

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF ORONO
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 278
HELD ON FEBRUARY 23, 2026
DISTRICT OFFICE ASSEMBLY ROOM | 685 OLD CRYSTAL BAY RD N, LONG LAKE MN 55356

Present: Sarah Borchers, Wendy Lundsgaard, Gavin Tempero, Timothy Usset, Kristine Flesher

Absent: Todd Madson, Laura Wallander

Before the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, board chair Borchers, along with board members Lundsgaard and Usset, hosted Coffee & Conversation with community members.

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Orono Independent School District No. 278 was held on Monday, February 23, 2026, and called to order by Board Chair Sarah Borchers at 7:00 PM.

3. - Consideration of the Agenda

Chair Borchers asked for a motion to move Item 8A to be next on the agenda.

Motion: Lundsgaard

Second: Usset

Vote: Approved - 4 in favor, 0 against.

8.A. - Schumann Elementary Flood Response Team Recognition

The Board recognized staff and students who responded to the water leak during Winter Break and whose work was credited with Schumann being able to open as scheduled after Winter Break. See who was recognized at 0:46 [youtube.com/@oronoschoolboard2971](https://www.youtube.com/@oronoschoolboard2971) Meeting 2/23/26

4. - Consent Agenda

- Approved Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on February 9, 2026
- Approved the retirement of Catherine Christensen, part-time Project Coordinator for Orono Healthy Youth and Orono Coalition at Orono Public Schools, effective January 30, 2026.
- Accepted Donations Totaling: \$12,102.39
- Approved the Treasurer's Report for January 2026
- Approved the Electronic Fund Transfers for January 2026
- Approved Voucher and Payment Registers, as presented:
 - o Bill Voucher Register: Nos. 320863-321071
 - o EP Register: Nos. 902745-902760
 - o EFT Voucher: No. 293
 - o Capital One Transaction Register: Nos. 53119-53148

Motion: Usset

Second: Tempero

Vote: Approved - 4 in favor, 0 against.

5. – Superintendent’s Report on Excellence

Visual Arts Recognition

Superintendent Flesher recognized the following district artists whose work was selected for the Metro West Conference Visual Arts Exhibition. The artwork is on display at Normandale Community College through March 3, 2026.

- Selected Artists: Riley Corcoran, Daria Mayo, Morgan Mulcahy, Seth Noel, Nick Nye, Diana Oliinyk, Lydia Richardson, Annalisa Tedlund, Jordan Flescher, and Aya Hanson.
- Special Mention: Gratitude was extended to Art Instructor Dr. Shelagh Gamble and Lyssa Campbell for their support of the arts.

7th Grade History Day

Dr. Flesher then celebrated the 7th-grade History Day showcase centered on the theme *Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History*. A record number of projects advanced to the regional competition in March across several categories:

- Individual & Group Exhibits: Lissie Toppin, Reagan Lillejord, Juliette Moon, Grace Matilla, Tatum Lubeck, Keira Reeder, Eme Howe, Rose Fedie, Natalie Totman, Alyssa Schultz, Quinn Rogers, Evelyn Verplank, Tyler Tate, Ried Windmiller, Gabi Vassar, Nikki Bocharnikov, Emma Barlage, and Eve Hall.
- Documentary & Performance: Henrik Nohre, Tye Bernard, Grace Leaman, Isla Meier, Robbie Crawford, Nathan Ratcliffe, Tommy Menozzi, Harold Campbell, Madhavan Kandanchatha, Violet Wooley, and Peighton Healy.
- Website & Research Papers: Emma Etzel, James Vossen, Everleigh Stofferahn, Penny Sipe, Harlee Robillard, Phemie Etzel, Jack Nelson, Wes Madson, Levi Merrifield, Leo Phillips, Libby Lundell, Rette Anderson, Weston Hedeem, Sam Mattson, Freya Blessing, Brody Markus, Tallulah Dowden, Lauren Korbmacher, Henry Masica, Nathan Baird, Riley Staloch, and John Kline.

Speech Team Success

The Orono Speech Team earned 3rd place overall in the large team category at the 4th annual Wild Thing Tournament. This is the first time in seven years the team has qualified for the large team division.

- Top Finishers: Ariana Langdon and Harrison Stenback (1st, Duo Interpretation); Sophie Middleton (1st, Extemporaneous Reading); Lila D’Alessandro (2nd, Extemporaneous Reading); Maya Haugen (2nd, Storytelling); Ariana Langdon (3rd, Discussion); and Harrison Stenback (3rd, Prose Reading)
- Acknowledgement to Barb Shofner for guiding and encouraging students.

