

Update from the Superintendent
Dr. Kristine Flesher



June 11, 2026

Dear Orono Families,

Summer is off and running! I waited to send my end-of-year message until today so that I could include results from our spring sports and state-qualifying athletes (read to the end for some amazing news)!

The end of the school year always serves as a reminder that learning is not simply about acquiring knowledge—it is about applying it in meaningful ways. For me, one of the greatest joys of May and June is witnessing the hands-on, experiential learning that brings our academic program to life. Our students embraced new challenges, discovered unexpected interests, and achieved outstanding milestones. Whether through research presentations, artistic performances, capstone projects, competitions, or community service, our students demonstrated a level of confidence and curiosity that will serve them well into the future.

Alongside them, our dedicated staff and coaches model what it means to be lifelong learners, continually refining their practice and pursuing excellence in all they do. While our students enjoy a well-deserved break, many of our educators remain hard at work through summer Community Education programming, professional development opportunities, curriculum design, and thoughtful preparation for the 2026–27 school year.

Thank you for your continued partnership, your valuable feedback, and your unwavering support of the children in our schools. Together, we create a community where students truly thrive, and we are profoundly grateful for the trust you place in us each day.

On behalf of the entire Orono team, I wish you a wonderful, safe, and restorative summer.

Sincerely,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Orono High School | Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

On June 4, we celebrated our graduates in the Class of 2026 as they crossed the stage and joined the proud tradition of Orono alumni.

It was a memorable night, with a quick transition from Pesonen Stadium to the OHS gym due to unexpected severe weather. Thank you to our graduates, staff, families, and guests who maintained a positive spirit and continued the celebration of our seniors inside with meaningful speeches and resounding cheers.

We wish all our graduates happiness, fulfillment, and personal success in the years ahead.

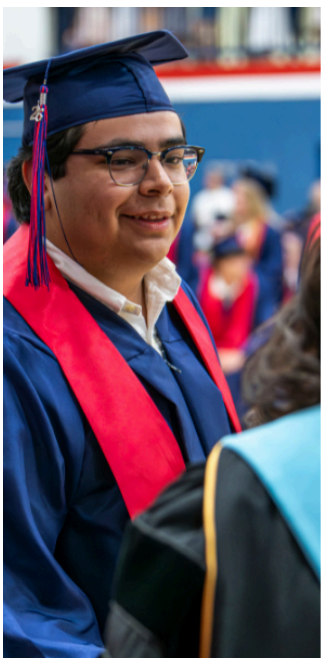
Cooper Shannon Photography Gallery
Download | Commencement Program
Livestream recording from Pesonen Stadium

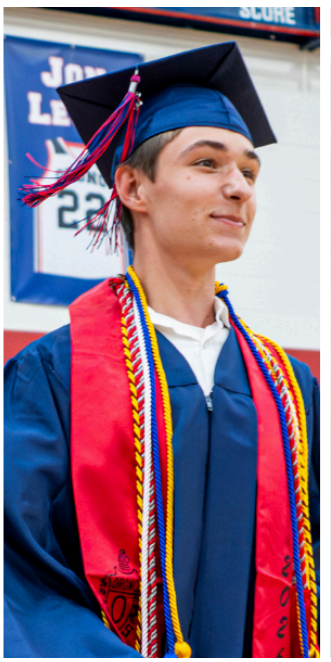
















Orono Schumann Elementary | Kindergarten Graduation

Last week, we were treated to two Kindergarten graduation ceremonies as 189 of our young scholars proudly filed into the Intermediate School gym in their oversized t-shirts, sang a collection of traditional songs, and received diplomas recognizing this important milestone. Congratulations to all!

Thank you to our Kindergarten teachers and Principal Lamparske for helping our students build a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Throughout the year, they developed essential academic skills while also learning how to be caring classmates, confident learners, and members of a connected school community. We look forward to watching their success as first-graders next year!






