

Update from the Superintendent
Dr. Kristine Flesher

April 15, 2026

Dear Families and Staff,

We have 35 instructional days remaining in the school year. Wow!

Every day counts. This is a focused stretch of the school year. In the coming weeks, students will engage in Advanced Placement and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, alongside continued instruction, projects, and performances that reflect their learning and growth. These days matter because they continue to build on the work already in motion and our students' academic confidence.

Our expectation is steady effort, strong attendance, and support for students as they finish the year with purpose. Classrooms remain active spaces of learning, and students are best served when we maintain consistency and care in these final weeks.

We are grateful for the partnership of families, the dedication of staff, and the commitment of students across our schools. This newsletter is filled with good news and there are more updates to come as we move through April... May... and all the way through June 4. Keep up the amazing work!

Sincerely,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Speaking of Champions...

Last weekend the **Speech team** (a co-op activity with Delano students) traveled to Jordan for the "Last Chance," dinosaur-themed tournament to wrap up their regular season. Congratulations to the team for earning **1st place** in the Large Team division! The Spring Showcase is this Thursday at 6:00

p.m. in the OHS Fenholt Auditorium with the Section Tournament beginning Saturday, April 18 here at home. Good luck to our team! Here are the names and places from the Jordan tournament:

- Ariana Langdon, 1st place, Discussion
- Maya Haugen, 1st place, Storytelling
- Owen Marks, 2nd place, Extemporaneous Speaking
- Ruby Gehrman, 2nd place, Dramatic Interpretation
- Ruby Gehrman and Sophie Middleton, 2nd place, Duo Interpretation
- Valerie Kottemann, 2nd place, Great Speeches
- Lola Lyngstad, 3rd place, Great Speeches
- Maggie Kubista, 4th place, Prose Reading
- Sophie Middleton, 4th place, Extemporaneous Reading
- Owen Marks, 5th place, Impromptu Speaking
- Keagan Klaers, 6th place, Discussion
- Makayla Ressler, 6th place, Prose Reading





Orono Foundation for Education Spartan Soirée! Space is limited and tickets are going fast with VIP tickets over 50% sold out! Don't miss your opportunity to join us. Buy your tickets today! The online auction will be live from Monday, April 27 to Friday, May 1. Great items to bid on and win, all to benefit Orono Schools!

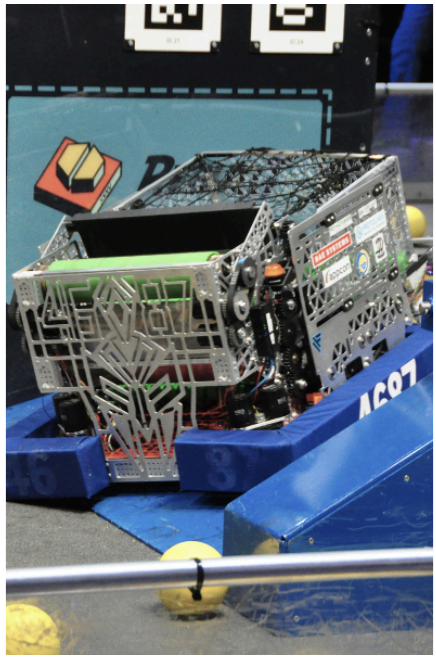
Spartobots Persevere at Granite City Regional

The Orono Schools Robotics Team, Spartobots, overcame early challenges to make their mark at the **Granite City Regional Competition** April 9-11 in St. Cloud. After wiring, programming, and damage repairs, the team rallied—making quick fixes and gaining momentum as the competition progressed.

The team's strong performance caught the attention of scouts and other teams across the field, drawing visitors to their pit to learn more about their robot design and match strategy. Finishing 18th of 51 teams in qualifications, the team was selected by an alliance captain to compete in the elimination rounds—an acknowledgment of the team's performance and potential They went on to battle through playoffs against tough competition.

At the close of competition, the Orono team proudly earned the **Granite City Regional Safety Award** (bottom photo)—a prestigious honor recognizing teams that go beyond simply following rules to actively promote and model a culture of safety. This reflects their leadership, consistency, and commitment to keeping both their team and the broader competition environment safe. Congratulations to the team and coaches on a job well done!








"America, Then and Now"

Orono Schumann Elementary Kindergarten students recently visited the Western Hennepin Pioneer Museum as a culminating experience for their Arts & Letters module, “America, Then and Now.”

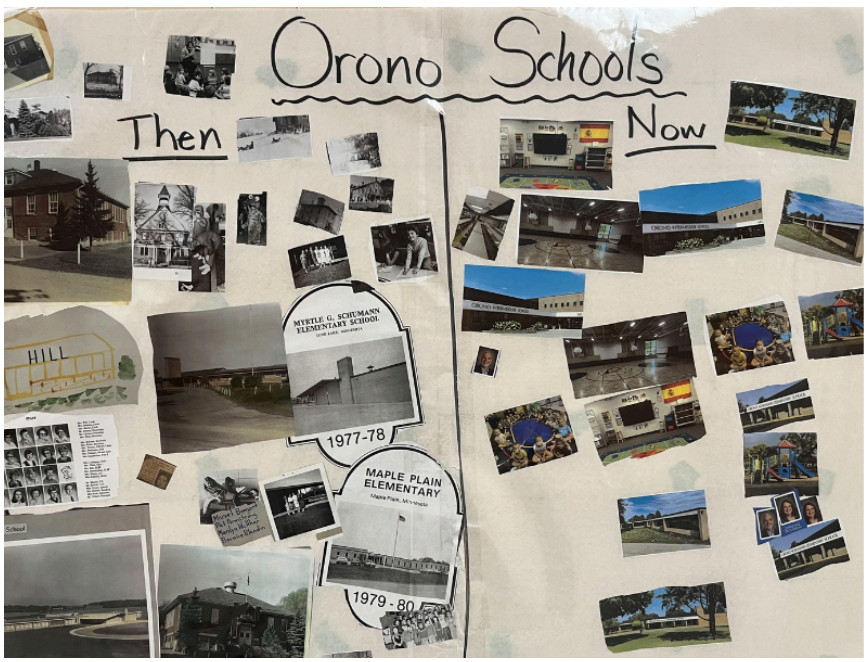
Throughout the unit, students explored the essential question, “How has innovation changed life in America over time?” They studied artifacts, literature, and visual art that showed how daily life has evolved over generations.

