ORONO SCHOOLS TODAY

October 2026

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Orono Community,

Across generations, families, educators, alumni, and community members have helped shape a district grounded in high expectations and a commitment to excellence.

This fall, we celebrated those connections when we opened our 1951 time capsule during Homecoming. The documents and photographs inside offered a glimpse into our district's beginnings and the vision that continues to guide us. While much has changed since 1951, the commitment to excellence and student success remains at the heart of Orono Schools.

We are excited to begin sharing more of this history with our community through our new Orono Schools History website at **oronoschools.org/history**. This is just the beginning! We look forward to building this collection over time, and we invite you to be part of it. If you have photographs, stories, or memories of Orono Schools, please share them on social media or email **communications@orono.k12.mn.us**. Your contributions will help preserve the people and experiences that have shaped our community.



Kristine Flesher, Ed.D.

This edition also celebrates the achievements of the Class of 2026, reflecting the hard work of our students and the support of their families and staff. Their accomplishments are the latest chapter in Orono's story.

Connectedness is a strategic goal for Orono Schools. By building on our shared history and working together to strengthen relationships across our community, we strive to ensure every student and community member feels a sense of belonging and safety.

Thank you for being part of the Orono story and for helping shape our future together.

With gratitude,

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT OPEN HOUSE

Join us to learn more about Orono Schools for the 27-28 school year!

Tuesday, November 17, 2026
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Tours scheduled at all schools

PLEASE RSVP

or **https://bit.ly/OPEN-HOUSE-2026**

Please learn more:
www.oronoschools.org/enroll

Contact us:
enrollment@orono.k12.mn.us
telephone: 952-449-8312

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CLASS OF 2026

MEASURING **EXCELLENCE**

Behind every chart lies a story of focused study sessions, academic breakthroughs, and passionate ambitions. These metrics offer a snapshot of the collective journey of the Class of 2026—from classroom excellence to competitive college placements.

Our students continue to reach higher

College-level Experiences and Opportunities to Earn Credit	Class of 2026
OHS Advanced Placement (AP) (23 courses)	93%
OHS Dual Enrollment (College Accounting, Computer Applications for College, Project Lead the Way pre-engineering)	24%
Hennepin Technical College	11%
PSEO - Full time	3%
PSEO - Part time	13%
Total percent of class taking courses with the potential to earn college credit	97% (unduplicated)

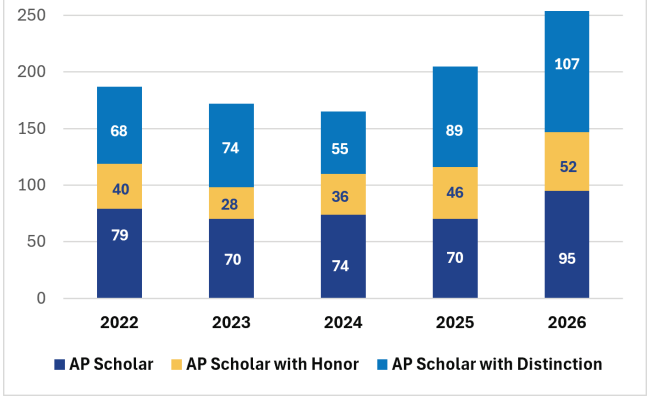
AP School Honor Roll 2025

2027 NICHE BEST SCHOOLS

with outstanding results

AP Exams & Enrollment	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of students tested	421	454	562	563
Number of exams administered	810	855	1,020	1,080
Percent of exams resulting in a score of 3+	79%	82%	91%	93%
Percent of graduating class taking and passing at least one AP exam	66%	69%	76%	79%
Percent of graduating class completing at least one AP course	86%	84%	90%	93%

AP Scholar Recognition



AP Capstone Diploma & Certificate

In fall 2024, Orono High School opened AP Seminar to sophomores, with 42% of the class participating. This expansion increased access to the AP Capstone Diploma, which requires scores of 3 or higher on AP Seminar, AP Research, and four additional AP exams. Last year, 234 students in Minnesota passed AP Research, with 25 from OHS! In the Class of 2026, **20** students earned the Diploma while **5** earned the Seminar & Research Certificate. For the Class of 2027, **7** students have already earned the Diploma, **20** are Diploma Candidates, and **5** have already earned the Certificate.