Class of
2038


Class of
2038











Orono Intermediate School | 5th Grade Graduation & Time Capsules

The last day of elementary school was memorable in so many ways for our fifth-grade students. They began the day with a celebratory, hallway clap-off to cheers and applause from staff and classmates. The students then enjoyed a special breakfast followed by an energetic track-and-field day.
After a catered lunch of Chick-fil-A (thank you for the generous donation, Caleb Lee), families gathered for a graduation ceremony where students received their certificates and celebrated this important milestone.

This year, every fifth-grade class created a time capsule. Working together, they brainstormed items that best represented their school year. Selections included Tech Decks, NeeDoh Nice Cubes, a 6-7 keychain, a headlamp representing their study of “All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys Soccer Team” and related escape room experience, a can of Bubly sparkling water, a nail

from Fort Snelling, puffy stickers, and an orange ribbon in memory of their friend, Weston Paszkiewicz. Each added their personal signature, photo, and letter to their future selves.

The time capsules will be carefully stored and reopened when the students are graduating seniors—a special reminder of the memories, friendships, and experiences that shaped fifth grade at IS.



Senior Showcase

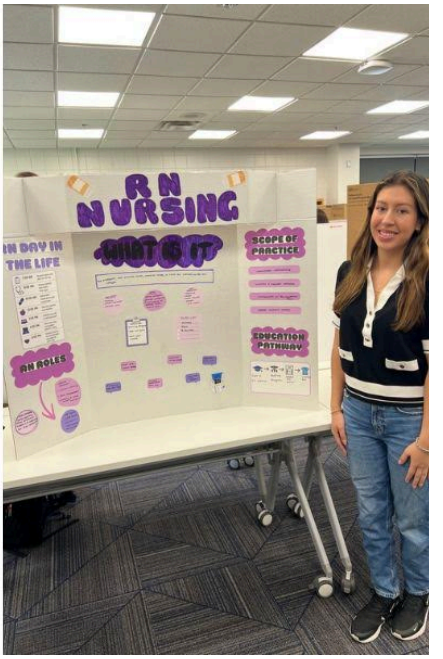
This spring, Orono High School hosted its annual Senior Showcase, highlighting the outstanding work of students participating in Senior Spartan Experience (SSE) or enrolled in AP Research. Visitors had the opportunity to explore student projects, hear about authentic learning experiences, and celebrate the many ways our seniors are applying their knowledge beyond the classroom.

SSE participants shared reflections from their immersive experiences in professional settings, where they gained firsthand exposure to careers and industries aligned with their interests. AP Research students presented the results of yearlong investigations, demonstrating advanced skills in inquiry, analysis, and communication.

The success of SSE depends on the support of local businesses, organizations, and professionals who are willing to mentor students. We are always looking for additional mentors willing to work with our students for 20 hours in May. Serving as a mentor is a meaningful way to help students explore career pathways, develop professional skills, and gain valuable real-world experience. Interested? Join our Mentor Directory by visiting: https://bit.ly/SPARTAN-EXPERIENCE.







8th Grade Capstone Projects

On June 3, Orono Middle School 8th-grade students participated in the 11th annual Capstone Festival. Student groups selected a global issue based on the theme, “Breaking Barriers.” Through their research they developed feasible, sustainable, and innovative solutions to global challenges. Excellent work, students! Groups had the choice of topic and project format (visual display, slideshow presentation, website, and documentary). Thank you to more than 70 Orono High School seniors who volunteered their service hours to assist in judging the projects. And shout-out to our 8th-grade Social Studies teachers, Bryan Buzard and Jay Nelson.









6th Grade Solar Ovens

Our 6th graders took advantage of a warm and sunny day last week to try out their solar ovens. This was an engaging STEM activity that helped students explore renewable energy, heat transfer, and engineering design. Students worked in small groups to build a simple oven using a box, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and black construction paper. The reflective foil directed sunlight into the box, the black paper absorbed heat, and the plastic wrap helped trap warm air inside. Students had good luck making s'mores, baking cookie dough, and dipping strawberries in melted chocolate.







