



Orono Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition and a Goal

District 278
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District News • August 30, 2024



From the Superintendent

Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

Welcome to the 2024-25 school year! As we plan and prepare to greet our Spartans next week, our focus remains steadfast on fostering a strong sense of *connectedness* within our school community. It is one of our [Strategic Goals](#). This year, we are committed to *deepening* the bonds between our students, families, and staff, recognizing that these connections are crucial for the academic and social well-being of all.

A sense of belonging is vital not only for our students but also for our parents and guardians. It is through our connections that we create a supportive environment where everyone feels valued, heard, and supported. This year, we encourage you to actively participate in our school community by opting-in to communications from our parent organizations (PTO, OMSPA and SPA; please see links, below). These organizations play a key role in keeping you informed about school programs, events, and opportunities to engage with the school and each other. By staying in touch and getting involved, you help create a network of support that extends beyond the classroom, ensuring that every student and family feels a true sense of belonging.

Wishing you a wonderful first day and start to the year. Together, we can make this school year a time of growth, connection, and shared success!

Warm regards,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Welcome, new staff!

Our annual Workshop Week (August 26-30) was filled with introductions, meetings, mentorship, and onboarding for our newest teachers and staff members. Pictured below are new educators ready to share their expertise with our children. Front row (l-r): Irine Arrieta, Emily Binder, and Ellie Davenport; middle row: Mitchell Benson, Kelly Buchner, Brooke Reimann, Joey Dokken, Carrie Ellis, Megan Benker, Abby Saatzer (K-5 Social Worker), and Shauna Condry (OHS School Counselor); back row: Doug Jetton, Joe Huber, Michelle Tormanen, and Jennifer Oddenino. Welcome to all! *(Not pictured, Shelly Howell and Kathy Mulvihill)*



Stay in Touch with Orono Parent Associations

Please sign up to receive communications from our Orono parent organizations: **PTO**, grades K-5; **OMSPA**, grades 6-8; **SPA**, grades 9-12. Each is a separate group with an email opt-in list and budget for the year. Please sign up and opt in to receive communications from any (or all!) of the three organizations. The communications provide details on activities, dances, class parties, cookie exchange and how parents can support the school and classrooms. The district is not able to share all contact information with parent groups, so please consider opting in! Thank you for your continued support.

