

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ORONO
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 278
HELD JANUARY 14, 2026
DISTRICT OFFICE ASSEMBLY ROOM - 685 N OLD CRYSTAL BAY RD, LONG LAKE MN

Present: Laura Wallander, Sarah Borchers, Todd Madson, Wendy Lundsgaard, Gavin Tempero, Kristine Flesher.

Participating Remotely: Timothy Usset. Board Member Usset attended the meeting remotely while out of town for military training in Colorado.

Absent: none.

Board members hosted a championship recognition and reception on Monday, January 12, 2026, honoring the Orono High School football team's Class AAAA State Championship, and the girls' swim and dive team for earning the True Team State Championship. The recognition was originally scheduled to precede the January 12 Board meeting, which was subsequently rescheduled to January 14, 2026, due to the lack of a quorum.

1. Community Members' Questions and Comments

No members of the community addressed the board.

2. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Orono Independent School District No. 278 was held on Monday, January 14, 2026, and called to order at 7:00 PM by Sarah Borchers, acting Chair.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Election of School Board Officers

Acting Board Chair Sarah Borchers presided over the annual election of School Board officers for the 2026 calendar year and opened the floor for nominations for each position.

Chair

Nomination of Sarah Borchers by Lundsgaard. No additional nominations. Sarah Borchers elected as Chair by acclamation.

Vice Chair

Nomination of Todd Madson by Borchers. No additional nominations. Todd Madson elected as Vice Chair by acclamation.

Treasurer

Nomination of Wendy Lundsgaard by Madson. No additional nominations. Wendy Lundsgaard elected as Treasurer by acclamation.

Clerk

Nomination of Laura Wallander by Borchers. No additional nominations. Laura Wallander elected as Clerk by acclamation.

5. Set Salaries of the School Board Clerk and Treasurer

The Board approved setting the compensation for the School Board Clerk and School Board Treasurer at \$0 or the minimum required by law, as set by state statute.

Motion: Wallander

Second: Usset

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye

Wallander – aye

Borchers – aye

Madson – aye

Lundsgaard – aye

Tempero - aye

6. Consideration of the Agenda

No request was made to modify the agenda.

7. Consent Agenda

Motion: Madson

Second: Wallander

Roll Call Vote: Approved - 5 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention

Usset – abstain

Wallander – aye

Borchers – aye

Madson – aye

Lundsgaard – aye

Tempero - aye

The Consent Agenda was approved as follows:

- Approved Minutes from the Regular Meeting held December 8, 2025

- Approved the appointment of Owen Dailey, full-time Long-Term Substitute Band Teacher at Orono High School, tentatively effective January 15, 2026, through April 6, 2026.
- Approved the leave of absence for Jennifer Runck, full-time Band Teacher at Orono High School, tentatively effective January 15, 2026, through April 6, 2026.
- Approved the leave of absence for Amy Weatherly, full-time Seventh Grade Science Teacher at Orono Middle School, effective December 18, 2025, through January 11, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Shelley Perkins, full-time District Office Receptionist & HR Assistant at Orono District Office, effective December 8, 2025.
- Approved the appointment of Stephanie Klaers, part-time District Office Receptionist & HR Assistant at Orono High School District Office, effective January 9, 2026.
- Approved the leave of absence for Tammy Schroeder, full-time Special Education Paraeducator at Orono Intermediate School, effective January 9, 2026, through January 23, 2026.
- Approved the appointment of Nicholas Elsenpeter, seasonal part-time AC Monitor at Orono Activity Center, effective December 29, 2025, through February 22, 2026.
- Approved the resignation of Megan Wilson, full-time Early Childhood Student Support Specialist, effective January 16, 2026.
- Approved the Resignation Agreement and Release of All Claims with Max Olsen, Manager at Orono Activities Center.
- Accepted Donations Totalling: \$16,224.28
- Approved Collateral
- Approved Treasurer's Reports for November 2025
- Approved Electronic Fund Transfers for November 2025
- Approved Bill Vouchers: 323369-323657, 2008-2017, EP Register: 903253-903271, EFT Vouchers: 314-317, 6656-6663, and Capital One items: 53504-53546

8. – Superintendent's Report on Excellence

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Flesher reported on recent student accomplishments, activities, athletics, and academic recognitions across the district.

