



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

Superintendent Jeff Elstad's Board Report

June 2025

❖ Important Dates

- June 19: District Closed
- July 4: District Closed
- July 9: School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Charles S Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

- We are eagerly anticipating the legislature's passage of a budget for the next biennium. A more detailed report of budget impact for OPS will be available at the July board meeting.
- It has been a pleasure and my life's dream to serve as your superintendent. During my time here, I have been blessed to serve a board that truly lives our mission to inspire excellence for every learner, every day. I will always be grateful for all of you and your support of our students and staff. God bless and be well!

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- We have hired 9 new teachers and 3 new administrators to-date for the 25/26 school year. We have several support staff positions to fill and 3 certified staff positions to fill that we are working hard to get those filled by July 1, 2025.
- Closing 24/25 employee evaluations and rolling over to 25/26
- Group Orientation for new hires began 6/16/25
- Policy committee work
- Employee Relations issues
- PELSB Licensure Applications
- 2 Teacher Apprentices approved for EBD/ASD program; 6 apprentices moving to year 2 in ABS program
- GYO MDE reports

Special Services

Dr. Sarah Knudsen, Director

- District-wide Special Education Leadership Team had its last monthly meeting; agenda included the year-in-review and allowed for team input regarding focus and plans for department priorities next year
- Onboarding incoming Director of Special Services, Shari Mensink, Assistant Director of Special Services, Jill Petersen and Director of Early Learning, Kaci Rendahl
- Year-end reporting and documentation to MDE

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

- We celebrated Superintendent Elstad with an assembly to honor him! We all wore bowties that we decorated in honor of all he has brought to our school district and community. He was surprised (as he thought he was coming to grill for our staff)!
- The year finished strong with a full ticket jar and a celebration at Dartts Park (5th graders vs staff kickball and Kona from our PTO)!
- We will miss our students over the summer, and we are already in full planning for preparing to welcome them back in the fall.

Owatonna Middle School

Christina Mattson, Principal

OMS wrapped up the 2024-2025 school year with our two biggest celebrations; Husky Pride Day and Kyle DeKam Leadership Ceremony.

Students were excited for their end of the year field trips. We had students heading to all kinds of fun places like ValleyFair, Air Insanity, Footgolf and Kerfoot High Ropes Course. It was a great day!

Our KDLA Ceremony was the very last day of school. We honored 20 student nominees who were chosen as outstanding leaders in our school.

It has been a great year at OMS!

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

We are in the last few days of the school year and our focus is to finish strong! Teachers are working one to one with students to support any academic needs and counselors are focused on ensuring all of our seniors have the necessary resources to transition smoothly to college, enlistment or careers.

We have honored so many over the past couple of weeks! We held our annual academic and scholarship night where we awarded over \$700,000 in scholarships and our first round of Owatonna Opportunity Scholarships. We also held a future educator signing, career and armed forces signing and honored our athletes. We will continue this with a send off for our state bound girls golf team and numerous individuals competing in state track and field.

Finally, we are excited to host the most important event of all, commencement! We honored over 400 graduates on stage and awarded them their much deserved Owatonna Diploma.

It has been a great year of celebration and we are grateful for all of the OHS staff that have made it so successful!

Alrea Learning Center (ALC)

Martina Wagner, Principal

- 28 students graduated this year, marking a significant achievement for both the students and staff.
- Building work has begun at the OEC, with upgrades to the HVAC system and installation of a new PA system.
- The summer credit recovery program is fully underway at OHS, ALC, Medford, and Owatonna Online. Nearly 135 students are participating in the program, focusing on recovering credits and staying on track for graduation.

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

Owatonna Online is upgrading its Edgenuity platform with EdgeEX, a new course series that improves the learning experience for both students and teachers.

- **For Students:** Features like personalized avatars, progress trackers, and fillable notes help keep students engaged and on track.
- **For Teachers:** New tools like an easy-to-use course hub and better customization options make managing courses more efficient.