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## **Superintendent Jeff Elstad's Board Report**

*April 2025*

### ❖ Important Dates

- April 28: School Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Crandall Center
- May 15 (Thursday): School Board Work Session, 5:30 p.m. at the District Office
- May 26: No School/District Closed
- May 27 (Tuesday): School Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the District Office

### ❖ District Updates

- At this board meeting, you will be asked to consider a farm lease agreement. This is in regards to the property the district owns east of Owatonna off of Rose St. We have been leasing and renting this property for crop production since we have owned it. This agreement puts our FFA chapter and our Agriculture Department as the beneficiaries of the proceeds.
- Mark Stotts will be presenting the insurance renewal the upcoming year. This year will include an increase of 9%, which is higher than previous years. This year we experienced higher than normal claims which drives the increase higher. That being said, we are still in a better position than most districts who are facing double-digit increases.
- Dr. Champa and I have been in weekly communication to start the transition work. She has scheduled a few full days in the district before her start here. Additionally, she plans to attend most, if not all, of the upcoming school board meetings.

## **Human Resources**

*Chris Picha, Director*

- 75% completed with filling our current open positions
- Continue implementation of new software for applicant tracking, records, professional learning, performance management, absence and time management
- Prescreens are set up for the Director of Special Services position with a hiring goal of 5/15/25.
- Participant in a new Teacher Apprenticeship Cohort for ASD/EBD with outstate school districts and MSU-Mankato

- Employee Relations issues
- Policy Committee Meetings

### **Community Ed/Roosevelt**

*Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director*

- Walking Track at OHS closes for public walking on May 2. We still have 2 weeks of walking data to collect, but to date we have a total of 3,680 walks taken this program year which compares to 3,427 walks taken in the 2024-2025 program year. We recorded 506 registrations, down slightly from a year ago, but more determined walkers! User profiles include stronger participation from the community with a number of community members with disabilities accessing the track. Participation by district employees showed a decrease. Requests for "day passes" increased this year.
- Summer School Age Care has completed registration with 126 contracts submitted. The Summer 2025 program will be hosted at Roosevelt Community School.
- 2025-2026 School Year SAC registration opened on April 21st. Returning families have spoken for just over half of available care slots. Families new to the program will register in the coming days, with anticipation that all care slots will be spoken for. A wait list will be maintained as approximately 20% of our registered families will have their childcare needs change over the summer and no longer need services when we open on September 4th.
- We are pleased to welcome Kayla Kummerfeldt as the SAC Program Specialist on the Community Education Team. Kayla began serving families on March 31st.
- Please stop by the Enviro Show on Saturday, May 10th from 8:00-4:30. Over 70 environmentally-friendly vendors will be on hand to share their skills and knowledge with the community. This event is a family-friendly, community partnership. Lydia Yahnke, Adult Programs Coordinator represents the school district in showcasing this innovative project!
- The Adult Learning Center is preparing to wrap up its academic year and move right into summer programming. Staff have worked hard to stay current in strategies that encourage attendance and retention with our adult students. We are anticipating a 33% decline in our contact hours, which will impact our funding awards for 2025-2026. We remain hopeful that an Integrated English Language and Civics grant submission will be awarded to the Center to further our innovative work in adult learning through the combined lense of education, training and workforce readiness.

### **Special Services**

*Dr. Sarah Knudsen, Director*

- School Social Workers and Counselors completed a three-day series of trainings facilitated by the MDE School Support Professional Consultant. Professional development focused on developing our district-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support for Social Emotional Behavior and Mental Health (MTSS SEBMH)

- Submitted a Demonstration Project grant to MDE to support MTSS SEBMH. The project's focus is on Tier 2 interventions and staff development to be incorporated into PLC work.
- Introductory training for Social Workers to begin Medical Assistance billing in Fall 2025
- District-wide special education staff participated in Raptor training
- Meet with District-wide Special Education Leadership Team; discussed internal systems for documenting time and effort; ongoing review and input for special education programs, process and procedures

## **Teaching and Learning**

*Julie Sullivan, Director*

Without a doubt, it has been a busy year in my department, but there are some exciting outcomes of this work. First, our READ Act training continues to move along with building principals following up with the learning work at staff meetings, ensuring the learning has a purpose. By mid-June, all of our year one participants should have completed the training. In August, our coaches and Kelly Kruger will be trained in the system that will be used with our support personnel next year.

