



333 East School Street · Owatonna MN 55060 · 507-444-8600 · www.isd761.org

Dr. Tammy Champa

December 2025

❖ Important Dates

- December 8: School Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Charles S Crandall Center
- December 24-26: District Closed
- December 31-January 1: District Closed
- December 24-January 2: No School

❖ District Updates

As we move into the final month of the year, there's always a flurry of activity - both figurative and literal. As noted during the levy presentations, district leadership is always a fine balance of providing the very best opportunities and experiences for our students while serving as responsible and effective stewards of tax-payer dollars. We are currently focused on carefully analyzing our survey data from our students, staff and families while we move forward with budget adjustments. We remain steadfast with our three priority areas that are currently at the forefront of our work:

➤ **Budget Adjustments & Fiscal Responsibility**

Based on the results of the November levy, we are preparing a budget that will foster financial stability for the next two years. There is a large-scale comprehensive review currently underway that is designed to reduce spending while maintaining our highest priorities - students, safety, and quality teaching and learning. A huge thank you to building and department leaders who are working in partnership to actively identify areas for reduced spending. It is our aim to work in collaboration and provide timely communication as recommendations are refined and brought forward.

➤ **School Perceptions Survey Data Analysis**

The survey results are in and we are grateful to all who took the time to participate. In total we heard from more than 3000 including families, students

and staff. We are currently analyzing the data at both the district and building level to identify needs and trends as we work to continuously improve.

➤ **Community Engagement Series**

In response to both survey results and budget realities, we are planning a community engagement series designed to ensure transparency, provide information and to ensure we move forward together. These events will provide opportunities for staff, families, and community members to learn more, ask questions, and offer feedback. The focus will be on clarity around financial decisions and strengthening trust through transparent communication. Please watch for the calendar to be published in the very near future.

Together, these priorities support our commitment to maintaining strong educational opportunities while navigating a changing financial landscape. On behalf of the Owatonna School District, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide each student with an excellent, well-rounded educational experience — **Inspiring Excellence. Every Learner. Every Day.**

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

Turn your wounds into wisdom

❖ HR Updates

- Recruitment and Selection of staff and onboarding new hires
- Employee Relations Issues
- Policy Committee work
- Adult & Student GYO Pathway Grant applications are open
- Teacher Apprenticeship Meetings
- Student Affairs Issues
- Brightworks Policy Work
- E-12 Sexual Abuse Statute Revision Committee Work
- 2026-2027 Budget Work

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

Since our last board report, we had our full week of Wit & Wisdom guided observations. This included four days with 16 classroom visits with our W&W representative. We visited each of the four elementary schools with each visit including two principals and two instructional coaches. While the classroom observations were incredibly valuable, it was the debriefing with a Wit & Wisdom trainer that really helped us as an instructional team to learn how to best

support our teachers, who are implementing this in the classroom. The time was incredibly valuable, and we look forward to doing this same process two more times this year. Although research says it is often 2-3 years before the implementation of a new curriculum shows up in test scores, we are anxious to see winter data. The other caveat to test scores this year is this spring, students will be taking the MCA IV test, which is new this year and will create a new baseline across the state. Either way, we are excited about the learning we are seeing in the classrooms with this new knowledge-building curriculum.

We have also started more informal walk-throughs of our new elementary math curriculum, Illustrative Math. We have seven early adopter teams across the four elementary schools, so these teachers are implementing two new resources this year--Wit & Wisdom and Illustrative Math. The new standards in math emphasize conceptual understanding of math, and IM supports this shift. The teachers who are using this new resource have indicated the student engagement with this math resource is high!

We also had our second DCAC meeting on Thursday, November 20. At this meeting, we heard the High Quality Teaching and Learning goals and action steps from each of our school sites. In addition, Kelly Kruger did a presentation on Wit & Wisdom. We wrapped up the meeting by looking at the district survey results. Our next meeting is Thursday, January 8.

Upcoming Dates:

- Week of December 1: CogAT screening starts in all second grade classrooms across the district. In addition, students who are new to us in grades 3-5 since last year's testing will be tested. This is one of the pieces of evidence we use for gifted and talented services.
- Monday, April 1: AIPAC meeting (American Indian Parent Advisory Committee) from 4:45-6:00
- Thursday, December 4: Junior Achievement Breakfast from 7:00-8:15am at Torey's
- Tuesday, December 9: K-5 ELA Committee Meeting from 3:00-4:30
- Wednesday, December 10: New Teacher Winter Gathering at Torey's from 3:15-5:00

Special Services

Shari Mensink, Director

Making progress on department goals:

- High Quality Teaching & Learning/Equity
 - Our goal is to identify strengths & gaps in our English and math interventions, E-12, with the long-term goal to provide approved research-based interventions.
- High Quality Teaching & Learning/21st Century Learners

- Through our identified action steps & accountability processes, we will update our departmental procedures and streamline staff access, moving key procedures to a SharePoint site.
- Safe & Caring Community/Equity
 - Through our identified action steps & accountability processes, we will create clarity around Conscious Discipline, Ukeru, Safety Care, LSCI & PTS, and assist buildings with implementation.
- Disproportionality Report submitted to MDE
- Shari attended OMS Student Advisory
- held Restrictive Procedures Oversight Committee quarterly meeting
- collaboration with Owatonna Bus Company
- Dec 1 Child Count finalization

