

Superintendent Jeff Elstad's Board Report

December 2024

❖ Important Dates

- December 9: Truth in Taxation 6:00 p.m.
- December 23-January 1: No School
- December 23-25: District Closed
- December 31: District Closed
- January 1: District Closed
- January 6: School Board Organizational Meeting/Work Session, 5:30 p.m.
- January 17: End of 2nd Quarter
- January 20: No School, Staff Development
- January 21: No School, Teacher Work Day
- January 27: School Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.

❖ District Updates

- At this meeting, you are being asked to consider acquiring realty services from Hamilton Real Estate group to handle the sale of the Bridge Street Property. Hamilton Real Estate group was selected by the Board Facilities Committee out of two proposals that were submitted. Once approval is received the property will be processed for the sale market.
- I was able to participate in a focused planning session with the Owatonna Partners for Economic Development earlier this week to re-evaluate our current roadmap for OPED and determine if the plan needed revision or editing. I continue to appreciate the unique partnership that our district has with the other civic governmental bodies in our community.
- Next week marks the beginning of our new board member orientation. Mr. Kubicek and Ms. VanGelder will officially begin their terms of office on January 6 at our organizational meeting.
- Lastly, I would like to publicly thank both Eric Schuster and Deborah Bandel for their service to our students, families and community. Being a school board member is challenging, yet rewarding. I appreciated having both of them as board members and the different perspectives they brought to our discussions.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

HR Updates

- Recruitment and Selection of staff and onboarding new hires
- Employee Relations Issues
- Policy Committee work
- Adult & Student GYO Pathway Grant annual review
- Teacher Apprenticeship Meetings
- 2026 GYO Grant Application
- Student Affairs Issues
- Power Schools Implementation

Finance & Operations

Lori Volz, Director

Finance/ Business Office

- The Finance Committee met on December 2nd to review the 23-24 audit report.
- Work on the 24-25 Amended/Revised Budget has begun.
- 25-26 cost reduction plan development will continue.
- We welcome our new Controller, Linda Guenther, to the district office.
- The Long Term Facility Bond is scheduled to be approved by the board

Food & Nutrition Services:

- We are still filling 3 cooks and cook/cashier positions as well as our secretarial position.
- The Wellness Committee will meet in January.
- New ovens have been installed at Lincoln Elementary. There are some additional equipment needs that are being evaluated.

Roosevelt/Community Ed

Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director

Family Open Houses are scheduled for December 11-13 at each of the School Age Care sites. It is our time to enjoy activities and friendships with parents and siblings of our charges, with an opportunity to learn more about daily site activities.

Adult Basic Education is finishing up its Consortium-level annual fiscal reporting due to MDE. New programming initiatives continue to be built with local work sites. Regional career pathway work and citizenship instruction are also prepping for post January 1st launch. Programs are designed to upskill or reskill adult learners seeking additional employability skills. Working regionally in the delivery of these programs affords Owatonna area adults with a broader cadre of learning opportunities and instructor expertise that Owatonna does not have the capacity to offer. That being said, Owatonna likewise has expertise that is shared with the SE ABE and

Hiawatha Valley consortiums. Our expertise lies in worksite English language acquisition, bi-lingual Driver's Permit Prep and integrated education and training across a host of career and content areas developed through grants and partnerships designed to meet local labor market opportunities.

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

As we near the winter break, we are in the process of planning winter benchmark assessments that will occur in January. This is a big undertaking but provides us with valuable information on student progress. This data is analyzed to make sure students are receiving the supports they need. The elementary math team will have had their second meeting by break and are teeing up their learning of the new standards and practices to help identify a new resource for K-5 math. Our elementary social studies committee had their first meeting around the new standards on Tuesday, December 3. The elementary LA committee is also deep into standards work and assessing the core resource we have to ensure we have what we need to meet the new standards. As I write, the CoGAT testing process has started, which is used to identify students for Gifted/Talented services. We are also nearly half way through our READ Act training. In addition, we recently learned that our data information system has been purchased by another company and will no longer be available after June 30; we are in the process of looking into other vendors that can do what Viewpoint offered us with additional features. As you can see, the T&L team is keeping very busy!