Knowledge that Pays

A score of 4 or 5 on the AP English Literature & Composition exam awards 7 credits at the Univ. of Minnesota, Twin Cities and fulfills two graduation requirements: University Writing and English Literature. The net financial savings is $4,410 for a Minnesota resident.

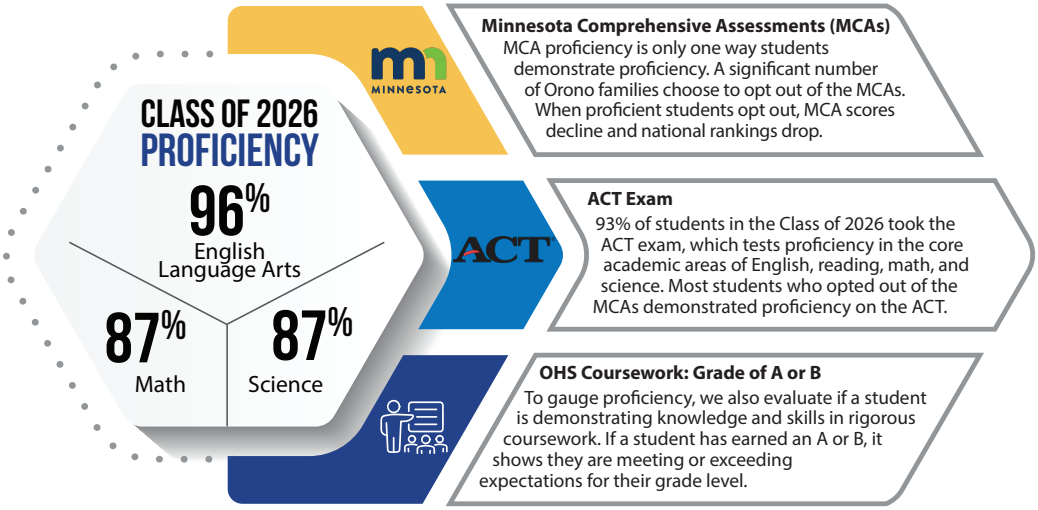
Understanding Student Proficiency: Every Measure Matters

At Orono Schools, we use multiple measures to evaluate student proficiency and understand what our students know and can do. These include performance on statewide assessments, ACT results, and consistent success in coursework. Together, these indicators provide a more complete picture of student learning, growth, and readiness for college, career, and beyond.

In Orono, we strive to provide students with a broad, rigorous curriculum and the knowledge and skills they need to succeed after graduation. This commitment is reflected in Orono's recognition by U.S. News & World Report, where we are ranked the #1 traditional high school for college curriculum breadth and the #2 traditional high school for college readiness.

Participation in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) matters. Statewide assessment results are one measure of student achievement and contribute to how our school's academic performance is represented in state and national comparisons, including school rankings. When all students participate, we gain a more complete picture of student achievement and help ensure Orono's academic strengths are fully represented.

We encourage all students to opt in to the MCAs. Participation supports our commitment to continuous improvement, helps showcase the strength of an Orono education, and reinforces the value of preparing every student for success.



2027 National Merit Scholars

Congratulations to 10 students in the Class of 2027 who scored among the nation's best on the Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). **Ethan Weiss** scored among the top 1% in the nation and will continue in the competition as a **Semifinalist**. Our nine **Commended Scholars** scored among the top 2-3% nationally and are recognized for their outstanding academic potential.

