2026-2027





OWATONNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

OWATONNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INSPIRING EXCELLENCE • EVERY LEARNER • EVERY DAY

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year

The Owatonna Public School district employees are energized and eager to inspire excellence to every learner, every day. Thank you for your partnership and continued support of the Owatonna Public Schools. It is our privilege to educate your child.

Best wishes to a successful school year!

Elementary Handbook

The elementary handbook has been written in collaboration with all four elementary schools (Lincoln, McKinley, Washington and Wilson) to provide important information concerning specific rules, policies and procedures related to the safety and operation of our elementary schools. In order for schools to operate safely and efficiently, you and your student(s) must become familiar with and abide by the expectations and rules outlined in this handbook.

2026-2027 Changes in the Elementary Handbook

Changes in the handbook were made to the following pages/sections. Please be sure to review these areas.

- Attendance *(page 5)*
- Behavior *(page 5)*
- Use of Technology *(page 7)*
- Curriculum (page 9)
- Family/Teacher Conferences *(page 10)*
- Wellness *(page 11)*
- Language Access Plan *(page 12)*
- Talent Development (page 13)
- School Age Care (page 15)
- Building Access and Security (page 17)
- Severe Weather & Emergencies (page 19)
- E-Learning (page 20)
- Safety Patrol (page 20)
- Volunteers & Background Checks (page 22)

Specific Elementary Announcements and Updates

For specific announcements, updates and procedures from your neighborhood elementary school, please review your elementary home website and review additional communication from the school by way of email, school newsletters, and social media pages.

Additional ways to stay informed throughout the school year:

- ➔ Read your school and district newsletters sent via email
- ➔ Follow the school district on Facebook and Instagram
- ➔ Attend or watch school board meetings
- ➔ Visit the district website: www.isd761.org

@Owatonna761

The school district provides equal educational opportunity for all students. The school district does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation or age. The school district also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled students. (Policy 102 - Equal Educational Opportunity)

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Elementary Directory

www.isd761.org
Dr. Tammy Champa, Superintendent
District Office: **507-444-8600**

Elementary Office Hours:
7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Transportation Services Liaison: 507-444-8636
SAC/Community Education: 507-444-7900

Lincoln Elementary School

747 Havana Road, Owatonna, MN 55060
Website
Principal: Justin Lang
jlang@isd761.org

School Hours
8:10 a.m.- 2:40 p.m.
Students may enter school at 8:00 a.m.

Main Office	507-444-8100
Attendance Line	507-444-8105
Fax	507-686-6080
School Nurse	507-444-8106
SAC- Lincoln	507-444-8122
Lunch Balance	507-444-8616

McKinley Elementary School

1050 22nd Street NE, Owatonna, MN 55060
Website
Principal: Justin Kiel
jkiel@isd761.org

School Hours
8:10 a.m.- 2:40 p.m.
Students may enter school at 8:00 a.m.

Main Office	507-444-8200
Attendance Line	507-444-8205
Fax	507-686-6104
School Nurse	507-444-8206
SAC- McKinley	507-444-8222
Lunch Balance	507-444-8616

Washington Elementary School

423 14th St NE, Owatonna, MN 55060
Website
Principal: Libby Zeman
ezeman@isd761.org

School Hours
8:10 a.m.- 2:40 p.m.
Students may enter school at 8:00 a.m.

Main Office	507-444-8300
Attendance Line	507-444-8305
Fax	507-686-6107
School Nurse	507-444-8306
SAC- Washington	507-444-8322
Lunch Balance	507-444-8616

Wilson Elementary School

325 Meadow Lane, Owatonna, MN 55060
Website
Principal: Cassie Mitchell
cmitchell@isd761.org

School Hours
8:10 a.m.- 2:40 p.m.
Students may enter school at 8:00 a.m.

Main Office	507-444-8400
Attendance Line	507-444-8405
Fax	507-686-6110
School Nurse	507-444-8406
SAC- Wilson	507-444-8422
Lunch Balance	507-444-8616

OWATONNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2026-2027 Calendar

July

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September

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27	28	29	30			

October

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				1		3
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January

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					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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28	29	30	31			

April

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

May

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

August

- 17-20 - New Teacher Workshop
- 24-27 - Teacher Work Days
- 27 - Parent/Student Information Day at OMS
- 27 - Gr. PK-5 Classroom Connection
- 31 - Gr. 9-12 First day of school
- 31 - Gr. 6 Orientation
- 31- Gr. PK-5 Classroom Connection

September

- 1 - Gr. PK, 1-5 Classroom Connection
- 1 - Gr. 6-8 First Day of School
- 2 - Gr. K-5 First Day of School
- 4 - School Not in Session
- 7 - Labor Day/No School

October

- 2 - Homecoming/2-Hr Early Release
- 15 - MEA/No School
- 16 - MEA/No School
- 30 - End of 1st Quarter