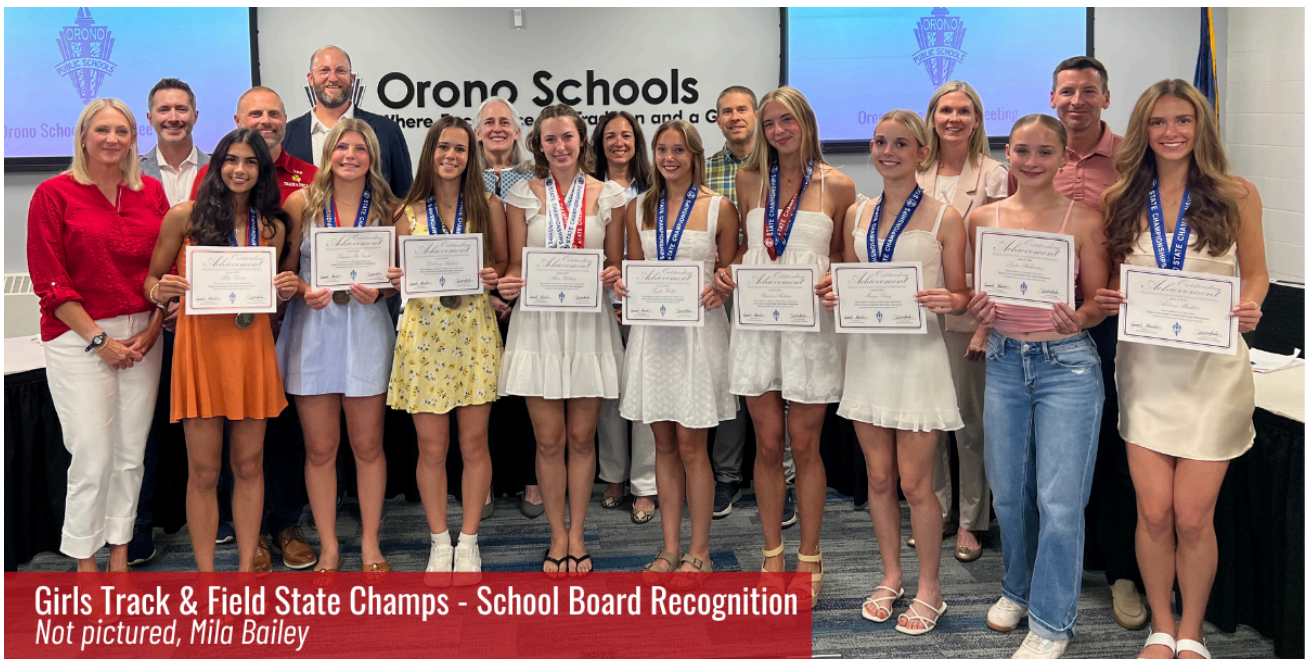
ATHLETICS

The spring season has come to a close with record-breaking achievements and exceptional teamwork. We are so proud of our student athletes, coaches, families, and supporters who helped ensure a memorable experience for all involved.

Girls Track & Field had an outstanding season including True Team Section Champions, True Team State Second Place, Section Championship, and the Class AA **State Championship *for the first time in school history*.** The girls turned in podium finishes in eight different events, highlighted by state titles and multiple new state records in the 4x800 and the 4x100-meter relays. We are so proud of this team! Thank you to our coaches for their guidance, expertise, and support of the team through the post-season. Congratulations to our girls on the following achievements:

