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Dr. Tammy Champa

October 2025

❖ Important Dates

- October 31: End of First Quarter
- November 3: No School, Teacher Work Day/Professional Development
- November 10: Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Meeting and A&I Progress, 5:00 p.m., Owatonna Public Schools District Office
- November 10: Special Meeting to Canvass Results of the Election/Work Session, 5:30 p.m., Owatonna Public Schools District Office
- November 14: No School, Grades PK-5, Conferences
- November 24: School Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Charles S Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

While it's hard to believe that MEA is already in our rearview mirror, there is a flurry of activity going on within our classrooms and across the district.

➤ **Levy and Financial Planning**

Our upcoming operating levy remains a key focus as we work to ensure sustainable funding to maintain the high-quality programs and the necessary support for our students. The community conversations, presentations, and outreach efforts have been intentional across our district. Thank you to all who have attended events and have engaged with questions. It continues to be the goal of the district to ensure all questions are answered and our residents feel informed when they cast their ballot. With the remaining time prior to election day, we're happy to answer questions, meet with individuals or groups. Our collective message regarding the levy remains clear: this funding will provide the resources to continue the excellence in Owatonna Public Schools.

➤ **School Perceptions Survey**

Our districtwide School Perceptions survey is now underway for staff, and parents/guardians. Our students in grades 4-12 will have the opportunity for their voice to be heard beginning on 10/22. This process provides us with an invaluable opportunity to listen and learn. The feedback we receive will guide improvement efforts across every building and strengthen our shared commitment to continuous growth. Thank you to everyone who helped ensure that every voice had the opportunity to be

heard. With all that is going on across the district, the extra efforts are greatly appreciated.

➤ **Grant Opportunities**

Pursuing grant funding is an important strategy for Owatonna Public Schools as we strive to enhance educational opportunities while maintaining fiscal responsibility to our community. Grants allow the district to innovate, expand, and sustain initiatives that directly benefit students, staff, and families—without placing additional burden on local taxpayers. However, it is important to note that grant funding is highly competitive, time-limited, and never guaranteed, making it a valuable but temporary supplement to the district's long-term financial plan.

➤ **Curriculum, Instruction, Partnerships and Community Collaboration**

There wasn't a moment that wasn't jam-packed during our recent professional development day. From embracing new curriculum, to refining practices to expanding opportunities within our community, we are deeply grateful for the time, energy and care our teachers and support staff invest each day to strengthen instruction to ensure that every learner has access to high-quality, engaging learning experiences. Their commitment truly reflects the heart of our mission—to meet the needs of every learner, every day.

Finally, I want to express appreciation to the many businesses and community organizations that partner with Owatonna Public Schools. From internship and mentorship programs to project-based learning opportunities and staff tours, these partnerships enhance the educational experience of our students and connect classroom learning to real-world application.

- In alignment with our **Mission Moment theme for this year—"Partnerships"**—we are reminded that our greatest successes are shared ones as we continue to be grateful for our many partnerships.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- Continuing interviews and selection of candidates for our open support staff positions and onboarding new hires
- Recruiting substitute teachers and support staff
- Continued implementation of PowerSchools
- Job Fairs - St. Mary's, UW River Falls
- Employee Relations Issues
- Policy Committee work
- MASPA Work Group reviewing New Minnesota Paid Family Leave implications and implementation processes
- Teacher Apprenticeship Weekly meetings - 2 cohorts
- STAR Report
- GYO Work Plan Reports

Roosevelt Community Ed

Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director

- Members of the Adult Education staff recently participated in professional development about how adult brains learn. The training was at a high level and allowed staff to process the research as well as network in "job alike" groupings to capture the nuggets of this new research. This annual professional development training is a priority the SE ABE Consortium and staff from across the regional program sites participated.
- SAC sites are fully staffed for the first time since the pandemic. Professional development and site routine training is underway as staff configurations have changed and we want to build quality sites around the needs of children and their families.
- All SAC sites are undergoing a security audit and having their training needs reassessed. Enrollments are beginning to shift as families are facing financial decisions impacting their ability to purchase child care. Requests for part-time and on-call care have also been noted. Site wait lists will be addressed as a result. Alternative enrollment options will continue to be a topic of conversation in an effort to meet community needs.

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

As I write this, we just finished our first additional PD day the board was kind enough to approve for this year. What a day of learning it was! Some of the highlights of the day:

- K-5 had a full day of Wit & Wisdom training with three separate trainers here to work with our staff
- Early Childhood continued their work with early reading skills and their new Heggerty curriculum
- Special Education had all teachers together for the afternoon for due process training
- 6-12 Language Arts, Social Studies, and Math worked on standards alignment
- OHS did business tours that people were excited about
- So much more happened on this day!!