DECA Recognition

- Orono DECA earned *Thrive Level Chapter Campaign Recognition* for the 2025–26 school year, one of the highest honors awarded nationally and achieved by approximately 6% of DECA chapters.

- The recognition reflects exceptional leadership, community engagement, innovation, entrepreneurship, and promotion.
- Students will be recognized at the DECA International Career Development Conference in Atlanta this spring.
- Appreciation was extended to DECA advisor Joseph Huber.

Youth in Government

- Forty-seven students in grades 8–12 participated in the YMCA Youth in Government 2026 program.
- Students debated legislation, passed proposals, and presented court cases.
- Superintendent Flesher thanked advisor Genna Torney, chaperones Stephanie Klaers, Joe Klaers, Kelley Kell, Hayley Brenna-Katterhagen, and AmeriCorps Promise Fellows Francisco Manzano Mier and Lexi Ostvig.
- Student leadership roles and recognitions included:
 - Simon Forbes and Keagan Klaers – Lieutenant Governor’s Cabinet
 - Ella Palm – Floor Leader, Knutson Senate; elected President of the Knutson Senate for next year
 - Oliver Bertram – Assistant Floor Leader, Humphrey House; Servant Leader Award recipient
 - Ava Kissner – Administrative Assistant, Humphrey House; Servant Leader Award recipient
 - Jane Stavitski – Administrative Assistant, Myers House
 - Lily DuBord – Trial Court Judge
 - Hannah Ferber – Lobbyist
 - Peter Gagne – Media Reporter
 - Kira Haglin and Winnie Yanish – Outstanding Delegate Award recipients

Fine Arts and Activities

- A choir concert was held and described as a successful event.
- Robotics officially launched its new season, with the SpartoBots continuing their mission to inspire students through STEM, innovation, and teamwork.

Athletics Highlights

- Boys' Hockey won two consecutive games, including a section rivalry win over Westonka.
- Girls' Hockey earned two wins in their last three games, including a historic program victory over Benilde-St. Margaret's.
- Girls' Basketball achieved a seven-game winning streak and earned the No. 1 state ranking in Class 3A.
 - Maya Moore scored 51 points against Benilde-St. Margaret's, setting a new single-game scoring record.
- Boys' Basketball earned a conference win over Bloomington Jefferson.
- Dance competed at the Edina Invitational, with Jazz placing fourth and Kick placing fifth.
- Boys' Swim and Dive remained undefeated in dual meets and is currently ranked fourth.
- Nordic Ski competed at the Mesabi East Invitational at Giants Ridge.
 - Connor Loop earned a third-place finish.
- Alpine Ski achieved strong results:
 - Boys' Alpine Ski Team earned a first-place team finish, sweeping the podium at Buck Hill with Kinzer (1st), Tulkki (2nd), and Monaco (3rd).
 - Girls' Alpine Ski Team also earned a first-place team finish, led by Ava Tulkki and Brooke Tulkki, both placing in the top ten individually.

- Wrestling competed at the Stewartville Invitational with podium finishes by:
 - Brett Kiecker (1st)
 - Tae Reidy (3rd)
 - Lucy Bullemer (3rd)
 - Alec Peterson (3rd)
 - Sutton Williams (4th)
 - Bennett Williams (4th)

Advanced Placement Recognition

- Orono High School was again named an *AP Honor Roll Platinum Level* school based on 2024-25 results.
- Over 80% of the Class of 2026 completed at least one AP course.
- 76% of students earned AP exam scores of three or higher, exceeding the 50% threshold.
- 31% of students took five or more AP exams, including at least one in grades 9 or 10, surpassing the 15% benchmark.
- Superintendent Flesher thanked teachers, counselors, administrators, students, and families for their continued commitment to AP access and achievement.

