to Jamie Jeska for the incredible entrance to the gym, and to Katie Phillips for working alongside Ms. Smith to make this year's fair a resounding success. And, of course, to Dr. Adam Lamparske (aka, Willy Wonka) for supporting this world of pure imagination. Well done!



Orono Spartan spring sports updates from Activities Director Paul Brunner on Facebook and Instagram

Solar Boat Achievements

The Orono Middle School Solar Boat teams had another successful year at the Regatta held May 18 at Lake Riley. Of the 14 teams competing, Orono Middle School was represented by three. 21 students—along with their siblings, parents, and grandparents—enjoyed the beautiful day. Congratulations for exhibiting such great teamwork, engineering skills, and character! Students had great fun and made lifelong memories. Here are the results:

The Experimental Class team
First Place Finish
Boat name - **OMSGoFast**

Team Members:
Noah Clausen
Asher Johnson
Rylan Jorgensen
Quinn Kennedy
Caleb Lasser
Ryan Loop
Solomon Lyngstad
Jack McKeand
Bennett Sherck
Ben Van De Ven

Student Class team
First Place Finish
Boat Name - **Sumo Sailor**

Team Members:
Alexander Knorp
Sullivan Oberg
Dalton Rahn
Nicholas Schmit
Logan Swanson
Maxwell Zjawiony

Student Class team
Third Place Finish
Boat Name - **Thingymajiggy**

Team Members:
Nea Clausen
Ava Kohout
Audrey Meneses
Lydia Sponsler
not pictured: Lydia Haislet



Orono Wellbeing Expo

I am thrilled to report that we had an **outstanding** turnout for the third annual Community Wellness Expo on May 2. Orono Community Education staff estimate that more than **850 community members** came together to learn about well-being resources, participate in service activities, enjoy a meal, and pet the llamas. Thank you to:

- Community Education Director Tiffany Clifton and **the entire team** at Orono Community Education
- Ms. Kristin Nafstad
- Our parent organizations—PTO, OMSPA & SPA
- Rotary Club of Orono for serving ice cream
- Orono art teachers who organized the sale of Empty Bowls that netted more than \$2,200 for local food shelves
- Special thanks to the 55 community organizations who registered to participate!

To learn even more about this successful event, please see the [Orono Community Education Facebook post!](#)

Did you attend the Expo? Click [here](#) to complete the survey!



Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, May 13, 2024 | [Full Recording and Agenda](#)

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Board Reports & Comments | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Academic Calendar – Second Reading | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Contract Signing Authorization, Official Investment Depositories, and Transfer of Funds | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Long Term Facilities Revenue for Orono School District 278 | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Long Term Facilities Revenue for Intermediate School District 287 | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- READ Act Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)

The next meeting of the [Orono School Board](#) is scheduled for Monday, June 10, 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](#).

Prospective School Board Candidate Information Session

Interested in running for School Board this fall? Three seats will be on the ballot November 5, 2024. Please join us to learn more about running for School Board, the governance role, commitment, committees, and more.

- Date and time: Wednesday, May 29 at 6:30 p.m.
- Location: Orono Schools District Office Assembly Room
- Questions? Please email info@orono.k12.mn.us

Calendars & Announcements

- Monday, May 27 is Memorial Day | No School E-12
- Wednesday, May 29 at 6:30 p.m. | Prospective School Board Candidate Information Session in the District Office
- Thursday, May 30 | Orono High School Auditorium
 - OIS Grade 5 Choir Concert, 6 p.m.
 - OMS Choir Concerts: Grade 6 at 6:30 p.m.; Grade 7 at 7 p.m.; Grade 8 & Spartan Singers at 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, June 6 is the last day of school
- Class of 2024 Commencement at 7 p.m. in Pesonen Stadium | LIVESTREAM LINK: <https://youtube.com/live/BKMHZ6ixyGA?feature=share>
- Wednesday, June 19 is Juneteenth | No programming E-12, district offices closed
- [Download the 2024-25 School Year Calendar](#)

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



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