- **Ryanne Andreen**
  - State champion, 4 x 800 meter relay
  - 6th place, 800-meter run
  - Competed in the 4 x 400 relay
- **Mila Bailey**
  - State champion, 4 x 100 relay
  - 2nd place, 4 x 200 relay
  - Competed in the 200-meter dash
- **Abby Dasari**
  - State champion, 4 x 100 relay
  - Placed 2nd in the 4 x 200 relay
- **Taydem Ide-Smith**
  - State champion, 4 x 100 relay
  - 2nd place, 4 x 200 relay
- **Maryn Leary**
  - State champion, 4 x 800 meter relay
  - Competed in the 800-meter run
  - Competed in the 4 x 400 meter relay
- **Addison Mushitz**
  - State champion, 4 x 100 relay
- **Lydia Richardson**
  - 3rd place, Triple Jump
  - Competed in the Long Jump
- **Delaney Stephens**
  - State champion, 4 x 800 meter relay
  - 8th place, 1600-meter run
  - Competed in the 4 x 400 meter relay
- **Alivia Uselding**
  - 2nd place, 4 x 200 relay
  - 3rd place, 100-meter hurdles
  - 3rd place, 300-meter hurdles
- **Taylor Walsh**
  - State champion, 4 x 800 meter relay
  - Competed in the 800-meter run
  - Competed in the 4 x 400 meter relay





Girls Track & Field State Champs - School Board Recognition
Not pictured, Mila Bailey

Boys Track and Field earned 2nd place at the Class AA True Team State competition and clinched the **Section Championship** this year. The team finished in 6th place at State with the following medalists. Congratulations to all!

- 1600m - Gabe Hallen (2nd place) and Cooper Munsch (7th place)
- 4x800m Relay - Liam Barkley, Sean Henkelman, Davis Kelly, Sam Chapman (8th place)
- 3200m - Cooper Munsch (6th place)

- Pole Vault - Luke Withrow (2nd place)
- Discus - Nicolas Pasulka (7th place)
- 800m - Gabe Hallen (8th place)

Great end to the 2026 season!



Girls Lacrosse earned the Metro West Conference Championship for the second year in a row. The team finished as Section 2A Runners-Up after losing to Minnetonka in double overtime 15-14. Congratulations on an amazing run! We are proud to announce that **Dylan Collins** was named Ms. Lacrosse, an award given to the most outstanding senior Girls Lacrosse player *in the state*. Shout-out to junior **Layla Nick** who was named *Star Tribune* Player of the Year!





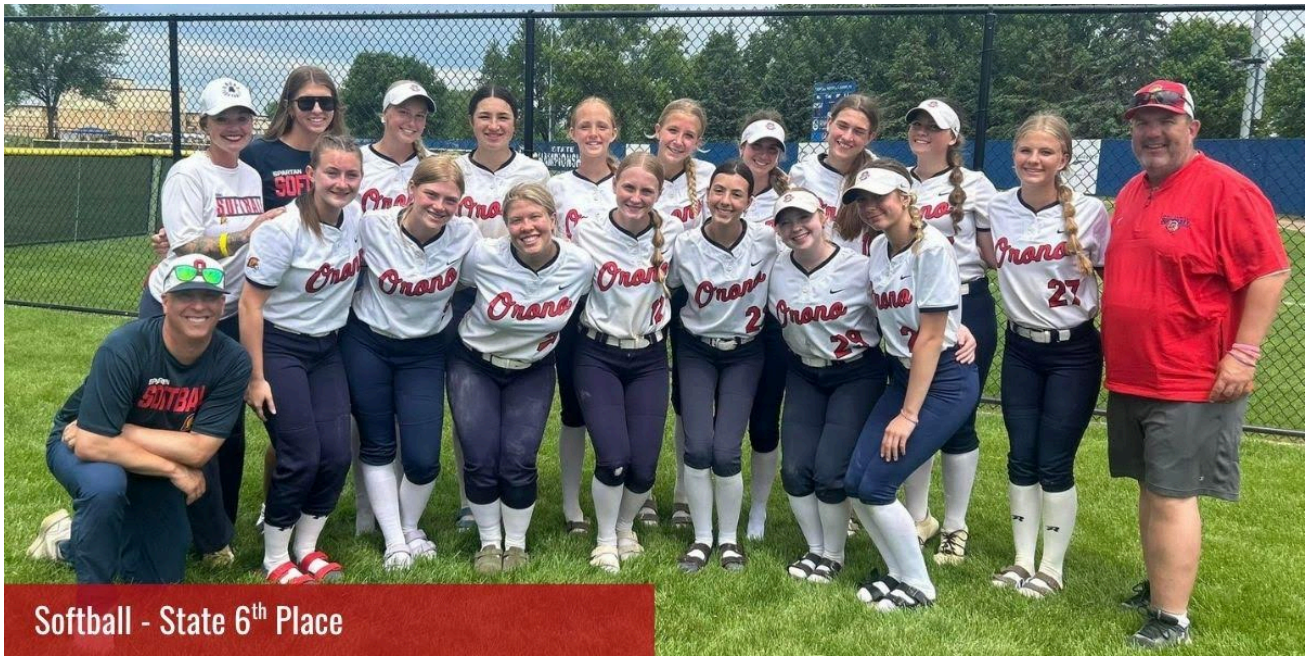
Boys Golf turned in a third-place finish at the State Tournament. Congratulations! Our boys capped off one of the most successful seasons in program history, highlighted by the program's first-ever Metro West Conference Championship, a Section Championship, and a spot on the podium at State.