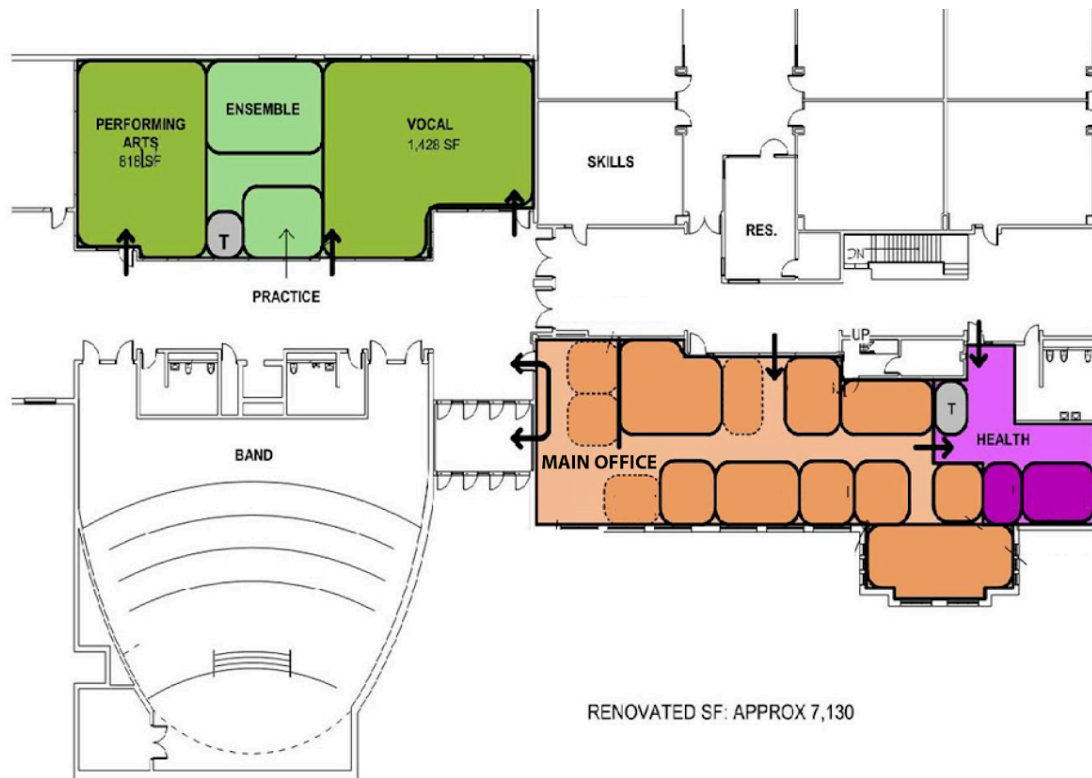
- Opt in for **Kindergarten-Grade 5** - PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)
<https://form.jotform.com/oronomnpto/2024-2025-communication-opt-in-form>
- Sign up for **Grades 6-8** - OMSPA (Orono Middle School Parent Association)
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdLuMJbkIIPvKbj6ehEAuIXO-zBCjGmx6V8IT6n_BLPaniF1g/viewform
- Opt in for **Grades 9-12** - SPA (Spartan Parent Association)
<https://forms.gle/GHapQQRYzbKsccd18>
- Opt in for **Class of 2025 Parents** of Seniors
<https://forms.gle/Dptv12f8xAtYsB4A8>

Orono Middle School Improvements

We are so excited to welcome our students and families to OMS where they will be greeted with a newly renovated/

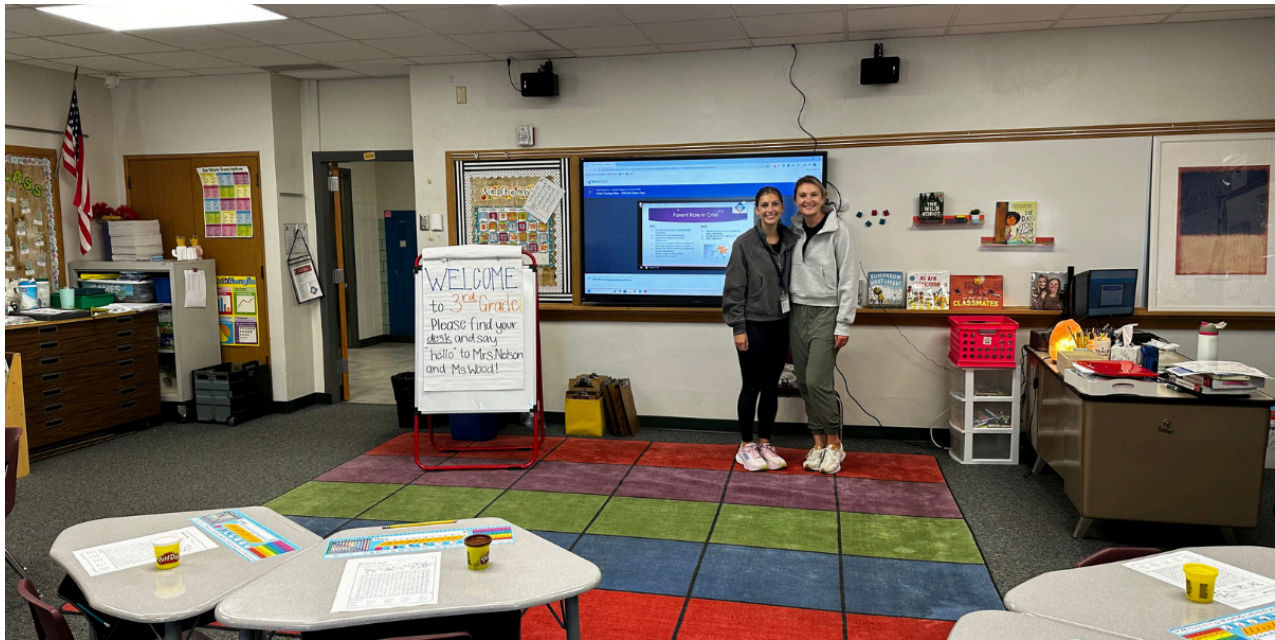
refreshed main office, health office, and performing arts spaces. These improvements reflect our commitment to secure and welcoming entrances and optimal learning environments for our students. The band room has new carpet and acoustic tiles; the performing arts and vocal rooms are where the office used to be! You can learn more by viewing the August 19 "[Construction Update](#)" presented to the School Board.

