

ORONO SCHOOLS

TODAY



December 2024

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Orono Community,

This newsletter honors our students and staff for their outstanding achievements. Whether it's in the classroom, on the field, or in the community, their dedication to academic excellence and exemplary character is evident.

Our students' understanding of the pillars of character—trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship—combined with the rigorous coursework they've embraced, shows just how committed they are to growing as well-rounded individuals prepared for the future.

As a district we are also committed to continuous improvement across all grades and programs, from Early



Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

Learning to Transition. Through the work of our Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), we are regularly analyzing data, assessing instructional practices, and identifying areas where we can make meaningful changes to boost student learning. The ILTs play a critical role in ensuring that we are constantly refining our approaches to meet our students' evolving needs.

Our targeted interventions, tutoring programs, and ongoing curriculum alignment with state standards further supports students as they work to achieve proficiency and academic success.

To our families with school-age children: I want to emphasize the importance of participating in standardized tests this year. These assessments provide valuable insights into our students' proficiency and progress. I encourage you to prioritize participation as these assessments help us tailor our instruction to meet the diverse needs of every student.

Let's continue to work together to support our students in reaching their full potential. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

2025-2026 ENROLLMENT

**New residents in the district?
Incoming K-12 students?**
Contact Us Today!

Considering Open Enrollment?
Applications Due January 15, 2025

LEARN
MORE



Visit our website:
www.oronoschools.org/enroll

Contact us:
enrollment@orono.k12.mn.us
telephone: 952-449-8312

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Orono High School Achievement

Advanced Placement (AP)


“AP for All” encourages all Orono High School students to complete at least one AP course during high school.


AP Exams & Enrollment	2021	2022	2023	2024	AP Awards	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of students tested	450	388	421	454	AP Scholar	66	79	70	74
Number of exams administered	899	772	810	855	AP Scholar with Honor	38	40	28	36
Percent of exams resulting in a score of 3+	79%	83%	79%	82%	AP Scholar with Distinction	68	68	74	55
Percent of graduating class taking and passing at least one AP exam	64%	65%	66%	69%	Total AP Scholars	172	187	172	165*
Percent of graduating class completing at least one AP course	80%	81%	86%	84%	<i>*Does not include AP Capstone</i>				

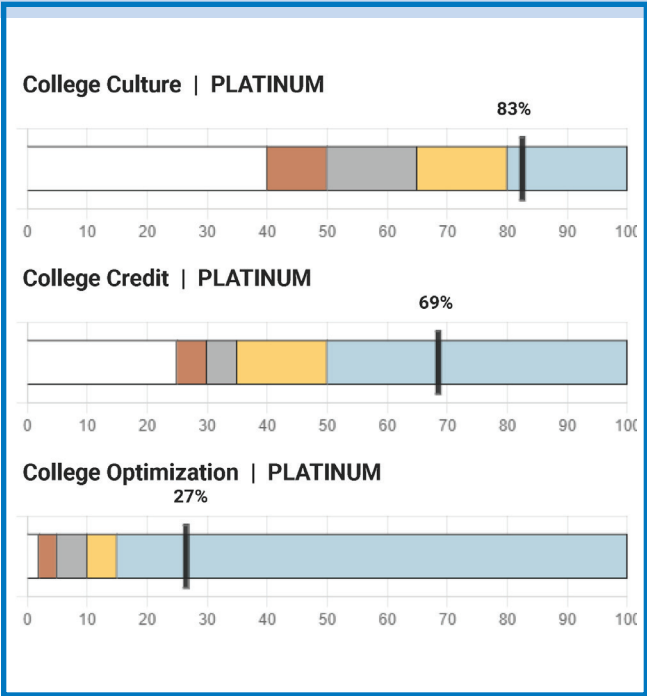
Orono High School recently restructured its AP program, providing earlier access to AP courses. This year, 45% of Orono’s freshman class enrolled in AP Human Geography, widely recommended as an introductory-level AP course. When OHS opened the AP Seminar course to sophomores for 2024-25 (earning English 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.