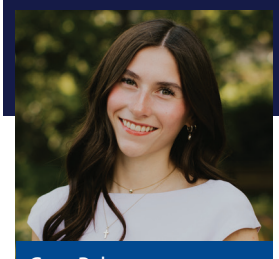

Ethan Weiss

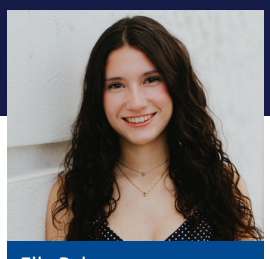

Liam Barkley

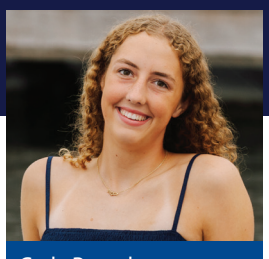

Ezra Cowden

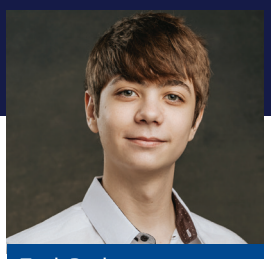

Adam Haislet

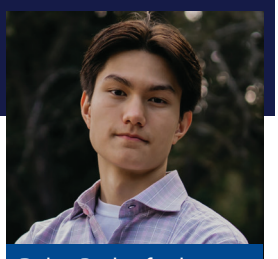

Sophie Middleton


Cora Palm


Ella Palm


Carly Rausch


Zack Rothe


Dylan Rutherford

FUTURE **READINESS**

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Preparing students for life after high school means equipping them with the skills, confidence, and experience to make informed choices. Whether pursuing a university, college, technical school, or another opportunity, our goal is to ensure every student graduates ready to navigate the future with purpose and possibility.



#1 Traditional High School for College Curriculum Breadth *(#4 overall in Minnesota)*

#2 Traditional High School for College Readiness *(#9 overall in Minnesota)*

ACT®

93% of graduates tested

ACT	Middle 50%-ile: Top 100
English	25-34
Math	27-32
Reading	28-33
Science Reasoning	27-34
Composite	30.1
Minnesota Composite	20.6 (68% tested)

MATRICULATION: TURNING POSSIBILITIES INTO PLANS

Our graduates are taking their next steps at colleges and universities that reflect their hard work, ambition, and individual aspirations. From highly selective institutions to students' top-choice schools, the Class of 2026 is pursuing a wide range of opportunities that align with their goals and interests.

92% of our graduates are enrolling in college, university, two-year college, or technical school, demonstrating a strong commitment to continued learning and future opportunity. Each destination represents a student's unique journey and the possibilities ahead. We are proud of our graduates as they move forward, prepared to build on their high school experiences and shape their own futures!

92%

of the Class of 2026
enrolled in a
college
university
two-year college
or technical school

College Admissions Fast Facts:

- 92% matriculation
- 66% overall acceptance rate
- 30% applied to a highly selective college; 15% accepted; 13% attending

Highly Selective Admissions:

Boston College, Boston Univ., Bowdoin, Carlton College, Fairfield Univ., Florida State Univ., Georgetown, Georgia Tech, Macalester, New York Univ., Northeastern, Notre Dame, Reed, Univ. of Chicago, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Univ. of Georgia, Univ. of Miami, Univ. of Michigan, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and Villanova.

Class of 2026 Top Choices

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of St. Thomas
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Iowa State University
University of Wisconsin
(Eau Claire, Lacrosse, and Madison)
St. John's University
Indiana University at Bloomington

YOUNG **READERS**

A strong foundation in reading is essential to lifelong learning and academic excellence. By investing in high-quality early literacy instruction, we are building on our tradition of achievement and ensuring our youngest learners are well prepared for the learning ahead.

Most people think of kindergarten as the beginning of lifelong reading, and our students are off to a wonderful start!

This year, we are strengthening that foundation even earlier by implementing the **Frog Street** curriculum across all Early Learning programs, from infancy through Pre-K. Our goal is to create a continuum of high-quality instruction focused on literacy skills and kindergarten readiness.

