



Orono Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition and a Goal

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District News • October 4, 2024



From the Superintendent

It is important to recognize the significance of the post-high-school admissions process in shaping the future of our students. This journey is not just about selecting a particular experience—college or university, technical school, internship, gap year, etc.—rather, it's a transformative experience that helps students explore their strengths, passions, and aspirations for the future.

In this important phase of the high school process, our OHS school counselors play a pivotal role. They provide a wealth of resources and guidance to help students navigate the complexities of college applications and future planning to ease stress and uncertainty. Counselors collaborate with families and students to make sure they are empowered with the information they need to make informed decisions.

We are committed to providing the tools and support necessary for all students to succeed in their journey. Please see the segment, below, for important future planning resources.

Warm regards,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

Future Planning Resources

Early High School Planning: How Making Choices in 9th and 10th Grade Can Open Doors After High School
Monday, October 7 at 12:00 p.m. | \$60 online course | [9th and 10th Grade Parents Register Here](#)

Junior Parent Webinar: Future Planning and Preparation for the National College Fair
October 14 at 12:00 p.m. | [Junior Parents Register Here](#)

NACAC In-Person College Fair
October 22-23, Minneapolis Convention Center | [Learn more here](#)

[Orono's College and Career Planning Website](#)

[The College Applications Process at Orono High School](#) (recorded webinar)

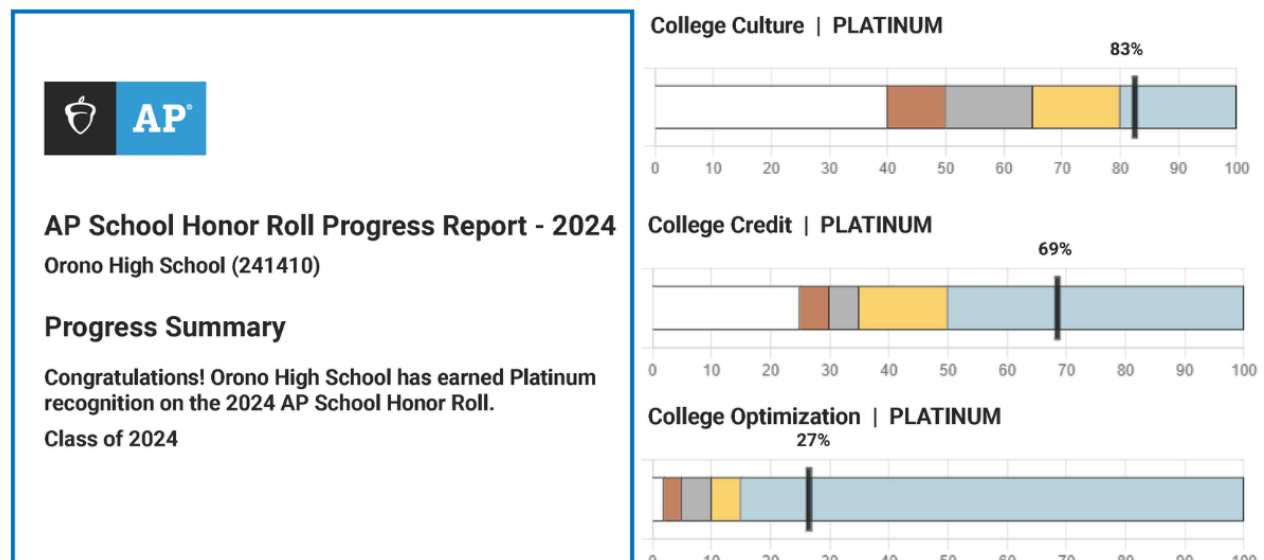
[Highly Selective College Admissions](#) (recorded webinar)

AP Honor Roll - Platinum at All Levels

We are so excited to announce that Orono High School has earned the Platinum designation in the Advanced Placement (AP) School Honor Roll. The charts, below, show that the Class of 2024 exceeded the threshold to earn the Platinum designation at *all levels*. The three areas are: (1) **College Culture**: 83% took an AP exam at any time in high school, regardless of score; (2) **College Credit**: 69% of students scored 3+ on any AP exam in high school; (3) **College Optimization**: Percent of students who took 5 or more exams, where at least 1 exam was taken in 9th or 10th grade.

Opening doors. Orono's AP program opens doors for students by providing access to rigorous, college-preparatory coursework beginning freshman year. All told, OHS offers 23 AP courses. This year, 45% of our freshman class enrolled in AP Human Geography, widely recommended as an introductory-level AP course. When we opened the AP Seminar course to sophomores for 2024-25 (earning English credit), 42% of the class enrolled. When coupled with the AP Research course taken junior or senior year, students are eligible to earn an AP Capstone Diploma.

Thank you to our K-12 teachers, staff, and students for prioritizing academic preparedness at all grade levels. Our students continue to build self-confidence and seek an appropriate level of rigor along their personal pathway. Congratulations!