November

- 2 - No School, Teacher Work Day / PD
- 13 - No School, Gr. K-5 Conferences
- 25 - No School
- 26- Thanksgiving Day/District Closed
- 27 - District Closed

December

- 24-31 Winter Break/No School

January

- 1 - Winter Break/No School
- 14 - End of 2nd Quarter
- 15 - No School, Teacher Work Day
- 18 - No School/MLK Day/Staff Development

February

- 12 - No School, Gr. K-5 Conferences / 6-12 Professional Development
- 15 - No School, President's Day

March

- 25 - End of 3rd Quarter
- 26 - No School, Teacher Work Day
- 29-31 - No School/Spring Break

April

- 1-2 - Spring Break
- 30 - No School Grades 9-12 / Big 9 Music

May

- 31 - No School/District Closed

June

- 4 - Last Day of School / 2 Hr. Early Release, Grades 9-12 / Graduation
- 7 - Teacher Work Day
- 8-9 - PLC/Staff Development
- 18 - District Closed

School Not in Session	First/Last Day of School
No School, Gr. K-8	No School, Gr. 9-12
No School, Gr. K-5	Early Release, Gr. 9-12
District Closed, Designated Holiday	

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https://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/yearly-calendar.html

Behavior and Expectations

Our schools utilize a positive approach to behavior where students are explicitly taught the expected behaviors. The expected behaviors are positively reinforced for our students. We will establish a safe learning environment where students have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Our primary goal is to teach the expected behaviors and provide redirection as needed. The following possible responses are used and vary based on severity of the incident as well as repetition of the offense in compliance with Minnesota and federal legislation:

- Restorative Practices
- Loss of privileges
- Parent/guardian conference
- Behavior contract
- Interventions
- Out of school suspension or dismissal for the day (grades 4-5)
- Referral made to outside agency
- Recommended expulsion—referral to the school board recommending the student be expelled from school up to one year. (*Policy 506 - Student Discipline*)

Attendance

When a child is absent from school, please call the attendance line to inform the office prior to the start of school. The call allows us to inform the teacher so plans can be modified in the classroom. It also keeps us current on the childhood illnesses which are affecting our students. If we are not called prior to school regarding your child's absence, the school will contact you. This is an important safety measure to protect our students.

In order to learn, and comply with Minnesota's compulsory instruction laws, students need to have consistent, regular attendance. *(Policy 503 - Student Attendance)* When a child is late for school, they must check in at the office to receive a pass before going to class. Please note any student who arrives after 8:10 am will be marked tardy. Reasonable efforts will be made by the school district to accommodate any student who wishes to be excused from a curricular activity for a religious or cultural observance.

Release of Children During School Hours

If it is necessary to take your child out of school during school hours, you must come to the office to sign out your child. The child will then be called to the office and dismissed from there. Please notify the office if your child is leaving for any reason. No student may be dismissed directly to the authorized adult from the classroom. This applies to the entire school day, including the lunch period. Any missed time away from school will add up for absences.

Restrictive Procedures

Owatonna Public Schools promotes positive approaches to behavioral interventions for all students. When restrictive procedures are employed in an emergency situation with any student, the School District will adhere to the standards and requirements of Minnesota Statutes 125A.094

Restrictive Procedures. Owatonna Public Schools use restrictive procedures in emergency situations. Refer to the district website for building-specific plans. Paper copies are available upon request.

See Also Hazing Prohibition (*Policy 526*) and Staff Notification of Violent Behavior by Students (*Policy 529*)

Harassment and Violence

The school district prohibits all forms of harassment and/or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or disability, and is committed to an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. (*Policy 413 - Harassment and Violence*, *Policy 423 - Employee-Student Relationships*, *Policy 522 - Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedures and Process*)

Bullying

“Bullying” is intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and:

1. an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or
2. materially and substantially interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

The term “bullying” specifically includes cyberbullying, malicious and sadistic conduct, and sexual exploitation.

Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student’s ability to learn and/or a teacher’s ability to educate students in a safe environment. The school district intends to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond to, and to remediate and discipline those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. (*Policy 514 - Bullying Prohibition Policy*)

Electronics

Cell phones, smart watches and other electronic devices are becoming more common with students. We know some families rely on these devices for a variety of reasons. In order to respect

the learning environment at school, we will require that all electronic devices are shut off during the school day, unless being used at a teacher's request. Devices should be left in the student's bag from the time of arrival at school until departure at the end of the day. The school will not be responsible for loss or theft. If a student is using a cell phone or other electronic device during the school day or it creates a disruption, the device will be taken from the student and a parent will be required to pick it up from the school office at their convenience. (*Policy 524 - Internet, Technology, and Personal Electronic Communication Device Acceptable Use and Safety Policy*) See also Social Media Guidelines.