- Monday, December 2: 6th grade LA standards work
- Tuesday, December 3: Social Studies committee meeting
- Thursday, December 5: *The Anxious Generation* community book study committee meeting
- Tuesday, December 10: Math committee meeting

Special Services

Dr. Sarah Knudsen, Director

- Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) Training is being offered the week of December 9th. We have 11 staff participating. Four other districts are participating. Approximately 25 staff from across the region will attend the training.
- Safety Care (replacing Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)) started December 3rd for Washinton and Wilson; training will continue by building over the next four months.
- Apprentices are finishing their first semester of their coursework. The first semester has gone very well. Apprentices and journey teachers are looking forward to the next rotation.

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- December 2nd-December 13th-Winter Hats, Gloves and Socks Drive
- December 12th-PTO Open Gym & Lincoln Swag pick up 5:00-6:30 at Lincoln
- November 21st-December 10th CHAMPS after school program
- December 2nd-December 6th Inclusive Schools Week

Lincoln Updates

- The Lincoln Student Council's first community service project is collecting winter hats, gloves and socks for the students at Lincoln to use when they are needed.
- The Healthy Huskies Challenge in November brought in over \$8,100.00 in donations. These donations will go towards Community Pathways, United Way of Steele County and our PE department at Lincoln.
- CHAMPS is an after school program that reinforces reading and math, by including hands-on activity, movement, computer support and small group work for students who qualify.
- Classrooms viewed a slide show and chose various activities to complete for Inclusive Schools Week.

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

- We appreciated celebrating Inclusive Schools Week.
- Our 4th and 5th graders worked hard learning music and dancing for our Winter Concert.
- We are utilizing a new model for student council that gets more students involved in a leadership role by utilizing a committee structure, and our students have been contributing greatly to the positive culture in our building and community!

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

As we enter December at Wilson Elementary, we are excited to make the most of our last three 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 3-19 (Tues/Thurs) - After School Program
- Dec. 11- 1st Grade Field Trip
- Dec. 17- PTO Meeting (5:00-6:00 pm)
- Dec. 20- Carolers visit Wilson
- Dec. 20- Pizza with the Principal
- Dec. 20- Steele County Blades School Appreciation Game (7:00-9:00 pm)

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

We are in the final few weeks before winter break and student learning and engagement is high! Students know they are in the final half of quarter classes and 5 weeks of semester classes. This makes intervention, course assignments and second semester planning a priority. Teachers are actively meeting student needs before and after school as well as Compass days. It is great to see the engagement!

We are excited to host our second Family Connect event on December 9th. We will be greeting families and discussing all of the opportunities we have for activities and discussing our MN Model process. It will be great dialogue and allow us to further connect and support families.

Finally, we are in full school activity mode with all athletic and arts programs offering events that showcase our students. We welcome all of you to attend. Please see the district website for the calendar of events. Go Huskies!

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Night School Success
 - Our Night School program concluded on December 12th, with over 55 students completing courses for credit recovery. This achievement demonstrates our students' dedication to catching up and staying on track toward graduation.
- Student Engagement and Growth
 - Teachers and staff continue to focus on daily engagement through Edgenuity and Infinite Campus, ensuring students are completing their courses and logging attendance.
 - Support structures, including daily office hours and Homework Help sessions, remain vital resources for student success.
- Upcoming Goals
 - We're preparing for January initiatives, including the next steps for Work-Based Learning partnerships and expanding opportunities for students to connect their coursework with real-world experiences.

Area Learning Center (ALC)

Martina Wagner, Principal

- **MAAP STARS Leadership & Community Engagement**
 - ALC students are actively participating in MAAP STARS, focusing on leadership development and personal growth. Through this statewide program, students are building skills in communication, teamwork, and academic achievement while preparing for events in 2025.
- **Toys for Tots Community Project**
 - ALC students and staff have been busy partnering with the local community for the Toys for Tots initiative. This project provides toys to families in need during the holiday season, fostering a sense of community engagement and generosity among students.
- **Night School Completion**
 - Like Owatonna Online, the ALC has seen significant success in its Night School program, with many students gaining credits toward graduation. This milestone reflects our commitment to meeting students where they are and supporting their unique pathways to success.
- **Looking Ahead**
 - As we head into the new year, ALC staff will continue to focus on high attendance rates, credit recovery, and social-emotional growth. Compass Time, introduced in November, is already showing promise as a tool for individualized student support.