We have landed on a new K-5 Language Arts resource as well; Wit & Wisdom will be implemented next year and is highly aligned to the Science of Reading and is the highest rated knowledge-based resource approved by the state of MN. We are excited to align this resource to the new state standards and the best practices we have learned about when it comes to reading instruction. In addition, after more than a year of research, we have landed on a new math resource for K-5 for the 26-27 school year. Wendy Eggermont led this process, which included presentations from three different vendors, multiple visits to schools to see these resources in action, and much dialogue with the math committee. Last week, the committee came to a unanimous decision to adopt Illustrative Math through Imagine Learning. This next year will be work to align the new standards to this new resource. Although there will likely be some teams/schools piloting this next year, full implementation will happen the following year.

Finally, one more big shift is the adoption of a new data warehouse system. Viewpoint has long been the system we have used, but they were bought out by Educlimber. Kenneth led the research into a variety of tools, but we ultimately landed on Educlimber, which offers a deeper platform for tracking student progress. That will be in place starting this summer into next year.

### **Upcoming Events:**

- Thursday, April 24: Last DCAC of the year
- Tuesday, April 29: EL Programming discussion
- Thursday, May 1: American Indian Parent Advisory Council meeting
- Monday, May 5: JA Biztown Interviews @ OMS
- Thursday, May 8: Bosch Community Fund meeting/reporting
- Monday, May 19: Mentor/Mentee Spring Gathering
- Thursday, May 22: JA Biztown with OMS 6th graders

## **Lincoln Elementary**

*Justin Lang, Principal*

### Important Dates

- April 23rd-Student council meeting at 2:45 in Sarah Kaley's room
- April 25th-Bowl for Kid's Sake at 3:00 at Sparetime (staff)
- April 28th-PLC meetings 2:45
- April 29th-April 30th-MCA Science testing for 5th graders
- April 29th and May 1st-Kindergarten interviews at Lincoln starting at 3:00
- PTO BOGO Book Fair held during kindergarten interviews and the PTO bingo event on Friday.
- May 2nd, PTO bingo at Lincoln 6:00 in the old gym.

### Lincoln Updates

- On Monday, April 7th, the day after spring break, we had a Transition Day at Lincoln. The goal of this day was to rebuild relationships, regulate students and rebuild routines.
- On April 9th-Laura K Murray shared with Lincoln students about her journey to become an author, her writing/research process and what it takes to get a book published.
- PLCs and OL & LA-Staff are continuing their learning work with our READ Act OL & LA training and the connection to their PLC learning work. Vocabulary has been the focus the past month and we are leaning into the learning work around comprehension and the assessment practice of reading.
- We are also working on preparing for next year with class placements and getting excited for our end of the year events!
- The Big Brother Big Sister committee has been busy organizing events to raise money. The last event, currently going on, is a Cash Drive including students and staff. Staff members have volunteered to reward the students if goals are met. The students are hoping they raise enough money so that Justin Lang has to shave his head!

## **Washington Elementary**

*Libby Zeman, Principal*

- We are kicking off quarter four strong with many grade levels doing research and showcase projects.
- Our kindness leadership team helped spread the word about positive ways to resolve conflict with other peers.
- Students in second & third grade as well as choir and our students in Stride all had fantastic music concerts!