Use of Technology

As a district committed to excellence in education, Owatonna Public Schools prioritizes the safety of students and staff while adapting to the evolving use of technology for teaching, learning, and communication. To support safe, responsible, and appropriate use of digital tools and online environments, all parents/guardians, students, and staff are encouraged to review the district's Internet, Technology, and Personal Electronic Communication Device Acceptable Use and Safety Policy (Policy 524) and the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy (Policy 625).

Dress and Appearance

Students are expected to be dressed appropriately which includes, but is not limited. to the following:

- Clothing appropriate for the weather.
- Clothing that does not create a health or safety hazard.
- Clothing appropriate for the activity (i.e. physical education or the classroom).
- Hats are only allowed in the building with approval from the principal. (*Policy 504 - Student Dress and Appearance*)

Personal Possessions

Lockers and Desks

School lockers/cubbies and desks are provided for the convenience of students and are the property of the school district. Inspection of the locker and/or desk interiors may be conducted by school authorities for any reason, at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. The personal possessions within a school locker may be searched only when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. School authorities must provide notice of the search to the student whose locker was searched as soon as possible after the search of a student's personal possessions unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials. (*Policy 502 - Search of Student Lockers, Desks, Personal Possessions and Student's Person*)

Lost and Found

Each year, clothing and other items are left at school and never claimed. We urge you to mark ALL clothing items with your child's name. Permanent ink and/or tape securely sewn in place are the best methods. Lost articles may be picked up at the school office. Lost and

found items will be donated to charity periodically throughout the year as storage is limited. **ISD 761 is not responsible for any personal items brought from home.**

Buildings and Grounds

Chemical and Tobacco Use

In order to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment, the school district prohibits the use of tobacco, alcohol, toxic substances and controlled substances without a physician's prescription on school grounds. (Policies 417 - Chemical Use and Abuse, 418 - Drug-Free Workplace / Drug-Free School , and 419 -Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices, and Electronic Delivery Devices; Vaping Awareness and Prevention Instruction)

Pest Management

Parents/guardians and school employees may request to be notified prior to pesticide application on school property. Pesticides include chemicals which are used to control insects, weeds, rodents or other pests as defined by the law (M.S. 123B.575, Subd. 9). Pesticides and non-chemical treatments may be used in combination in and around schools for a variety of reasons, including the control of pests which have the potential to bite, sting, spread disease, cause asthma, and/or trigger an allergic reaction. Pesticides may also be used to prevent or control damage to materials within the school building or to the school building itself, or to control pests or weeds that are seen as a nuisance.

To limit the potential pesticide exposure, this school follows safety regulations to ensure pesticides are applied properly. All pesticide products, which are used in and around school buildings, are required to be registered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, school employees and certified and licensed applicators are required by state and federal law to comply with all requirements of the pesticide label, including building sites, application rates, re-entry intervals, posting, use of personal protective equipment, use restrictions, and disposal on the product label.

If you would like to be notified prior to pesticide applications, please contact the Manager of Facilities, Operations and Safety at 507-444-8606.

Pets

In practicing cultural sensitivity, along with many being allergic or fearful of animals as well as the potential for injury, students, families, and staff may not bring animals into our schools or around the outside of schools during the school day or at the start or dismissal of school. It is recognized that service animals are not pets but perform valuable functions and are trained to do important tasks for individuals with disabilities. For more information on Service Animals, please see Policy 535 - Service Animal on School Property.

Curriculum

A curriculum guide for each grade level will be provided to families upon request. These guides contain all of the curriculum information specific to your child's grade level. Curriculum information can also be found on the school district's website.

The school district shall neither promote nor disparage any religious belief or nonbelief. Instead, the school district encourages all students and employees to have appreciation for and tolerance of each other's views. The school district recognizes that one of its educational objectives is to increase its students' knowledge and appreciation of music, art, drama, and literature, which may have had a religious basis or origin as well as a secular importance. The school district supports the inclusion of religious music, art, drama, and literature in the curriculum and in school activities provided it is intrinsic to the learning experience and is presented in an objective manner without sectarian indoctrination. (*Policy 609 - Religion and Religious and Cultural Observances*)

Field Trips

Field trips provide authentic learning experiences for students. There is a permission form that covers all in-town field trips in the annual update. Separate permission forms will be required for all out-of-town field trips. Chaperones will need to have a background check prior to the scheduled trip. (*Policy 610 - Field Trips*)

Assessments

Owatonna Public Schools follows a comprehensive program for student assessment which includes a variety of assessments that serve different purposes and to ultimately improve student learning. Assessment data is an essential component of the student achievement planning process for all levels of the district as well as a key aspect of long range planning.

For more information about district assessments, including information about statewide assessments and options, please visit the school district website or see the appendix of this handbook (www.isd761.org/district-services/teaching-learning/assessments).

Family Communication and Conferences

Classroom Connection

Owatonna Public Schools is committed to creating strong student and family relationships and fostering a positive first experience. Students in grades K-5 will start next school year on Thursday, September 2 to allow time for the family and staff to make a connection.