Academic Enrichment: 5th Grade Cave Experience

Dr. Flesher highlighted an interdisciplinary "Escape Room" activity for 5th graders based on the book *All Thirteen*. Students applied critical thinking and teamwork in a simulated cave setting.

- Acknowledgments: Kelly Buckner (Design), Bailey Nett (Instructional Support), Jamie Jessica (Volunteer), and the PTO for providing equipment.
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Athletic Achievements & State Qualifiers

Dr. Flesher continued with several significant updates in **Spartan Athletics**:

- Alpine & Nordic Skiing: Danny Kinzer finished 4th at State (Alpine). The Boys' Nordic team finished 2nd at the State Championship.
- Basketball: The Girls' team went undefeated in conference play to win the Conference Championship for the second consecutive year. The Boys' team is currently advancing in postseason play.
- Dance Team: The Jazz team earned 3rd place at State, and the Kick team earned 4th place at State.
- Swimming & Diving: The team finished 3rd in Section 2A. Ben Mitchell set a new school record in the 200 IM (1:56.78).
 - *State Qualifiers*: Gideon Fish, Ben Mitchell, Eli Fish, Davis Kelly, Luke Mitchell, Luke Hammer, Jackson Hadley, Bjorn Jaenchen, Ethan Weiss, Henry Parks, and Ty Trok.
- Wrestling: Brett Kiecker won the 2AA 114-pound individual title and qualified for the state tournament.

6. - Board Members' Questions and Comments

Facilities & Finance Committee - Director Usset reported on the committee's discussions regarding the tennis court project and the district's lease levy capacity.

Timothy Usset - Reported that he, Chair Borchers, and Director Lundsgaard attended a professional development morning session featuring Dr. Clay Cook. The presentation focused on the challenges of changing behavior within systems. He highlighted the district's "inspirational" work with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and commended staff engagement in this framework.

Laura Wallander - absent

Todd Madson - absent

Wendy Lundsgaard - Shared feedback from the mid-year community meeting (to be detailed in the board workshop). Legislative Update (MSBA): Noted that this is a policy-focused (non-budget) year at the Capitol. Highlighted the upcoming February 27 Economic Forecast and noted new AI-driven weapons screening and security protocols at the Capitol.

Sarah Borchers - Chair Borchers attended her first meeting of Meet and Confer. Chair Borchers also attended the Orono Foundation for Education (OFE) meeting and announced the new "Soiree" event on May 1, with tickets available after spring break. Lastly, she shared information from the SEPPC meeting, inviting parents to join the Special Education Parent Partnership Committee, emphasizing the value of their shared best practices and summer learning solutions.

Gavin Tempero - no report

7. - Old Business

7. A - Other Old Business as Necessary

No other old business was brought forward.

8. – New Business

Dr. Flesher asked to move item 8C to the next item. One of the presenters for 8B had not arrived.

Motion: Borchers

Second: none

Vote: Approved - 4 in favor, 0 against.

8. C – Schumann Elementary Flood Update

Chad Eischens, Coordinator of Building & Grounds, Adam Lamparske, Principal of Schumann Elementary, and Nick Taintor, Director of Business Services, gave an update on the response, current restoration status, and next steps.

Watch the update at 27:00 youtube.com/@oronoschoolboard2971 Meeting 2/23/26

8.D. – Federal Single Audit Reports – 2024-25

The Board accepted the 2024-25 federal single audit reports and related management letter as submitted by auditors from LB Carlson.

Motion: Usset

Second: Tempero

Vote: Approved - 4 in favor, 0 against.

8. B – AIPAC Compliance

Ms. Katie Yandell, AIPAC Chairperson, Ms. Donna Ostvig, Engagement and Integration Coordinator, Leslie Locke, American Indian Cultural Liaison, presented an overview of AIPAC activities and the annual vote of concurrence.

Watch the report at 50:35 youtube.com/@oronoschoolboard2971 Meeting 2/23/26

8. D - Other New Business as Necessary

No other new business was brought forward.

The next Regular School Board Meeting will be held on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the District Office Assembly Room.

The meeting was adjourned to a work session for a Mid-Year Administrative Update at 8:05 PM

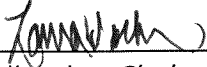
Motion: Usset

Second: Lundsgaard

Vote: Approved - 4 in favor, 0 against.



Sarah Borchers, *Chair*



Laura Wallander, *Clerk*

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

A recording of this meeting is available online on the Orono School Board YouTube channel.