A huge message of gratitude to everyone involved in the visioning, planning, and execution of these plans. This is a years-long process with most of the physical work taking place over a few short weeks this summer. With such a tight timeline, we anticipate finishing touches to continue throughout the fall. The Open House/Curriculum Night for OMS parents/guardians is scheduled for Thursday, September 5, from 5-7 p.m.



Summer Technology Implementation

Thank you so much to our community for funding the technology levy two years ago. As a reminder, we identified three technology areas of need at that time: safety, infrastructure, and classroom learning. Over the last two years, we upgraded our 911 safety/calling system and replaced the entire wireless infrastructure on campus. This summer we enhanced all of our classroom learning spaces for the benefit of students and staff. Thank you to Sean Beaverson, Orono's Director of Technology, his staff, and our summer Tech Buddy interns who worked tirelessly to ensure we started this school year with reliable, digital learning spaces that are future-ready for our students. You can learn more by viewing Mr. Beaverson's presentation, "[Summer Technology Implementation Update](#)" to the School Board on August 19.



The district's audio/visual refresh this summer included replacement of 15-year-old Smart Boards with new, reliable "plug-and-play" technology monitors. In all, 156 classrooms were updated across five school sites.

Road Construction/Access Update

Thank you for your patience as you have navigated the road construction around campus since June. You can visit the [Hennepin County Transportation website for this project](#) at any time to view updates and changes. As we return to school, please note the following:

- County Road 6 will continue to be a detour route through this fall. As a result of increased traffic during construction, the County has installed an **interim all-way stop** at the intersection of Cty 6 and Old Crystal Bay Road. A school speed zone has also been set in this area with a **reduced speed limit of 45 mph**.
- Willow to Hwy 12 will be open fully to westbound traffic. Old Crystal Bay to our turn into the back side of campus will be open east and west bound. There will be no eastbound traffic between Hwy 12 and our turn into the back side of campus. There is also no eastbound traffic between Willow and Old Crystal Bay.

Please plan for delays as we navigate road construction through the fall. Please allow extra time if you plan to drop off or pick up your child on school days. **Thank you for driving carefully and helping us put safety first!**

Orono Community Education Summer Update

Once again this summer, our main campus and the Discovery Center were a hive of student activity! Orono Community Education reports more than **6,700 registrations** for summer classes, and this doesn't include our Spartan Kids and Discovery Kids child care programs. Wow! Thank you to our full-time staff members for their tireless work and innovative programming and our summer staff (with many Orono alumni!) who made each day fun and engaging for our kids.



Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, August 19, 2024 | [Agenda](#)

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Board Reports & Comments | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Appointment of Election Clerk | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Summer Technology Implementation Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Summer Construction Projects Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)

The next meeting of the [Orono School Board](#) is scheduled for Monday, September 9, 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](#).

Calendars & Announcements

- Monday, September 2 - Labor Day
- Tuesday, September 3 - First Day of School Grades 1-12
- Wednesday, September 4 - First Day of Kindergarten
- Monday, September 9 - First Day of Preschool
- Monday, September 30 - No Preschool; No School K-12, Staff Professional Day

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