Before school interviews allow teachers to meet individually for 30 minutes with students and parents before the start of the school year. All students will sign up for an individual 30-minute interview conference time on either Thursday, August 27; Monday, August 31; or Tuesday, September 1.

Students will meet one on one with their teacher to learn more about them and complete some assessments. Parents should complete all of the forms electronically prior to the meeting. Following the teacher meeting, students will stop at stations to complete FASTBridge reading assessment. Students in grades 1 & 4 will also complete their vision and hearing screening. The teachers are looking forward to getting to know your child better at the beginning of the year. Look for an email to be sent to your home mid-August with your child's teacher's name and a link to sign up online for an interview time. Families without internet access should contact your elementary building office.

Family/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are a great opportunity for families to meet with the teacher; students are encouraged to attend. Prior to conference time, parents/guardians will receive information from their school about scheduling a conference with the teacher. One conference per student will be scheduled.

We strive for 100% attendance at our conferences. *MN Statute 181.9412 Subd. 2* allows employed parents to request a leave for school conferences and activities. An employer must grant an employee a leave of up to a total of 16 hours during any 12-month period to attend school conferences or school-related activities related to the employee's child, provided the conferences or school-related activities cannot be scheduled during non-work hours. You must let your employer know in advance and make every effort to schedule the leave so that it disrupts your workplace operations as little as possible. The law does not guarantee that the time off will be paid, but paid vacation or other paid leave time may be used.

Email

All staff have email addresses, which can be found under the District Staff Directory.

Report Cards

Report cards come out three times per year (following second, third and fourth quarters) and provide information about students' progress throughout the year.

Food & Nutrition Services

All students can enjoy a free breakfast and lunch meal provided through the Minnesota Free School Meals Program! All school sites participate in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. For a complete lunch meal, students must take three or more full servings from the five different food groups, and one of the servings must be a fruit or vegetable. One carton of milk is included with each breakfast and lunch meal. Students purchasing a carton of milk with their cold lunch from home or a second milk with their meal will be charged $.55 per carton. To

purchase any additional a la carte food or beverages, students must have prepaid money in their meal account. Visit our webpage for more information on payments, application for meal benefits, menus, pricing, special dietary needs, etc. Call 507-444-8616 with questions. We look forward to serving your children! (*Policy 534 - School Meals Policy*)

If you'd like to join your child for lunch, we ask that you call the office by 9:30 the day of so we can plan for seating and meals. Adult meal prices can be found on the school district website: www.isd761.org/district-services/nutrition-services/pricespayments. Please bring your ID with you.

Wellness

The school district promotes wellness through food and nutrition services as well as with physical activity. For healthy snack ideas and resources, please visit the school district website: isd761.org/district-services/wellness (*Policy 533 - Wellness*)

Health Services

To enable the school to give your child proper health care, the school nurse's office welcomes any health communications or questions related to the health of your child. A health office nurse is in the office each school day.

Should My Child Stay Home?

Here are some guidelines to help you make that decision:

- If a child has a fever of 100 or more, the child should stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without fever-reducing medicine.
- If a child has vomited or had diarrhea, the child should stay home until 24 hours after the last episode.
- If a child has any rash and you do not know the cause, check with your family physician before sending the child to school.

Medication

Medications are given with doctor's orders AND parent signature ONLY. This includes over the counter medications such as Tylenol. Permission slips are available in the nurse's office or at the Owatonna Clinic. All medications are to be brought to school and picked up by an adult to avoid problems and ensure safety. Medications must come in their original container. We will not administer medications that come in alternate containers. (*Policy 516 - Student Medication and Mental Health Telehealth*)

Vision and Hearing Screening

We routinely do both hearing and vision screening on all 1st and 4th grade students. Parents and staff can request screening for students with possible concerns at any time during the year.

Immunizations

In order for a student to enroll or remain enrolled in any elementary or secondary school in Minnesota, the parent or guardian must provide a statement to the school showing that the student is either:

- Completely immunized by receiving all immunizations required by law, or
- Received the primary schedule of immunizations required by law and is up to date in completing a schedule of the remaining required immunizations, or
- Legally exempt from one or more of the required immunizations, as evidenced by either a statement of medical exemption signed by a physician, a documented history of the varicella disease, or a notarized statement of conscientious exemption.