9. – Board Members' Questions and Comments Facilities & Finance Committee Meeting Update –

Committee Chair Todd Madson reported that the Facilities and Finance Committee met the previous week for a brief but consequential meeting. The committee discussed parking lot and tuckpointing project bids, both of which are part of the district's ongoing building and grounds restoration programs. These bids are scheduled for board action at the current meeting.

Mr. Madson noted that the district received a strong number of competitive bids, which is favorable to the district. He credited district staff and the district office for their strategic

planning related to project scope and timing, emphasizing that this work contributed significantly to the quality and competitiveness of the bids received.

The committee also discussed the recent water leak. Mr. Madson commended the district's crisis management response, noting the high level of professionalism and coordination demonstrated. He shared that the district's effective collaboration with outside partners contributed to the school being returned to full operation quickly and expressed appreciation for the district's efforts on behalf of the community.

Policy Committee Meeting Update -

Chair Borchers reported that the Policy Committee reviewed policies presented at the meeting. Superintendent Usset noted that policies brought forward for first reading continue to be discussed in detail, including consultation with legal counsel when needed, and that committee discussions remain active and productive.

Timothy Usset -

Orono Action / Coalition / Negotiations Report:

Superintendent Usset reported that Orono Action has met and is continuing work on guiding principles, which will be brought to the Board at a later date. He also shared that he attended a recent Coalition executive committee meeting and noted that negotiations are ongoing, with progress continuing.

Laura Wallander -

Teacher Meet and Confer / Community Education / Discovery Center / Curriculum & Accountability Report:

Board Member Wallander reported on several meetings held prior to the winter break. She shared that district administration met with the Teacher Meet and Confer group to review norms, address transportation improvements, and discuss new issues raised by Discovery Center staff now included in the teacher contract. She noted that bus timing concerns have improved and that a clearer process is being developed for reviewing proposed teacher-led committees.

Ms. Wallander also reported on meetings of the Community Education Advisory Council and the Discovery Center Parent Advisory Council, highlighting strong participation, high registration demand for community education programs, and upcoming events. She further shared updates from the Curriculum and Accountability Committee, including discussions related to future changes to the high school registration guide and a system review of student information and learning platforms to ensure effective integration and use.

Todd Madson -

PTO Report:

Board Member Madson reported on a recent PTO meeting and shared that the annual Runathon fundraiser is underway, with fundraising and donations now open.

Wendy Lundsgaard -

AMSD Report:

Board Member Lundsgaard reported attending an AMSD Board meeting virtually. She highlighted student presentations from Minnetonka Public Schools on Minnesota education funding and a presentation from the Minnesota Department of Education reviewing student survey data. Key findings included positive trends in student sense of belonging and mental health, with areas of concern noted in social media use, sleep, and physical activity.

Gavin Tempero -
nothing to report

Sarah Borchers -
nothing to report

10. - Old Business

10. A - Policy Review (Second Reading)

The Board approved Policies 512, 514, and 515 following a second reading.

1. Policy 512: School-Sponsored Student Publications and Activities
2. Policy 514: Bullying Prohibition
3. Policy 515: Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records

Motion: Wallander

Second: Tempero

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye

Wallander - aye

Borchers - aye

Madson - aye

Lundsgaard - aye

Tempero - aye

10. B - Other Old Business as Necessary

No other old business was brought forward.

11. – New Business

11. A – Designation/Approval

1. Official Local Depositories

The Board approved designating the following as official depositories for the District's regular funds: MidCountry Bank, Bank of Maple Plain, MN Trust, MN School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus, and Pershing LLC (Ehlers). The Board further authorized the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer to open or continue accounts with these institutions and to execute and deliver signature cards and agreements on behalf of the Board, including the authority to endorse, negotiate, or deposit any funds or instruments payable to the District.