Now in its second year, our **K–5 Arts & Letters** curriculum, along with **UFLI Foundations**, our phonics and foundational reading program, support a cohesive approach to literacy development. Together, these programs help students build the language, early literacy, phonics, and foundational skills they need to become successful readers.

Our early results are outstanding! Our preliminary fall 2026 data shows that more kindergarten and second-grade students *than ever before* are meeting grade-level literacy benchmarks and growth targets, demonstrating meaningful progress.

As students grow as readers, they become better equipped to tackle increasingly complex texts, deepen their understanding, and build knowledge across subject areas.

This progress is about more than learning to read; it is about establishing a strong, lasting academic foundation that prepares every student for continued success.

Through braided funding from our partners & community members, Orono is able to provide the full suite of new K–5 literacy resources. ***Thank you, all!***

Orono Foundation
For Education

Orono Public Schools Parent Teacher Organization

Levy Funded
Orono Public Schools
Community Supported





Orono readers in action!



1951 TIME CAPSULE

GENERATIONS **AT THE TABLE**

Descendants of Orono's early School Board join alumni and community leaders to connect our past with our future.

In the years following World War II, communities across Minnesota faced a defining task: evaluating local schools and consolidating district boundaries to prepare students for a rapidly changing world. Orono answered that call with vision, laying the foundation for a district shaped by high academic expectations, college readiness, and deep community pride.

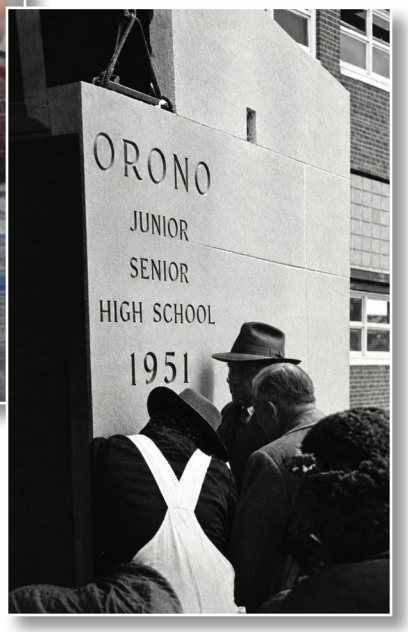
That rich legacy came to life this fall during Homecoming as we opened Orono's 1951 time capsule—a handmade copper box preserved for 75 years.

In a memorable moment connecting our history directly to the present, descendants of Orono's original School Board sat around the table alongside legacy alumni and community leaders to reveal the items. Looking through the preserved photos, official records, public documents, and mimeographed copies, guests in the room shared a connection to the visionaries who built our district.

The founding documents revealed an important truth: Orono's commitment to a challenging, preparatory curriculum was not a recent innovation—it was an essential part of our educational identity from day one. As we reflected on these records together, we were reminded that while times change, the values of community, excellence, and dedicated student support remain unchanged.







Descendants of Orono's original School Board join district leaders and legacy alumni to open the 1951 copper time capsule. The handmade box (at left) protected original documents and photos that were placed under the Orono Junior-Senior High School cornerstone (at right) 75 years ago. (View the video of the opening at oronoschools.org/History.)

Dig Deeper into Orono's History Online!

On the **oronoschools.org/history** website, you can: Watch as the 1951 time capsule is unsealed in September 2026 Browse digital scans of original documents, newspaper articles, and letters. See photos from the early history of Orono Schools. **We're just getting started!** Email **communications@orono.k12.mn.us** if you have photos to share!