Students enrolling the first day of school must provide the required immunization documentation prior to the first day of school. Students have until October 1 of each school year to be in compliance. Students transferring into the Owatonna Public School District after the first day of school have a maximum of 30 days to provide immunization documentation and be in compliance. (*Policy 530 - Immunization Requirements*)

Programs and Services

Language Access Plan

Owatonna Public Schools' language access plan is designed to ensure equitable access to school and district services to students and their families whose home language is not English. The plan was developed collaboratively among various departments, including the Multilingual Learner, Communications, Technology and Innovation, and Special Education Departments. Services include:

- Remote and in-person interpretation with district Success Coaches
- Written classroom translation for students and families
- Language Line for translation and live phone-based interpretation
- Diffit and Brisk for instruction
- TransAct for state and federally mandated communication
- One-click website translation for family access
- Campus notifications in home language
- Talking Points for classroom communication
- American Sign language interpretation
- Relay Services
- Screen Reader software

Families may contact their local Success Coach, school office, or the Multilingual Learner Coordinator for assistance. *(Learn more about the plan on the school district website)*

English Learner Program

The purpose of the English Learner program is to ensure English Learners are competent in the listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing of the English language in all content areas. English Learner (EL) staff members provide a balanced program of instruction for students using specific strategies and best practices. Instruction is focused on language learning and acquisition, which will allow students to be successful in all content areas. The students may be in a pull-out model, push-in model, a combination of both, or co-teaching model. In any model, the English Learner teacher may work one-on-one or with small groups of students who have similar needs. The English Learner teacher works closely with the classroom teachers and other building professionals to provide the most effective service for the student. The student's progress is reviewed on a regular basis and adjustments are made as needed. The district has services for students and families to help all multilingual learners succeed.

We aim to provide the following supports:

Culture

- Culturally relevant pedagogy
- Family engagement
- Bilingual support staff

Language

- Integrated classroom support for language and content
- Dedicated EL staff
- Attention to English reading, writing, listening and speaking acquisition

Content

- Multimodal language support (visuals, kinesthetic, tactile, and auditory)
- Home language support and resources for beginners
- Emphasis on academic language

Talent Development

Owatonna Public Schools provide differentiated learning experiences to challenge and engage students across our system. Students deserve and need challenging learning opportunities that help them discover their unique interests and strengths. Our programming is designed to meet the needs of all students including those who have demonstrated high performance or show the potential for high performance relative to others of their age, experience or environment. Outstanding talents and potential are present in children and youth from all cultural and socioeconomic groups. Starting in grade 3, academically talented students are identified and placed in math and reading cluster classrooms where they receive differentiated, advanced programming in domain-specific strengths. These clusters work together on a regular basis, engaging with rich, research-based curriculum resources.

Title I Program

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low-income families, to assist schools in ensuring that all children meet challenging academic standards. Schools accepting Title I funds

are required to provide all children with fair, equitable and significant educational opportunities to obtain a high-quality education and to reach--at a minimum--proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments.

The goal of this program is to provide targeted interventions so that all students learn essential core standards. This program is delivered through a push-in model into Tier 2 intervention blocks. This supports the classroom teacher in responding to meet the diverse academic and behavioral needs of each student. This program serves as additional support and prevents students from growing further behind and better prepares students to be successful in the general education environment.

Special Education Program and Services

Owatonna Public Schools offers a wide-range of Special Education Programs and Services. Each student with a disability receives educational programs and support based on their individual needs. Programs and services are provided to students and their families beginning at birth through the age of 21 or completion of a secondary education program.

Special Education teachers across the district provide direct and indirect services to students in the areas of academic, emotional/behavioral, fine and gross motor, social skills, functional skills, adaptive skills, vision, deaf/hard of hearing, speech / language therapy, and vocational work skills. Services include:

- Speech (Language or Articulation)
- Learning Disabilities
- Emotional-Behavior Disorders
- Developmentally Cognitive Delayed
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Developmental Adaptive Physical Education

Each elementary school has a team of special educators who provide additional assistance to children in need of specialized instruction. The team meets to discuss the needs of children who have been identified by classroom teachers, parents and/or other appropriate agencies. The team is comprised of the principal, special education teachers, the speech and language teacher, the school psychologist, the school social worker and appropriate classroom teachers. If a child qualifies for service, the team works with the classroom teacher, specialists, and the child's parents to develop a suitable individual educational plan.

Section 504, a provision of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, ensures access to a free and appropriate public education for individuals with a qualifying disability by prohibiting discrimination based on a disability.

A student may qualify for a 504 plan if he or she has a mental or physical condition for which reasonable accommodations are necessary in order to make progress in school.

Questions about Section 504 services may be directed to the building principal or Director of Special Services at 507-444-8604.

Community Education

In partnership with our diverse community, Owatonna Community Education aims to meet the needs of individuals and families through lifelong learning, service and leadership development. Owatonna Community Ed welcomes you and encourages you to explore their website to see the variety of programs they have to offer the community. They strive to provide an opportunity for continuing education that is suitable for all ages. Community Ed offers many enrichment opportunities for students in a wide variety of areas. Watch for their flyers in the mail. For more information, go to their website or call 507-444-7900.