During their museum visit, students viewed historical objects up-close and made meaningful connections to the past. One kindergartner shared, “There’s so much to see—we could stay all day!” The Kindergarten staff hope to make this an annual part of this Arts & Letters unit.

Thank you to Mr. Bob Gash, Mr. Kelly Shaughnessy, and museum volunteers who helped students engage in hands-on discovery. If you haven't visited the museum, check it out! Admission is free and the museum is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at 1953 West Wayzata Blvd, Long Lake. https://www.whcpa-museum.org









Outstanding Achievements in Music

We are proud to share that the **Orono Chamber Choir and Orono Treble Choir** both earned Superior (highest) ratings at the MSHSL Large Group Contest held at Delano High School on February 9. The **Orono Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band** also received Superior ratings at the MSHSL Large Group Contest at Westonka High School on February 23.

Several talented student musicians were selected to perform in an **All-State Band Concert**, an honor earned through a competitive recorded audition process. Congratulations to:

- Ezra Cowden – Trumpet
- Kaia Erickson – Clarinet
- Ellis Howe – Euphonium
- Davis Kelly – Percussion
- Jack Munsch – Baritone Sax
- Alivia Uselding – Trombone

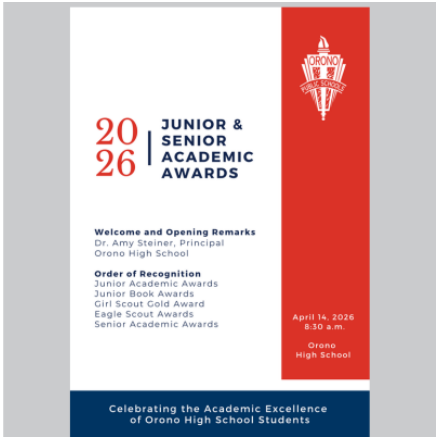
The **MSHSL Band solo/ensemble competition** was held Friday, April 10 with two Orono students participating:

- Senior Elise Meyer, flute, earned a Superior (highest) rating
- Senior Kaia Erickson, clarinet, earned a Superior rating and perfect score!

Congratulations to all our outstanding musicians and their instructors.



Seniors Elise Meyer and Kaia Erickson



Junior & Senior Academic Awards Celebrated

Today, Orono High School seniors, juniors, family members, and guests celebrated the academic achievements of the OHS Classes of 2026 and 2027. You can review the program online.

Seniors

- 155 named Honor Graduates for earning a cumulative GPA of 3.5 after seven semesters
- 93 have earned AP Scholar honors to date*
- 5 awarded AP Capstone Diplomas
- 16 designated AP Capstone Candidates

Juniors

- 123 juniors received an academic award for earning a cumulative GPA of 3.5 after five semesters
- 21 juniors have earned AP Scholar honors to date*

A traditional part of the event is the surprise announcement of our four Junior Book Award honorees. Congratulations to **Sophie Middleton**, Dartmouth; **Ethan Weiss**, Harvard; **Ella Palm**, St.

Lawrence; and **Simon Forbes**, Yale. The Junior Book Awards are in recognition of students' academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to their communities.

**AP Scholar, AP Scholar with Honor, or AP Scholar with Distinction*

Opportunities for Community Connection

April 23-25 - OHS Spring Play "**Blithe Spirit**" | tickets available at https://oronohs.booktix.com
April 27 - Orono Foundation for Education Silent Auction opens | Auction items live April 24
April 30 - Annual **Community Wellness Expo** from 5-7 p.m. at the Orono Activities Center
May 1 - **Spartan Soirée** hosted by the Orono Foundation for Education
May 4 - **OHS Band Concert**, 7 p.m., Wayzata Community Church
May 7-9 - OMS Production, "**Madagascar Jr.**" | tickets on sale at https://oronoce.booktix.com

For sports competitions, please visit our Athletics and Activities calendar.

School Calendar

May 15 - Last Day of ECFE
May 21 - Last Day of Preschool
May 25 - Memorial Day (No School E-12)

Please see the Calendars webpage for more information including the 2025-26 and 2026-27* academic calendars.
**Note that school begins before Labor Day in fall 2026.*

Orono School Board Meeting Highlights

Monday, April 13, 2026 | Agenda

- Superintendent's "Report on Excellence" | Watch the Presentation
- Board Members' Questions and Comments | Watch the Presentation
- Activities & Athletics Update | Watch the Presentation
- ATPPS: Q-Comp Annual Report & Approval | Watch the Presentation

The next meeting of the Orono School Board is scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2026, at 7 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. A Coffee & Conversation session precedes the Board meeting at 6:30 p.m. No registration required.