Celebrating Our National Merit Semifinalists and Commended Scholars

We are proud to announce our Class of 2025 National Merit Scholars: Semifinalists **Jorja Kenworthy** and **Quinn Martini**; and Commended Scholars **Thomas Martin**, **Cameron Oddenino**, **Henry Shafer**, and **Alisha Shah**. Congratulations!

The National Merit Scholarship Program honors students who excel on the PSAT/NMSQT taken in fall of junior year. Semifinalists represent the top 1% of high school seniors nationwide, and advancing to this level places them in the running for National Merit Scholarships. In addition, our Commended Scholars—who rank among the top 3% of test-takers—have

also earned distinguished recognition.

These six students exemplify the values of perseverance, intellectual curiosity, and leadership. Please join us in congratulating these exceptional individuals as they continue to pursue excellence in and out of the classroom. Best wishes to the Class of 2026 who will be taking the PSAT/NMSQT later this month!



Front row (l-r): Cameron Oddenino, Alisha Shah, Thomas Martin, and Jorja Kenworthy
Back row: (l-r) Quinn Martini and Henry Shafer

New Opportunities Focus on STEM in Middle School

In Mr. Doug Jetton's technology education classes at Orono Middle School (OMS), 7th and 8th grade students have been engaged in deep learning this fall. In 8th grade, students have just completed a unit building solar suitcases from kits donated by We Share Solar. Each Solar Suitcase kit includes everything required to build a stand-alone, 12-volt DC solar power system including step-by-step instructions. The Solar Suitcase project will be repeated each quarter as students rotate through their exploratory courses. On October 1, Ms. Gigi Goldman, co-founder of We Share Solar, visited the classroom and brought additional perspective to the project. She shared the history of the organization whose mission was to light women's clinics to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improve health outcomes. Later, the organization added an education focus to help students gain the light they need after sundown to study; in particular, for mandatory high school entrance exams.

One solar suitcase, generously funded by the [Orono Foundation for Education](#), will be built in December 2024 through OMS WIN (What I Need) time. Students will self-select to spend their WIN time building the Suitcase that will be deployed to a refugee camp in Africa next year.

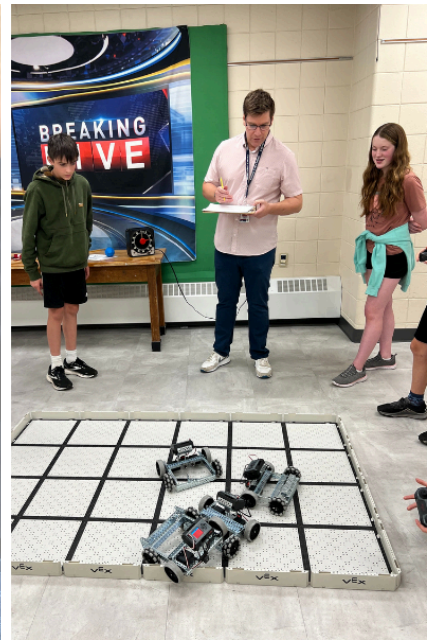
During this unit, students learned about solar and renewable energy, circuitry, service learning, geography, global issues, and the barriers to learning experienced by students their very own age. We hope that OMS students will have the chance to connect with the African students who receive their Solar Suitcase.



Vex Robots Compete at OMS

Our OMS 7th-graders have been flexing their STEM muscles this quarter by learning to build, program and compete with their VEX robots. Through an incredible donation from the [Orono Foundation for Education](#), teams of students are designing and building remote-controlled Vex robots, then learning the rules of First Robotics' competition through their instructor, Technology Teacher Doug Jetton. In addition to building their skills in programming, they are honing their skills in problem-solving, perseverance, teamwork, and leadership. Nice work, 7th-graders!

High School Robotics Team Forming Now. If your high-school-age student is interested in Robotics, please attend the information meeting on Tuesday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the Orono Activities Center Classroom #28. Coach Perry Haislet and Ms. Lundsgaard have details to share on this exciting opportunity!



Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, September 23, 2024 | [Agenda](#)

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Board Reports & Comments | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Navigating the College Admissions Landscape | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Preliminary Year-end Financial Results | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Preliminary Levy Certification | [Watch the Presentation](#)

Monday, September 9, 2024 | [Agenda](#)

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Board Reports & Comments | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Presentation of the Check from Orono Foundation | [Watch the Presentation](#)
- Community Education Update | [Watch the Presentation](#)

The next meeting of the Orono School Board is scheduled for Monday, October 14, 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](#).

Calendar

- October 14-16 - National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week
- October 16 - Unity Day: Wear Orange or your BE KIND t-shirt!
- October 17-18 - MEA state teacher convention - No School E-12
- November 8 - Professional Day - No School E-12
- November 11 - Community Veterans Day program from 8:45-9:30 a.m. in the Orono High School gymnasium

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



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