School Age Care (SAC)

The SAC Program provides before- and after-school care, early dismissal, non-school day, and summer care enrichment and support for our K-5th grade students. SAC is designed to provide a wide range of fun and exploratory activities to students, such as arts and crafts, sports, games, quiet time, creative and dramatic play, outdoor play, science, special events, community service, exploration and field trips. For more information regarding SAC, visit the Community Ed website or call 507-444-7900.

Records and Rights

Media Opt Out

Owatonna Public Schools are proud to promote the success of our students, staff, and programs. These accomplishments may draw the attention of newspapers, television stations and other media who visit our schools to photograph, film, and identify students and staff during various activities. The District also uses names, images and video clips of students in materials such as newsletters, website content and posting to social media platforms.

To restrict the District and those acting under its permission the ability to feature your student, please use this Media Opt-Out Form. If the District does not receive this form, your student will be included in materials for public promotion. A separate signature form is required for each child in school. Please sign and return this form to your child's school. Should you choose to opt-out, a new form will have to be completed each school year. Media Opt-Out Form

Pledge of Allegiance

Under MN Statute 121A.11, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited in every school building at least once a week either by each individual classroom or over the school intercom system by a school administrator. Recitation is voluntary: Everyone must respect the rights of others who opt to forego reciting the pledge. *(Policy 531 - The Pledge of Allegiance)*

Parental Custody

The custodial parent is responsible for providing the following to the school:

- A copy of the signed and certified court order, awarding custody.
- Court order revisions/updates that affect custody, visitation, or record-access rights.

Upon request, a non-custodial parent has the right to access and receive copies of school records and information; to attend conferences; and to be informed about the child's welfare, educational progress, and status, as authorized under MN Statute 120A.22, Subd. 1(a). ISD 761 is not required to hold a separate conference for each parent. In cases where parents are separated, divorced, or never married, it is recommended that the school have documentation of custody and visitation rights.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform and provide the school with current documentation if anyone is legally restricted from contact with his or her child/ren.

If there is no legal restriction, and upon request, the school will do the following:

- Send duplicate correspondence to non-custodial parents.
- Arrange for review of school records by non-custodial parents.
- Keep non-custodial parents apprised of major school events.

Protection and Privacy of Education Records

The collection, security, storage and release of student information is as required by state and federal laws. The school district must obtain and use information about each student to plan the best education program and ensure the rights of each student and parent/guardian to privacy. Therefore, access to information by third parties is controlled.

The superintendent of schools has overall responsibility for student records and delegates the day-to-day responsibility to administrators in charge of each elementary and secondary school and to certain district personnel.

See Also Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).

Student Data

Public Data Directory information may be disclosed in the form of class lists or other lists.
The following student information is public: a) name; b) school of attendance; c) dates of attendance; d) grades completed; e) degrees and awards received; f) participation in officially recognized activities/sports; g) height and weight of members of athletic teams; and h) photograph (including most videos).

Names of students in each class and classroom photographs are designated as limited directory data and allow parents and guardians to have access to that information without designating it as public information.

If you, as a parent, do not want directory information used for school functions, please submit this request in writing to the principal of the elementary building. *(Policy 515 - Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)*

Nondiscrimination Policy

Owatonna Public Schools is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for all students and staff and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, in its programs and activities, as required by Title IX and MN Human Rights Act (MHRA). This includes prohibiting sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based violence, and unequal access to extracurricular activities. Any concerns related to Title IX should be reported to Chris Picha, Director of Human Resources & Title IX Coordinator, at 507-444-8602 or cpicha@isd761.org.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Title IX Coordinator

Chris Picha
Director of Human Resources
Owatonna Public Schools
333 East School Street
Owatonna, MN 55060
Telephone Number: 507-444-8602
Email: cpicha@isd761.org

Section 504 Coordinator

Shari Mensink
Director of Special Services
Owatonna Public Schools
333 East School Street
Owatonna, MN 55060
Telephone Number: 507-444-8604
Email: smensink@isd761.org

Visit the school district website (isd761.org/nondiscrimination) for more information.

All policies - including Policy 522 - Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination - can be found on the school district website: www.isd761.org/our-district/school-board/policies.

School Safety

Building Access and Security

For the safety of students and staff, all exterior doors are locked during the school day, except for the main entrance. A secured entrance doorbell will provide access to the main office. Upon entering the main doors, all visitors will be asked to present an ID such as a driver's license, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason

does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member can use any form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering our schools without our knowledge. No other data from the ID is gathered or recorded, and the information is not shared with any outside agency. Once entry is approved, the greeter will print a name sticker that identifies the visitor, date and the purpose of his/her visit.

A child will be released only to his/her parents or individuals authorized on the student's emergency card; identification may be requested. It is a misdemeanor for any person to enter or be found in an elementary, middle, or secondary school building unless he or she:

- is enrolled or a parent/guardian of an enrolled student in the school;
- is a school district employee;
- received permission/invitation from a school official to be in the building;
- is attending a school event, class, or meeting to which he or she has been invited;
- reported his or her presence in the school in the manner required for school visitors.