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- 12/2/25 National Special Education Day
- 12/2/25 PTO meeting 6:00 in the Lincoln Art Room
- 12/3/25 Collaboration Day 8:10 to 2:40
- 12/8/25 Staff meeting at 2:50
- 12/10/25 Site Team meeting at 2:50
- 12/12/25 Dress Up Day: Twin Day
- 12/15/25 PLC Work-2:45
- 12/17/25 Collaboration Day 8:10 to 2:40
- 12/17/25 Student Council Meeting 2:45

Lincoln Updates

- Mr. Lang and other district administrators completed walk-throughs with a representative from Wit & Wisdom (new curriculum) in an effort to see how initial implementation is going. We received great feedback and praise from Meg about how well we are implementing and we thoroughly enjoyed our time in classrooms with students and teachers.
- Lincoln PTO is doing a fundraiser through Create to Go.
- We are collecting toys for Toys for Tots through December 11th.
- Lincoln students donated \$850.00 in coins for the United Way.
- The Healthy Husky Challenge on November 24 brought in over \$12,000.00 in donations. Donations will go towards Owatonna Park and Recreation Youth Scholarship Assistance fund and our Physical Education department here at Lincoln. Thank you prizes were handed out in physical education class.

- Lincoln's Student Council held a toilet paper drive for the OHS Huskies Give Week. The toilet paper will be going to Community Pathways.
- Students and families showed extraordinary dedication by supporting multiple fundraisers in November. Their collective efforts not only raised vital support for important causes but also showcased the spirit of giving that defines our school community.

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

Updates:

- We leveled up our music making for our concert (4th/5th and choir) on 12/7.
- Staff are examining progress towards literacy and math goals and making adjustments to interventions as needed.
- Washington families showed their generosity during Husky give week by donating 1,059 boxes of cereal and 589 boxes of bandages!

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

As we begin December at Wilson Elementary, we are excited to make the most of our last few weeks before winter break. This month, we are emphasizing the importance of conflict resolution, providing our students with the tools they need to navigate challenges and build healthier relationships with their peers. Alongside this focus, we are encouraging everyone to spread joy and positivity throughout our school community. From collaborative classroom activities to kindness challenges, our goal is to create an atmosphere of support and compassion, ensuring that every student feels valued and connected as we head into the holiday season.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Dec. 5 - PTO Donuts in December (before school)
- Dec. 11 - Wilson Winter Concert @ OHS
- Dec. 16 - PTO Meeting @ 5:00
- Dec. 18 - Pastries with the Principal
- Dec. 19 - Schoolwide BINGO
- Dec 24 - Jan. 2 - No School - Winter Break - students return January 5th

Owatonna Middle School

Christina Mattson, Principal

At the end of November, OMS Student Council hosted their first Activity Night. Glovember was a huge hit! We had a lot of students attend for the evening festivities.

During the month of December we are busy planning for Husky PRIDE Day. This year we will hold HPD on December 23, the day before winter break. Students will have a variety of activities to choose from on campus and around Owatonna. There will be everything from snowfootball to a day at the movies. This full day event is a great reward for all of the hard work our students put into keeping their PAW (behavior) grades up throughout the first part of the school year.

As you can imagine, this time of year is high energy at the middle school. Students are excited about all the snow, upcoming concerts and events, Husky PRIDE Day, and, of course, winter break.

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

Greetings from Owatonna High School! We are back from the Thanksgiving Break and looking forward to the winter break after a flurry of activity in the next 3 weeks. Students are engaging in high levels of learning in all courses as both quarter and semester courses are deep into the content and its application to learning in the real world. Students continue to impress us with their level of understanding and it is exciting to see them actively engaged in the topics! The semester and quarter both end in January so we will have one final drive once we return from break.

We are also well into the music and athletic seasons with the start of our winter sports, winter concerts and the naming of the cast for our winter musical. Exciting times are ahead and we hope to see you in attendance at many events. Please see our website for a detailed list of all events at OHS.

Area Learning Center

Martina Wagner, Principal

MAAP STARS: Toys for Tots Project

- Students participating in MAAP STARS service event
- Collecting and preparing donations for "Toys for Tots"

- Building community engagement and leadership skills

Staff Professional Learning

- Focus on collaborative teaming and increasing student engagement
- PD aligned to Danielson Domain 3 (questioning, academic talk, active learning)
- Staff implementing high-impact engagement strategies in classrooms

Fall Night School Credit Recovery

- Over 80 students participating in fall night school
- Significant credit recovery progress toward graduation
- Flexible pathway supporting seniors and at-risk students

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

Family Engagement Initiatives

- Increased engagement with families through new monthly newsletters.
- Newsletters include home learning activities, tips for supporting online learners, and highlights of family–student learning partnerships.
- Positive feedback from families reporting more structured support and collaboration at home.

End of Trimester Progress

- Owatonna Online students are successfully wrapping up Trimester 1, including learners participating through the district partnership with Waseca.
- Continued alignment with partner districts ensures consistency in expectations, monitoring, and academic support.

American Education Week Recognition

- Owatonna Online staff were recognized during American Education Week for their commitment to innovation and high-quality online instruction.
- Celebrations highlighted their dedication to student engagement, virtual relationship-building, and flexible learning pathways.