Senior **Dylan Kringen** fired a two-day total of 143 to earn a tie for 5th place individually! Way to close out your high school career, Dylan!

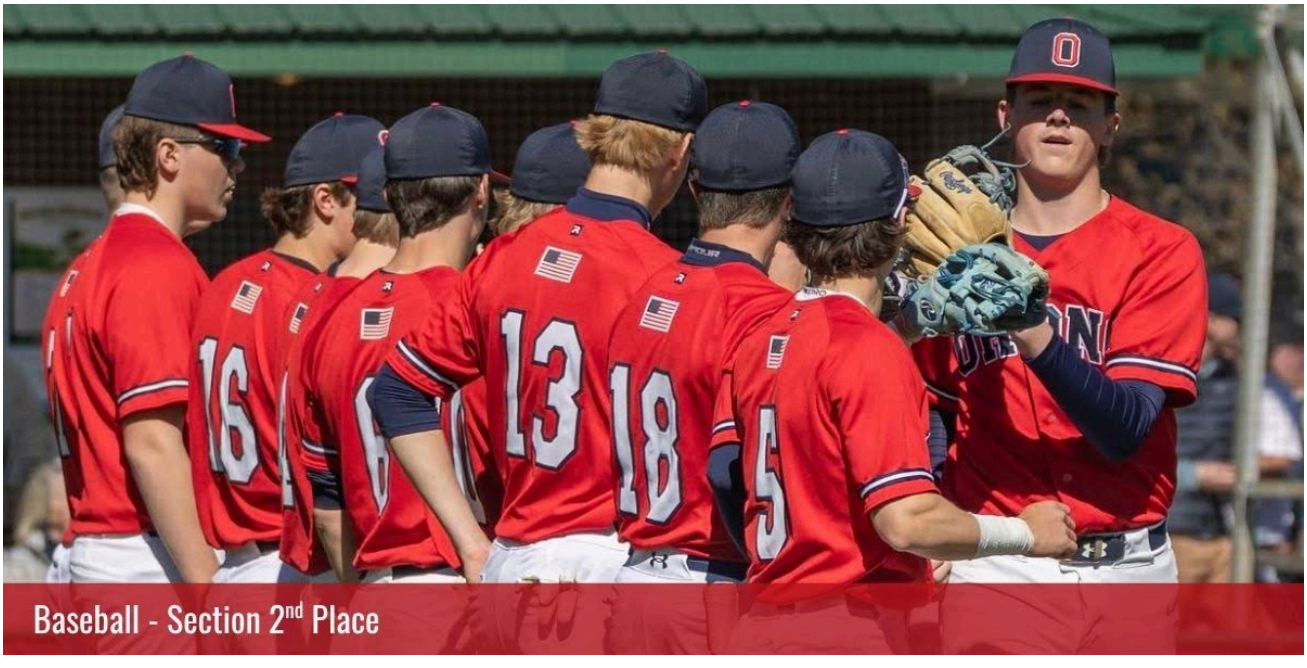


Boys Golf - State Third Place!