Motion: Wallander

Second: Madson

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye

Wallander – aye

Borchers – aye

Madson – aye

Lundsgaard – aye

Tempero - aye

2. Official Investment Depositories and Transfer of Funds

The Board approved the following investment depositories and authorized Director of Business Services Nick Taintor and District Controller Rachel McQuiston to transfer funds among these financial institutions for investment purposes:

(1) Wells Fargo Bank

(2) US Bank

(3) Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus

(4) MidCountry Bank

(5) Bank of Maple Plain

(6) PMA Financial Network, Inc./MN Trust

- (7) Capital One Bank
- (8) Pershing LLC

Motion: Madson
Second: Lundsgaard
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye
Wallander - aye
Borchers - aye
Madson - aye
Lundsgaard - aye
Tempero - aye

3. Official Publication

The Board of Education approved the Laker Pioneer as the District's official publication.

Motion: Wallander
Second: Usset
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye
Wallander - aye
Borchers - aye
Madson - aye
Lundsgaard - aye
Tempero - aye

4. Legal Counsel

The Board of Education approved the firm of Squires, Waldspurger, & Mace P.A. as the District's legal counsel.

Motion: Lundsgaard
Second: Tempero
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye

Wallander - aye
Borchers - aye
Madson - aye
Lundsgaard - aye
Tempero - aye

5. Office of the Clerk

The Board of Education approved the Orono District Office at 685 Old Crystal Bay Rd N., Long Lake, MN as the official office site of the Board of Education clerk.

Motion: Wallander
Second: Madson
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye
Wallander - aye
Borchers - aye
Madson - aye
Lundsgaard - aye
Tempero - aye

6. Renewal of Surety Bonds or Equivalent

The Board of Education approved the renewal of surety bonds or equivalent for all employees.

Motion: Lundsgaard
Second: Madson
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye
Wallander - aye
Borchers - aye
Madson - aye
Lundsgaard - aye
Tempero - aye

7. School Auditor

The Orono Board of Education approved the firm of LB Carlson as the District's auditor.

Motion: Madson

Second: Tempero

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye

Wallander - aye

Borchers - aye

Madson - aye

Lundsgaard - aye

Tempero - aye

8. Contract Signing Authorization

The Board approved authorization for Superintendent Kristine Flesher or Director of Business Services Nick Taintor to lease, purchase, and contract for goods and services within the approved budget, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 123B.52, subdivision 2, to allow for timely business transactions.

Motion: Lundsgaard

Second: Madson

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset - aye

Wallander - aye

Borchers - aye

Madson - aye

Lundsgaard - aye

Tempero - aye

9. Staffing Resolution

The Board adopted a resolution directing District administration to evaluate and make recommendations regarding potential increases and/or reductions in programs and

positions for the 2026–27 school year due to financial limitations, program revisions, and changing student enrollment.

Motion: Wallander

Second: Tempero

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye

Wallander – aye

Borchers – aye

Madson – aye

Lundsgaard – aye

Tempero - aye

10. Financial Advisor

The Orono Board of Education approved the firm of Ehlers, Inc. as the District's financial advisor.

Motion: Madson

Second: Wallander

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye

Wallander – aye

Borchers – aye

Madson – aye

Lundsgaard – aye

Tempero - aye

11. Architect and Engineer

The Orono Board of Education approved the firm of Wold Architects and Engineers as the District's architect and engineer of record.