AP SCHOOL HONOR ROLL

For the second consecutive year of the new Advanced Placement (AP) School Honor Roll Program, Orono High School met or exceeded three criteria—college culture, credit, and optimization—to earn **Platinum level** in the Advanced Placement (AP) School Honor Roll.



AP School Honor Roll
2024




- ➔ **COLLEGE CULTURE**
Students taking at least one AP exam in high school, regardless of score.
- ➔ **COLLEGE CREDIT**
Students earning an exam score of 3 or higher on one or more exams.
- ➔ **COLLEGE OPTIMIZATION**
Early access to AP courses: optimization is based on the percent of students in the graduating class who took five or more AP exams in high school, where *at least one exam was taken in 9th or 10th grade.*

Class of 2024 Graduation Rate • 99.5%

College & Career Ready

College-level opportunities in high school equip students with advanced skills, knowledge, and experiences that prepare them for the rigor of higher education and the demands of the modern workforce.

91%
of the Class of 2024
enrolled in a
college
university
two-year college
or technical school

College Admissions Fast Facts:

- 91% matriculation
- 71% overall acceptance rate
- 24% applied to at least one highly selective college

Highly Selective Admissions:

Boston College, Carnegie Mellon, Dartmouth, Grinnell, Harvard, Notre Dame, Reed, Smith, Tufts, Vanderbilt, Villanova, West Point, Yale, and various Honors programs

Class of 2024 Top Choices

- University of St. Thomas
- University of Minnesota
- University of Wisconsin - Madison
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- University of Kansas
- University of Iowa

College-level Experiences and Opportunities to Earn Credit	Class of 2024
OHS Dual Enrollment (College Accounting, Computer Applications for College, Project Lead the Way pre-engineering)	21%
OHS Advanced Placement (AP) (23 courses)	84%
Hennepin Technical College	8%
PSEO - Full time	3%
PSEO - Part time	7%
Total percent of class taking courses with the potential to earn college credit	90% (unduplicated)

ACT [®] 89% of graduates tested	
ACT	Middle 50%-ile: Top 100
English	24-33
Math	25-31
Reading	28-34
Science Reasoning	26-32
Composite	26-31
Minnesota Composite	21 (69% tested)
National Composite	21



These students from the Class of 2025 scored among the nation's best on the Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) taken in fall of junior year. The top 1% in the nation are named National Merit Semifinalists; generally, the top 2-3% of PSAT scorers receive Commended Scholar status. These students were recognized by the School Board in November 2024.



National Merit Semifinalists
Jorja Kenworthy and Quinn Martini

National Merit Commended Scholars:
Thomas Martin, Cameron Oddenino, Henry Shafer, and Alisha Shah

An amazing fall in Orono!