Softball won the Section championship and qualified for state ***for the first time since 2014***. The girls won five consecutive elimination games en route to claiming the Section title. Congratulations to our softball team for placing **6th at State**.


Softball - State 6th Place

Baseball finished as **Section Runner-Up**. The boys **won 20 games**, the winningest season in more than a decade. Congratulations on an outstanding season!



Girls Golf finished third in Section competition. Senior **Nora Benson** qualified as an individual for State and finished the State Tournament tied for 30th place. She closed out her high school career with three consecutive State Tournament appearances. Congratulations and all the best to you, Nora!





Boys Tennis had an outstanding season earning the Metro West Conference Championship and finishing as Section Runners-Up. **Max Skanse** and **Anthony Perrill** qualified for State in Doubles and finished in 4th place. Congratulations to these seniors who have contributed so much to the boys tennis team during their high school careers. Best wishes to you both!



Max Skanse & Anthony Perrill



Boys Tennis, Section Runners-Up

Boys Lacrosse had a strong season, and competed in the first round of Section competition. We look forward to watching our returning players next year!



Boys Lacrosse

Boys Volleyball (co-op team with Westonka, Delano, Orono, and Waconia) won Round 1 of the Section tournament 3-0 against United Christian Academy but fell to Eagan in the quarterfinal to end

their season. The momentum keeps building for this MSHSL Boys Volleyball team, now completing its second season. It was great to host home matches at Orono High School this year!



STAFF

We are proud of the following Orono staff members who were recently recognized for excellence. Congratulations to all!

- **Mark Vonder Haar** was named Educator of the Month for May 2026 from the LocoRobo (LocoDrone) company. You can read about his work with our students in the Drone technology course at Orono High School.
- **Ms. Sarah Craig** was awarded Section Coach of the Year by the Minnesota Fastpitch Coaches Association.
- District Nurse **Janet Franzen. MSN, RN, LSN** received the "Sight Saver Award" from the St. Louis Park Lions Club for going above and beyond to serve students. Janet brought the Lions Club to Orono Schools to help screen students' vision. Through these efforts, about 10% of students are referred for vision checks with a provider, which is life-changing for a student. Janet is pictured with Lions Club Co-Director Shari Thurston.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

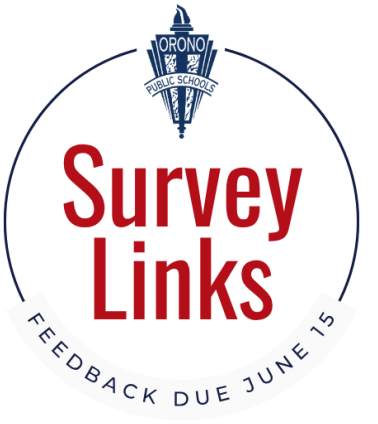
Reminder - 2026 Parent Survey
The parent survey will be open through Monday, June 15. Please take a few minutes to anonymously share feedback on our strategic goals and offer thoughts for the future.

COMPLETE THE 2026 PARENT SURVEY by JUNE 15

Parent Engagement Survey
If you would like to volunteer, join a committee, or explore other ways to get involved, please complete our Parent Engagement survey by Monday, June 15. A staff member will follow up with you in the future.

COMPLETE THE PARENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Thank you for your time!



2026-27 Calendar

Please see the Calendars webpage for the 2026-27 academic calendar. Please note that school begins before Labor Day.

Orono School Board Highlights

June 8, 2026 Regular Meeting | Agenda

- Recognition of Girls Track & Field State Champions | Watch the Presentation
- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | Watch the Presentation
- Board Members' Questions and Comments | Watch the Presentation
- 2026-27 Preliminary Budget Approval | Watch the Presentation
- Curriculum Report/Annual Curriculum Adoption | Watch the Presentation

The next meeting of the Orono School Board is scheduled for Monday, August 17, 2026, at 7 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. A Public Comment session precedes the Board meeting.