Outside Deliveries

Food for school events must be commercially prepared. Personal outside deliveries, such as flowers, non-latex balloons, and DoorDash are not permitted. If delivered, they will be kept in the office until the end of the school day. Parents will be responsible for transporting these items home that day. Latex balloons are not allowed due to allergies. The school district encourages all students, staff, and parents to make age appropriate, healthy selections of foods and beverages.

Weapons

To ensure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public, no student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in this policy. The school district will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, or member of the public who violates this policy. (*Policy 501 - School Weapons Policy*)

Phone Calls During Emergencies

Please do not call your child's school with questions during an emergency. The phone lines must remain open for emergency communications. If you need assistance, call the main district phone number: (507) 444-8600.

Comprehensive Emergency Plan

Owatonna Public Schools has a Crisis Management Policy and individual School Crisis Plans which have been created in consultation with local law enforcement, emergency management and public health officials. Drills are routinely held in all district buildings to prepare students and employees for emergencies. (*Policy 806 - Crisis Management Policy*)

Severe Weather and Emergencies

Generally, you can expect that school will be held, even in severe weather. If you disagree with the district's decision to hold school on a day you believe the weather is hazardous, you may keep your child home. Please call your school's absence line to report the absence. The absence may be excused.

Tornado warning or other severe weather: Buses will not be loaded, and students will remain at school.

School Cancellations

District administrators consider the combined effects of snow, ice and wind chill when determining if school will be held. If the National Weather Service predicts the wind chill to remain at or drop below -35ºF (below zero), school may be canceled. We attempt to make the decision by 5:30 a.m. after surveying conditions, monitoring weather reports and consulting with transportation vendors.

Early Release

If necessary, a decision to close school early will be made as soon as possible. Lunch may be served, and schools will be released in normal order, so older siblings are home first to await younger brothers/sisters.

Communication on School Cancellations and Early Release

If school is canceled or dismissed early, the following communication will go out:

- Telephone/Email: Through the district automated messaging system; a call and/or email provided to your child's school for contact information will be used.
- District Website: Emergency information will be posted on the district's website.
- District Social Media Pages: Emergency information will be posted on the district's Facebook page: @Owatonna761
- Radio/TV: Information will be submitted to major radio and TV stations as "Owatonna Public Schools."

Family Emergency Plan

- Please review your family plan for when school is canceled and/or dismissed early with your children.
- If your family plan is for your children to go home, do they know how to get into your home safely?

Programs, Activities, and Events

When school closes, all after-school and evening activities and programs are generally canceled as well, including extra-curricular activities and community education programs (youth/adult classes; preschool programs; adult basic education; early childhood). Privately sponsored activities scheduled through the school district's facilities reservation department are also canceled.

Student Emergency Contact Information at School

Students will be released only to parents, guardians and authorized individuals listed on the student emergency information kept at school. Please keep this information current.

E-Learning

In the event that we have to cancel school due to inclement weather or another emergency, Owatonna Public Schools may call an 'E-Learning Day' instead of simply canceling school. The Minnesota Department of Education approved the use of e-learning days for up to five days in one school year. The e-learning day will be announced using the same communication methods we currently use for school cancellations (phone, website, radio and TV stations). (See also Policy 602 - Organization of School Calendar and School Day and the E-Learning Plan)

Student Leadership Opportunities

Band/Choir/Orchestra

Each elementary school offers several extra-curricular activities for intermediate students. Orchestra lessons begin the summer after students have completed 3rd grade. Band lessons begin the summer after completion of 4th grade. Choir is open to 4th and 5th grade students.

Safety Patrol

Patrol students are selected from the fourth and/or fifth grade classes. They provide safety to students going to and from school. Student captains and the school Patrol Advisor supervise patrols. The patrol captains receive special training at Legionville during the summer. The PTO sponsors this activity.

Patrols are at designated crossings from 7:45-8:05 and from 2:40-2:50 each day. They DO NOT patrol during electrical storms. When the Minnesota winter becomes extremely cold, revisions are made in their schedules.

Student Leadership Team

Student Leadership Team works together to create unity and school spirit among students and staff.

Transportation

Bus Eligibility

Upon the request of a parent or guardian, the school district shall provide transportation to and from school, at the expense of the school district, for all resident students who reside one mile or

more from the school, except for those students whose transportation privileges have been revoked or have been voluntarily surrendered by the student's parent or guardian. Owatonna Public Schools partners with the Owatonna Bus Company to provide transportation. Please call the school district's transportation services liaison at 507-444-8636 for any questions about bussing.