Girls Cross Country - Section 3rd Place
Jocie Hallen, State Qualifier



"Anastasia" Outstanding Spotlight



OHS Marching Band - Impressive



Girls Tennis - Conference Champs

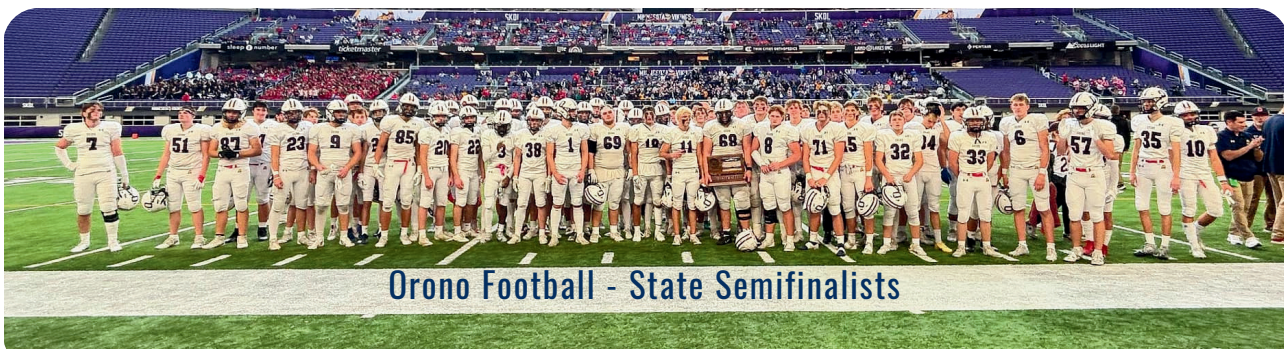
A Place to Belong



Girls Swimming & Diving -



Girls Volleyball - Great Season



Orono Football - State Semifinalists





Awards



Debate Returns to OHS!
Not pictured, Dylan Rutherford



Homecoming Performance!

g and Thrive



MSHSL State Champions!



OHS Choir - Talent & Tradition

95% OHS student participation in
arts · activities · athletics



Girls Soccer - State 4th Place



Boys Cross Country State 6th Place
Owen Chapman, 3rd Place; Gabe Hallen, 13th Place



Boys Soccer - State 4th Place

Welcome Changes at the Middle School

Orono Schools remains deeply committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students, staff, and community members while also fostering a welcoming atmosphere for all who walk through our doors.

This summer, we undertook a major reconstruction of our middle school entrance to enhance both security and hospitality. The new design includes secure entrances that provide better control over building access. Our reconfigured office spaces not only provide appropriate work areas for administration and counseling teams, but a direct view of the parking lot and main entrances. These changes further strengthen our security measures by allowing staff to monitor the flow of visitors in real time.

Our revamped lobby area supports our district's strategic goal of fostering connectedness. The newly designed, welcoming lobby entrance and desk areas now serve as a warm, inviting space where guests, students, and families can feel at ease.

In addition to these enhancements, we were excited for our students to start school this fall with enhanced performing arts spaces that reflect our commitment to enriching the student experience through the arts including band, choir, and theater.

At OMS, the Link, and our elementary buildings, crews also installed replacement HVAC systems that are improving air quality and comfort.

We want to extend our gratitude to Orono's Business Services department that oversaw facilities and finance, buildings and grounds, and the multitude of contractors who spent the summer bringing our dreams and plans to life. Many years of thoughtful planning and resource management made these improvements possible. Thanks to everyone's hard work, we are able to offer a safer, more secure, and more welcoming space for all.



Sally Nichols (l) and Lisa Krebsbach welcome students, families, and guests in the newly remodeled reception area at Orono Middle School.

Proficiency Based on Multiple Measures of Success

New analysis of MCA scores, ACT exam scores, and course grades offers a complete picture

In today's educational landscape, the measurement of student proficiency extends beyond a single standardized test. In our state, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) are administered periodically to help measure student progress toward meeting state academic standards. The MCAs provide valuable data, but they are just one piece of the puzzle.

An holistic approach to measuring growth. Orono Schools embraces an holistic approach to measuring student proficiency, relying on multiple measures of success to understand a student's progress and help determine appropriate academic pathways.

