

Welcome from the Superintendent
Dr. Kristine Flesher

November 4, 2026

Dear Orono Families and Staff,

Bringing people together to help make our community a great place to live has always been a key part of who we are. In fact, this commitment goes back to the very beginning of our district. According to our history webpage, in 1951, our first Superintendent Carlton Lytle shared that the new junior-senior high school "would also be a community center for adults... with opportunities for recreational, athletic, and social programs." That vision of our schools serving as a gathering place for the entire community remains just as meaningful today.

We invite *everyone* in our community to join us for two upcoming opportunities to connect and make a difference. On November 10 at 8:45 a.m., we will host our **Veterans Day program** in the Orono High School gym. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students, staff, and community members to come together to recognize and honor all those who have served our country. We hope you will join us!

Additionally, Orono Student Senate is hosting a **Community Blood Drive** on November 18 from 12–6 p.m. in the OHS gym. Help us support this meaningful cause! Community members are welcome and encouraged to sign up to donate blood.

Take your seat at the annual **Cribbage Tournament** on Sunday, November 15, from 1-4 p.m. in the Orono Activities Center. This event is open to ages 10+ so register now and bring your family! You can also reserve a seat in Fenholt Auditorium for the OHS **fall musical production of "Cinderella."** Great seats are still available for the production November 13-21.

These events are reminders that our district is more than a place where learning happens each day. It is a place where traditions are celebrated, service is encouraged, and our community comes together.

Thank you for helping us carry this vision forward. We look forward to seeing you!

With appreciation,
Kristine Flesher, Ed.D., Superintendent

Orono Staff Recognition

This fall has been a time of awards and recognition for Orono staff members. Congratulations to...

- **Mr. Jeremy Buch** who earned the University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences 2026 Sarah L. Tilman Science Teacher Award. This award recognizes a teacher's influence through the eyes of students—not simply classroom performance—but the ability to spark curiosity, build confidence, and make science meaningful. Mr. Buch was nominated by Ava Klug, Orono Class of 2026. Ava shared, "Mr. Buch is not only a great teacher, but someone who wants to share his love of biology. He [creates] new ways to explain concepts, working on hands-on demonstrations, and researching new experiments that align with the course while still being interesting and engaging." Thank you, Ava, and congratulations to Mr. Buch!
- **Mr. Mike Daniels**, our Districtwide Buildings & Grounds Custodian, received the Metro Chapter Award from the Minnesota Educational Facilities Management Professionals Association. Mike was nominated by his colleague, Tim Domka, who recognized Mike for exemplary work ethic, stewardship of school property, creativity, and representing the community in a positive manner. We appreciate all you do, Mike!
- **Coach Erin Murray** was recently inducted into the Minnesota State High School Soccer Coaches Association Hall of Fame, the fourth female coach to earn this honor. Erin has led the Orono High School (OHS) Girls Soccer program since 2005. She is a 2000 Orono graduate and an OHS special education teacher. Over her time as head coach, she has received the Minnesota Coach of the Year and Regional Coach of the Year awards. She has also been President of the Minnesota State High School Soccer Coach Association. Congratulations!







From left*: Mr. Buch with OHS alumni Ruby Masters '25 and Ava Klug '26; Mike Daniels with nominator Tim Domka; and Coach Erin Murray (center) with Caitlin Tripp (l) and Natalie Soper (r).*

In Loving Memory of Allison Koester

Allison Koester was a beloved Kindergarten teacher at Schumann Elementary from 2015 to 2025. She was known for her kindness, warmth, gentle spirit, and ability to make every student and colleague feel seen and valued. This fall, together with Allison's family, the Kindergarten team dedicated a bench and tree to honor Allison's life and legacy. This special memorial, near the Schumann Elementary playground, will serve as a lasting reminder of the joy Allison gave to our community.





Orono School Board Election Results

Congratulations to Sarah Borchers, Wendy Lundsgaard, and Todd Madson, who were re-elected to the Orono School Board in the November 3 election. We appreciate Candidate Jennifer Frank, and all the candidates, who participated in the election and stepped forward to serve the school district. For more information about the School Board and upcoming meetings, please visit the School Board webpage. Thank you!



SARAH BORCHERS



WENDY LUNDSGAARD



TODD MADSON

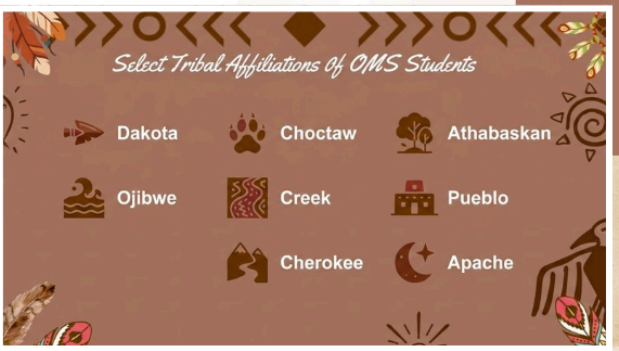
November is Native American Heritage Month

In recognition of **Native American Heritage Month**, students in our district came together to create beautiful, visual displays and a slideshow celebrating Indigenous cultures, histories, and the contributions of Native American leaders and trailblazers. This student-led initiative, under the guidance of Leslie Locke, coordinator of the Orono Native American Parent Advisory Committee (ONAPAC), was an opportunity for students to research the breadth of tribal affiliations represented within our district, explore the cultural significance of Indigenous life, and suggest meaningful reading recommendations to peers. Many thanks to our student contributors–Hudson A., Evelyn B., Mary B., Eva D., Tallulah D., Jonathan G., Leo P., August V., and Sheena W.–for their thoughtful work in creating the slideshow and displays for Orono Middle School and Orono High School. We are grateful for their efforts to foster awareness and appreciation throughout our school community.