OUR **EARLY STORY**


THE FIVE DISTRICT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Hill School

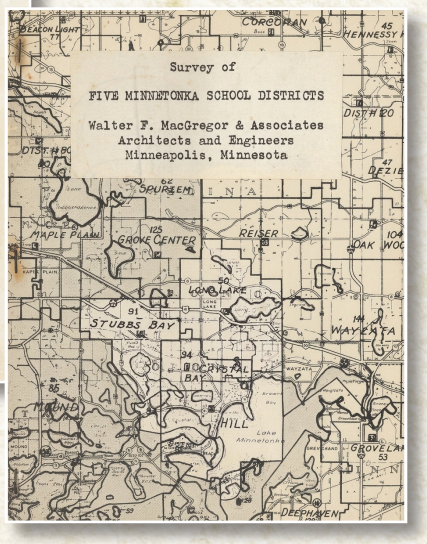
Minnetonka Beach

Stubbs Bay

Upper Crystal Bay

Long Lake

The **Minnesota School Reorganization Act of 1947** brought forth a statewide effort to survey and potentially consolidate thousands of small, rural school districts into larger, unified systems.



The goals were to improve administrative efficiency, standardize curricula, and provide better opportunities to prepare students for higher education and modern jobs.

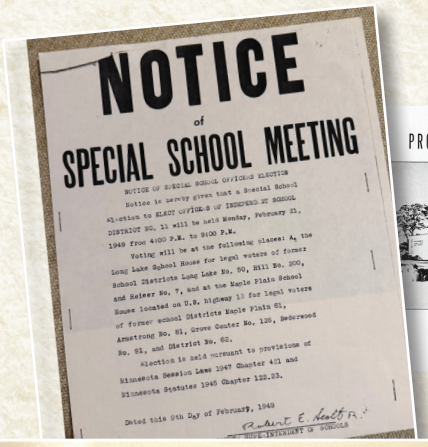
Five school districts in our area were surveyed in November 1947.

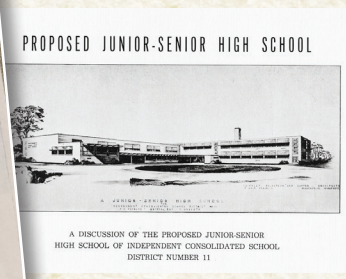
The community moved quickly with *strong support* for consolidation of nine small districts and plans to build a comprehensive junior-senior high school. This effort required five community elections over 16 months!

- Vote to consolidate: January 25, 1949
- Choose the first School Board: February 21, 1949
- Approve the 42-acre land purchase from Edward Fries for a new junior-senior high school: May 26, 1949
- Authorize a $100,000 bond issue to fund the new District 11, October 18, 1949
- Authorize a $765,000 bond measure for the new junior-senior high school, May 2, 1950


SCHOOL BOARD

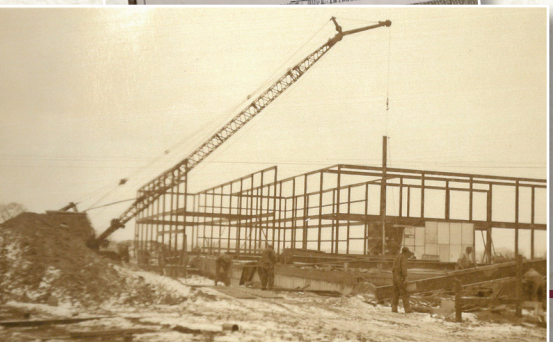
Members of the 1952 Orono School Board led the district in its early days of consolidation, land purchase, and construction of the new Orono Junior-Senior High School that opened in fall 1951. Left to right: Russell Johnson; John Pillsbury, Jr.; Catherine Piper Pierson; Herbert Ross; Donald Willis; Winnifred Bryant; and Superintendent Carlton W. Lytle.


NOTICE
of
SPECIAL SCHOOL MEETING


PROPOSED JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF INDEPENDENT CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 11

Construction on the new Orono Junior-Senior High School began July 19, 1950 and opened to students on September 17, 1951.







Orono Public Schools, ISD #278
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D., Superintendent
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SPARTAN PRIDE
BE PART OF IT

Visit oronoschools.org/calendar for athletic competitions and a schedule of performing arts events.