## **Wilson Elementary**

*Cassie Mitchell, Principal*

As we near the end of April, it's hard to believe that we have just six weeks left of the school year. Our MCA testing for 3rd-5th graders has been going really smoothly, and I'm so proud to see our students taking their time and showing what they know. Beyond the focus on testing, we've also witnessed incredible growth in our social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, reflecting our strong sense of community and teamwork. Our students are learning not only to excel academically but to support one another as friends and classmates. I couldn't be prouder of the positive strides we're making together!

### **Important Upcoming Dates:**

- Apr. 29 - 30th - Science MCA Testing for 5th grade
- Apr. 29 & May 1 - Kindergarten Interviews
- May 7 - Wilson Track Meet - 3rd - 5th grade
- May 21 - All City Track Meet 4:00 PM - 7:30 PM at OHS
- **May 26 - No School - Memorial Day**
- May 31 - PTO Carnival
- Jun. 5 - 5th Grade Graduation
- **Jun. 6 - Last Day of School**

## **Owatonna Middle School**

*Christina Mattson, Principal*

- We are right in the middle of our MCA testing season. Students are working hard on their Math and Reading MCAs.
- Last week we announced our 20 KDLA semi-finalists. We have a great group of students who have been nominated by their peers and recognized as leaders in our student body. It is awesome to see the students chosen because they truly represent the qualities of kindness, dedication, leadership, and integrity.
- As our spring continues we are busy planning for Husky PRIDE Day and helping students get their PAW scores up so they are eligible to attend all of the fun field trips and activities offered on this celebration day.

## Owatonna High School

*Kory Kath, Principal*

- We hosted our final hybrid day today. Students were engaged online in asynchronous learning and staff were available to support students with work as needed. Some of the day was used for professional development around students safety measures and the afternoon was designated for standards implementation and scope & sequence work for courses. The time is also used by our EL and SPED teachers to complete their Read Act training.
- We have only 7 weeks of school left and are focused on end of year events that highlight students and celebrate our school community. Prom and After Prom are this Saturday, April 26th and tonight is our Lion's Club banquet that honors seniors in NHS. In the coming weeks we will have teams move to sections for spring sports, attend Big 9 Music Festival and celebrate all music ensembles at our annual Pop's concert. Amazing events and we invite you all to go to our website so you can plan to attend our events.
- We are prepared for a great end to the school year and celebrating our seniors at commencement on Friday, June 6th.

## Owatonna Area Learning Center

*Martina Wagner, Principal*

### Student Achievement & Engagement

- **12 students** made the **A/B Honor Roll** for Quarter 3, a reflection of consistent academic effort and growth.
- **22 students** successfully **passed all of their classes**, meeting core credit goals and moving closer to graduation.
- **18 students** participated in **Made in Owatonna Day**, visiting local businesses to learn about career paths, workforce expectations, and employment opportunities within the community. This experience helps bridge classroom learning with real-world applications and post-secondary planning.

### Planning & Innovation

- The ALC team has begun **strategic planning** for the **2025-2026 school year**.
  - Focus areas include refining our **master schedule** to better align with student needs and staff expertise.
  - We are also exploring **creative programming models** that expand credit recovery options, support individualized learning, and increase access to career pathways.

### Community Connections

- On **May 15**, students will participate in a **Downtown Cleanup Day** as part of a **community service learning project**.
  - This event helps build civic pride and responsibility while giving students the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the Owatonna community.

## **Owatonna Online 7–12**

*Martina Wagner, Principal*

### **Career Readiness & Work-Based Learning**

- We launched Work-Based Learning opportunities for students in Quarter 4, providing structured pathways for students to gain real-world experience.
- Students participating in these programs are already demonstrating strong workplace readiness skills, including time management, communication, and responsibility—key competencies for post-secondary success.

### **Growing Partnerships**

- Owatonna Online continues to expand its reach through new partnerships with school districts across Minnesota.
- We have recently welcomed students from:
  - **NRHEG**
  - **Waseca**
  - **Fertile-Beltrami**
  - **Bemidji**
  - **Pequot Lakes**
- Onboarding for these new districts is underway, with a focus on smooth transitions and aligned academic planning.