Fall Athletics Update

It's been an exciting fall season for our Spartans! With a few teams still competing in postseason play, there's more to cheer for this fall! At the same time, winter sports are getting ready to kick off, with all teams starting their seasons in the coming weeks. Please visit the Activities & Athletics webpage for more information.

- **Boys Cross Country** recently completed their season, finishing third in the Section 6AA Championship, narrowly missing a State Meet berth. Special congratulations to Eddie Loberg on qualifying for the Boys Cross Country State Meet! Loberg earned a second-place finish at the Section 6AA Championship.
- **Girls Cross Country** claimed first place at the Section 6AA Championships! The Spartans scorched the course, placing five runners in the top nine and securing a trip to the State Meet while capturing the first section title in program history!
- **Football** cruised to a win over Providence to advance to the Section 6AAAA Championship. The Spartans will host Zimmerman this Friday at 7:00 p.m. with a trip to the State Tournament on the line. Come out and show your support for our defending state champions.
- **Girls Tennis**: Congratulations to Mollie Hollerman and Bluma Molitor on qualifying for and competing in the Girls Tennis State Tournament in doubles competition after capturing the Section 5AA Doubles Championship! The duo advanced to the second round, capping off an impressive postseason run.
- **Girls Volleyball** saw its season come to a close with a hard-fought five-set loss in the section quarterfinals to Jordan. Congratulations to our Spartans on a great season!

- **Boys Soccer**: The Spartans captured the Section 6AA Championship in dramatic fashion, outlasting Delano with a stunning equalizer in the final six seconds before scoring the game-winner in overtime! After another hard-fought battle in the State Tournament quarterfinals, the Spartans fell to Sartell 2-1 in overtime, bringing an outstanding season to a close. Congratulations on a tremendous year!
- **Girls Soccer** finished their season as the 2026 Section 5AA Runners-Up. Congratulations on a great season, and thank you for representing Orono with class and pride.
- **Girls Swim & Dive**: After a successful regular season, the team is looking ahead to the postseason for the Section 3A tournament on November 12. Best of luck to the athletes and coaches!



Girls Cross Country: State Bound!

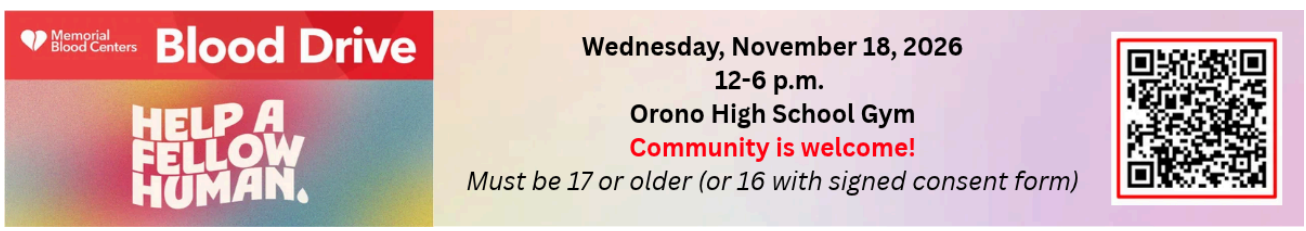


8-0, Section Championship Next



Eddie Loberg: Headed to State!





Orono School Board Highlights

October 26, 2026 Regular Meeting | Agenda

- Superintendent's Report on Excellence | Watch the Presentation
- Board Members' Questions and Comments | Watch the Presentation
- Orono Excellence Fund – Orono High School: College Admissions, Character & Belonging | Watch the Presentation
- Resolution to Support the Application to the MSHSL Foundation for a Form A Grant to Offset Student Activity Fees | Watch the Presentation

The next meeting of the Orono School Board is scheduled for Monday, November 9, 2026, at 7 p.m. in the District Office Assembly Room. A Public Comment Session will precede the Board meeting at 7:00 p.m. Learn more and register on the Public Comments webpage.

Upcoming Events for the Community

- Tuesday, November 10 - **Veterans Day program**. Doors open at 8:30 a.m.
- November 13-21 - OHS Fall Musical, "**Cinderella**." Tickets on sale now.
- November 15 - **Cribbage Tournament** from 1-4 p.m. for ages 10+. Register now.

- November 18 - **Blood Drive** in the OHS gym from 12-6 p.m. Sign up today.
- November 19 - **"How to Avoid Common Scams"** presentation by the Orono Police Department. From 8-9:30 a.m. in the Orono Activities Center. No fee to attend.

Visit the calendar of events for more!



District Academic Calendars

Please see the Calendars webpage for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 academic calendars.

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