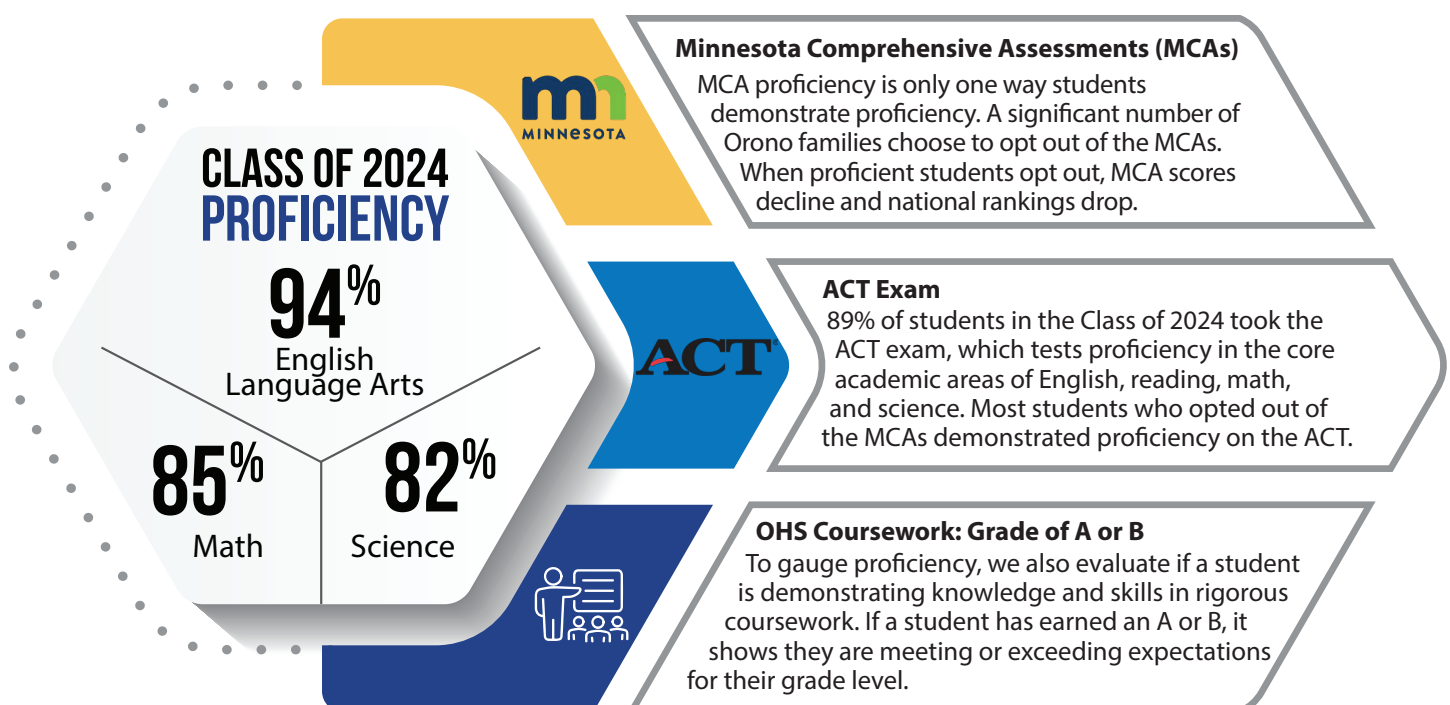
MCA opt-outs impact score reports. A statistically significant number of Orono families choose to opt out of the MCAs. When they do, district proficiency percentages decline. In our June 2024 newsletter to the community, we shared that our Class of 2025 opt-out percentage for **MCA math** (taken junior year) was nearly 31%. We understand students and families are choosing to prioritize their time preparing for more rigorous coursework and national exams.

Impact on national rankings. In previous years, Orono High School (OHS) has ranked #1 among traditional high

schools in Minnesota. In 2024, the ranking fell to #5 among traditional high schools. When you compare OHS to other neighboring schools, Orono outpaces others on nearly all other criteria; however, the proficiency data on standardized tests lowers the high school's national ranking.



Ensuring all students are on track for success. Orono is committed to ensuring that all students are on track for success, regardless of their participation in state testing. By evaluating multiple measures, we create a balanced view of student achievement that reflects their day-to-day learning and readiness for future challenges. This approach supports our mission to foster academic growth and to tailor pathways for all students, empowering them to reach their full potential. Ultimately, our focus remains on creating a well-rounded and fair evaluation system, while also respecting family choice.





Orono Public Schools, ISD #278
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STEM Opportunity Shines a Light

In Mr. Doug Jetton's technology education classes at Orono Middle School (OMS), eighth-grade students have been engaged in deep learning this fall. They recently completed a unit building Solar Suitcases from kits donated by We Share Solar. Each Solar Suitcase 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.

In early October, 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.

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.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Orono Foundation for Education (oronofoundation.org), one solar suitcase will be built in March 2025 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. Mr. Jetton is actively seeking eighth-grade students to volunteer for a number of experiential leadership roles for this project. Please check in with him at OMS!