"I Believe in You" Video Release • Homecoming Recap • School Board Highlights



Update from the Superintendent
Dr. Kristine Flesher

September 24, 2025

Dear Families and Staff,

As we move through this busy and exciting fall, I am grateful for the energy, creativity, and dedication I see throughout our schools. This month, we are proud to share a very special passion project, "I Believe in You." Born from a simple but powerful idea, this video highlights the deep connections between staff and students and reminds us how important it is to hear those words of encouragement. You'll find the full story in this newsletter.

We also just wrapped up an early but spirited Homecoming! Thank you to the many staff, students, families, and community members who made the week such a success, despite the weather challenges. From the parade and pep fest to the football game and dance, Homecoming was a true celebration of Orono spirit.

Finally, a reminder that **Monday, September 29, is a Professional Day**. There is no school for students in grades E–12.

Thank you for your continued partnership in making Orono a place where every student feels known, supported, and inspired.

Warm regards,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

"I Believe in You" Project

Connectedness is at the heart of Orono Schools. Connectedness is critically important for our children and is a strategic goal in Orono Schools. Research on student achievement and school safety consistently shows that when students feel a strong sense of belonging, they not only achieve more but are also safer, healthier, and more hopeful. When caring adults speak life and belief into children, it has a profound and lasting impact.

Over the past year, we have been implementing strategies to strengthen connection and belonging for every student. One of these efforts is the **"I Believe in You" project**; and today we are proud to share the very first video from this initiative. While the video features only a few students, it models the many moments of encouragement we want every child to experience each day.

Our strategic goal is clear: at Orono, every student should feel known, valued, and inspired to see a bright future ahead. We invite you to watch this heartfelt video, celebrate the spirit of connectedness that defines Orono Schools, and consider how every adult in our community can positively impact our children.



Homecoming 2025 Brings Orono Together

Last week, Orono celebrated Homecoming with a full slate of beloved traditions and new memories. Despite the rain, the parade went on, giving us the chance to cheer for our first responders, students, community leaders, and alumni.

Thanks to the flexibility of our staff and families, the tailgate was successfully moved indoors. We are especially grateful to the Orono Foundation for Education, the Orono Student Senate, and OFE's School-Year Sponsors for hosting this free community event. Attendance exceeded expectations and may have even surpassed last year's crowd!

The week also included the annual Promising and Distinguished Alumni Dinner, where honorees reflected on the lasting influence of Orono teachers, staff, and coaches. It was an inspiring evening that underscored the power of education and connection.

Friday night brought another highlight as the Orono Football team defeated Mound Westonka 37–0, keeping the anchor for the 33rd straight year despite rain and weather delays. Congratulations to our players and coaches on this exciting Homecoming win! A heartfelt thank you to our amazing Marching Band and Dance Team for lifting spirits with a wonderful halftime performance, even in the pouring rain!

Adding to the celebration, the Class of 2000 marked its reunion by joining the parade with OFE. It was a joy to welcome them back to campus! We hope you made many Homecoming memories last week, too.



In Case You Missed It... Parent Associations Launch New Communication Opt-In & Directory

Our parent associations and Foundation—PTO, OMSPA, SPA, and the Orono Foundation for Education—are off to a strong start this school year, bringing families together and supporting our schools through fundraising, events, volunteer opportunities, and community-building efforts.

For the first time ever, the Orono Foundation for Education and our parent associations are partnering on one streamlined communication opt-in process and a free online parent directory. By registering, families will be automatically opted in to receive updates from their school's parent association (you'll only receive messages relevant to your student's school) as well as the Foundation. The online directory will also make it easier than ever for families to connect with each other across our school community. Please take a moment to opt-in today!

Opt-In for Parent Association Communication Today!



Important Dates

- September 29 - Professional day, No school E-12
- October 16-17 - State teacher convention (MEA), No School E-12
- October 19-25 - CHARACTER COUNTS! week
- November 7 - E-12 Professional Day, No School E-12

Please see the Calendars page on the Orono Schools website for more information including the 2025-26 academic calendar.

Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, September 22, 2025 | Agenda

- Superintendent's "Report on Excellence" | Watch the Presentation
- Board Members' Questions and Comments | Watch the Presentation
- Sharing Excellence - ISTE Presenters | Watch the Presentation
- Preliminary Year-End Financial Results | Watch the Presentation
- Preliminary Levy Certification | Watch the Presentation

Monday, September 8, 2025 | Agenda

- Superintendent's "Report on Excellence" | Watch the Presentation
- Board Members' Questions and Comments | Watch the Presentation
- Presentation of the Check from Orono Foundation for Education | Watch the Presentation
- Community Education Update | Watch the Presentation

The next meeting of the Orono School Board is scheduled for Monday, October 13, 2025, at 7 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. Public comment begins at 7 p.m. To register, please visit the School Board Public Comment webpage.