Motion: Tempero

Second: Madson

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye

Wallander - aye
Borchers - aye
Madson - aye
Lundsgaard - aye
Tempero - aye

11. B - Committee Appointments

The Board of Education approved the following appointments as presented:

Committee Name	Board Representative(s)
Board Committees	
Board Policy	Sarah Borchers, Todd Madson, open
Co-Curricular	Laura Wallander, Gavin Tempero
Facilities and Finance	Sarah Borchers, Todd Madson, Timothy Usset
Negotiations	Laura Wallander, Wendy Lundsgaard, Timothy Usset
Orono Action Steering Committee	Laura Wallander, Wendy Lundsgaard, Timothy Usset
Board Assignments / Liaison Work	
AMSD Board (Association of Metropolitan School Districts)	Wendy Lundsgaard, Tim Usset (Alternate)
Community Education Advisory Council	Laura Wallander, Todd Madson
Curriculum & Accountability Council	Laura Wallander, Wendy Lundsgaard
ECFE Advisory Committee (Early Childhood Family Education)	Laura Wallander, Wendy Lundsgaard
Brightworks! (Formerly ECSU)	Gavin Tempero
Intermediate District #287	Leslie Locke
Middle School Parent Association	Wendy Lundsgaard
MN State High School League (MSHSL)	Laura Wallander
MSBA (MN School Boards Association) Local Legislative Liaison	Wendy Lundsgaard, Timothy Usset (Alternate)
The Orono Coalition	Timothy Usset
Orono Foundation for Education	Sarah Borchers, Gavin Tempero
Orono Healthy Youth	Gavin Tempero, Timothy Usset
Orono Ice Arena Board	Laura Wallander
Parent Teacher Organization	Todd Madson
Spartan Parent Association	Sarah Borchers
Special Education Parent Partnership Committee (SEPPC)	Todd Madson, Sarah Borchers (Alternate)
Staff Development	Gavin Tempero, Timothy Usset
Teacher Meet and Confer	Laura Wallander, Sarah Borchers
Community Liaisons	
Independence	Timothy Usset
Long Lake	Gavin Tempero
Maple Plain	Wendy Lundsgaard
Medina	Sarah Borchers
Minnetonka Beach	Laura Wallander
Orono	Todd Madson

Motion: Wallander

Second: Madson

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye
Wallander – aye
Borchers – aye
Madson – aye
Lundsgaard – aye
Tempero - aye

11. C - 2026-2027 School Board Meeting Dates

The Board conducted the first reading of the proposed board meeting dates for 2026-27. No action was taken; a second reading and approval will occur at the January 26 meeting.

11.D – Approve Construction Bids for Summer Projects

1. The Board approved the low base bid of \$714,701 from Minnesota Roadways Co. for the 2026 Parking Lot Improvement project.

Motion: Madson
Second: Tempero
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye
Wallander – aye
Borchers – aye
Madson – aye
Lundsgaard – aye
Tempero - aye

2. The Board approved the low base bid of \$88,643 from Ram Construction Services for the 2026 Tuckpointing Building Repairs project.

Motion: Tempero
Second: Wallander
Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye
Wallander – aye
Borchers – aye
Madson – aye
Lundsgaard – aye
Tempero - aye

11. E – Policy Review (First Reading)

The Board conducted the first reading of the following policies as part of the established three-year policy review cycle:

1. Policy 516: Student Medication and Telehealth
2. Policy 516.5: Overdose Medication
3. Policy 517: Student Recruiting
4. Policy 518: DNR/DNI Orders
5. Policy 519: Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies
6. Policy 520: Student Surveys
7. Policy 521: Student Disability Nondiscrimination

A second reading and recommendation for approval will be scheduled for the January 26 meeting.

11. F – Other New Business as Necessary

No other New Business was brought forward.

12. Informational Items

Chair Borchers noted that the January enrollment numbers were included in the Board packet.

The next Regular School Board Meeting will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the District Office Assembly Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Motion: Wallander

Second: Madson

Roll Call Vote: Approved 6-0

Usset – aye

Wallander – aye

Borchers – aye

Madson – aye

Lundsgaard – aye

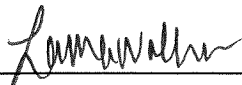
Tempero - aye

Portions of this document were prepared with assistance from AI-based summarization software and reviewed by district staff for accuracy.

Due to a technical issue with the main camera, the meeting was recorded using alternate recording methods.



Sarah Borchers, *Chair*



Laura Wallander, *Clerk*