Bus Expectations

The school district recognizes that transportation is an essential part of the school district services to students and parents but further recognizes that transportation by school bus is a privilege and not a right for an eligible student. The bus follows the same expectations as the school day. Consequences for inappropriate behavior demonstrated on the bus may include a warning, loss of privileges, bus suspension or termination of service. Please remember that the bus is a continuation of the school day. (*Policy 707 - Transportation of Public School Students*)

Student Responsibility

Each student is responsible for practicing safe and courteous bus ridership. The safety of all children is of primary importance and must be protected. The same behavior expected of children at school is expected at the bus stop and on the bus. Children are expected to:

At the bus stop…

- Arrive 5 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Stay back from the street so they do not become a traffic hazard.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely and the driver to signal to board before approaching.

On the bus…

- Stay seated and facing forward until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Talk quietly and use respectful language.
- Respect the bus, bus driver, other riders and their property.
- Keep the bus clean.
- Help the driver remain focused on the road by not causing a distraction.

Bicycles/Scooters/Rollerblades/Skateboards

Children are allowed to ride bicycles to school. Racks are provided for parking them, but the school does not accept any responsibility for the bicycles. As a measure of safety, please follow these guidelines:

- All bicycles must be parked and locked in the racks provided.
- Bicycles must be walked on school grounds.
- Children may ride only their own bicycles.
- Riders should follow all traffic rules including the use of our school patrols.
- Students may bring scooters or roller blades to school only with special permission from the classroom teacher and/or principal.

Tennis shoes with wheels in the sole are not allowed during school hours.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

ISD 761 is fortunate to have an active Parent Teacher Organization, which offers support for student programs and classroom activities. The PTO is a wonderful opportunity for families and staff to collaborate in providing learning opportunities for our students. Please give your active support to this essential school group. PTO meetings are held once a month.

Volunteers and Background Checks

Parents and community members are always encouraged to apply as an employee or volunteer at their child's school and/or with the Owatonna Public Schools. Volunteers provide a valuable service to students and staff.

- **Employment and Services Criminal History Background Checks**
  The school district has adopted a policy, the purpose of which is to promote the physical, social, and psychological well-being of its students. Pursuant to this policy, the school district shall seek criminal history background checks for all applicants who receive an offer of employment with the school district. The school district also shall seek criminal history background checks for all individuals who are offered the opportunity to provide athletic coaching services or other extracurricular academic coaching services to the school district, regardless of whether compensation is paid. These positions include, but are not limited to, all athletic coaches, extracurricular and academic coaches, assistants, and advisors. The school district may elect to seek criminal history background checks for other volunteers, independent contractors, and student employees. *(Read the full policy here - Policy 404 - Employment Background Checks)*

ISD No. 761 Foundation

The Owatonna Independent School District No. 761 Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization providing for individuals, community groups and businesses to make contributions to give students and staff additional opportunities and programs not usually funded with tax dollars. Designated gifts are reviewed by the foundation board to ensure that they meet their stated objectives.

Foundation funds will enhance existing district programs and encourage the development of innovative programs as determined by district educators and the school board. Some of the areas currently benefiting from ISD No. 761 Foundation contributions include: agriculture, industrial technology, math programs/scholarships, geography, athletics, music, professional teacher training, and student scholarships.

The ISD No. 761 Foundation is a separate legal entity from the Owatonna School District.
For more information, visit www.761foundation.com.

District 761 School Board

Owatonna Public Schools board meetings are held the second and fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 PM with some exceptions. Typically, the second Monday of the month is a work session held at the Owatonna Public Schools District Office, 333 East School Street, Owatonna. The fourth Monday of the month is generally the regular business meeting held in the chambers at the Charles S Crandall Center, 540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna. For upcoming agendas and meeting minutes, please visit the School Board website.

School board members are elected during the November General Election on even years. Members are elected for a four-year term with either three or four members elected. All board members are elected at-large.

2026 School Board Members
Mark Sebring - Chair
Timothy Jensen - Vice Chair
Ron Kubicek - Treasurer
Andrea Van Gelder - Clerk
Elizabeth Hedlund - Director
Jolayne Mohs - Director
Lori Weisenburger - Director

2026 Student Representatives
Lowell Schultz
Greta Veldman

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statewide Assessments:

Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the Minnesota Academic Standards or the WIDA English Language Development Standards. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 districts and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)
MCA and the alternate assessments (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)/Alternate MCA) are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners
The ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English, based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments helps families see a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results:

- For Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) in grade 10.
- For course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.

English learners who take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements, have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions on how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form below. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student would not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any additional consequences for not participating.

Explore the Statewide Testing page for more information.

(education.mn.gov > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1% of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the beginning of each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

Statewide Assessment: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results.

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Current Grade in School: _____ Student ID Number (if known): _____

School: _____ District: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reason for Refusal: _____

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting your student out of this school year:

- ☐ MCA/MTAS Reading
- ☐ MCA/Alternate MCA Science
- ☐ MCA/MTAS Mathematics
- ☐ ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20____ to 20 ____ school year.)

Visit the website for the fillable form (www.isd761.org/district-services/teaching-learning/assessments)

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