We are hyper focused on early reading skills and ensuring our students are prepared for the next level. Adopting a new resource will not result in an overnight change, but we are headed in the right direction with structured literacy and strong foundational programs. We are doing regular classroom walk-throughs and will continue to support our classroom teachers as they implement this new resource. In addition, OHS did its first run with the required reading testing from the state. All students in first semester English classes took the ROAR assessment. After that, students who showed a need for further diagnostic testing took the CaptiBasix test last week; this is a requirement from the state that all schools across the state have to implement this year. This test will allow us to see who at the secondary level still needs support with reading skills. This year is laying the groundwork for how this will work next year with interventions at the secondary level.

Upcoming dates from T&L:

- Tuesday, October 21: Wit & Wisdom Implementation Check: Kelly Kruger, Julie Sullivan, W&W Trainer, and two building principals (all day)
- Wednesday, October 22: TDE Committee Meeting @ 3:10
- Monday, November 3: PD Day for PreK-5; 1/2 day with Math standards and 1/2 day with W&W planning

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.

-Delivered 10/20 Professional Development:

- Due Process topic 1: Progress Reporting procedure
- Due Process topic 2: Administrative Designee procedure
- Due Process topic 3: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

-Planning for 11/3 E-5 Professional Development

-Submitted an Owatonna People's Press article.

-Presented on KOWZ radio show.

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- October 2nd-4th grade field to Farm America
- October 7th-Picture re take day with groups

- October 10th-Firetrucks visited kindergarten
- October 14th-Author Jenny Baertsch visited Lincoln
- October 15th-We All Play end of the quarter celebration was replaced with popcorn and a movie due to weather
- October Assembly-New Gym at 9:15
- October 27th-2nd grade field trip to Quarry Hill
- October 31st-Birthday book giveaway for October birthdays

Updates

- Kindergarten had a visit from our local Fire Department during Fire Safety Week.
- Lincoln teaching staff have been busy in collaboration meetings centered around Literacy (Wit & Wisdom/Phonics), Math and Social Emotional Learning (SEL).
- Children's author Jenny Baertsch visited Lincoln and talked about her latest book Junkyard Tough A Tail of Bravery
- The October assembly was focused around the PBIS theme which is "Throw kindness around like confetti" and awards to classes were given out for the golden tray and the golden dust pan.

McKinley Elementary

Justin Kiel, Principal

Another great month at McKinley!

Upcoming Events:

- October 28 - Levy Informational Meeting (hosted by our elementary schools) - 6pm at McKinley
- October 30 - Children's Dental Clinic
- October 31 - End of 1st Quarter
- November 3 - Teacher Workday
- November 6 - Collaboration Day
- November 7 - PTO Glow in the Dark Dance
- November 10, 13, 14 - Family-Teacher Conferences

Thank you for your continued support!

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

- Students have already earned their first school-wide celebration (time with their buddy class).

- We are working hard on our action steps (planning for our new literacy resource as well as implementing interventions where needed) as we work towards our reading and math goals.
- Teachers are engaged in committees to support our students' sense of belonging, learning, school culture and engaging environment.

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

Staff and students at Wilson have been busy embracing new opportunities and challenges this year, and it's truly amazing to see the joy they find in learning. With the rollout of our new literacy curriculum, Wit and Wisdom, we've already witnessed remarkable growth in their reading and writing skills, sparking creativity and critical thinking in the classroom. In addition, our 4th graders are early adopters for the new math curriculum, Illustrative Mathematics, and we've noticed a big shift in collaborative conversations, problem solving and engagement. We are excited to continue to see the benefit of all the hard work!

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Oct. 21-23 - Let's Smile Dental Clinic
- Oct. 22 - Unity Day
- Oct. 24 - Fall Fundraiser Pick-up (small gym)
- Oct. 28 - Elementary Levy Meeting 6:00 pm at McKinley
- Oct. 31 - End of Quarter 1- Bowling Celebration
- Nov. 6 - Wilson Family Night- Magic Show

Owatonna Middle School

Christina Mattson, Principal

We have had an excellent start to the 2025-2026 school year at OMS. Now that we're nearing the 2 month mark, students are used to our routines and expectations. We've enjoyed the warmer weather in September and October, so many classes have been able to get outside. All students have completed the beginning of the year FastBridge Reading and Math assessments, we were thrilled to see students working hard and taking these assessments seriously. Our 6th and 7th grade students have completed their first of six exploratory Wheel classes. The purpose of the Wheel is to offer 6th and 7th grade students an opportunity to experience a little of each of our main elective options. Overall, it's been a great start to the school year!

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

Owatonna High school is in the last two weeks of 1st quarter. This means that many students are finalizing one or more of their courses for the school year and looking to begin new courses as well. This has led to purposeful family communication and dialogue on support, next steps and ways we can better serve students. Conferences were one of the main events for this and we saw greater attendance for this event and a larger number of 9th grade families.

We are also hosting Compass Days the first and third Wednesdays of the month which allow students to meet with teachers, join clubs and use hybrid time to meet the needs of coursework. We are excited about the utilization of the time and know it teaches important skills for time management and belonging to our school community.

Finally, the fall activities season is ending soon and winter season is upon us. We want to congratulate our fall teams and ensembles on a great season and look forward to seeing many at our events and fall play that are still competing and showing this season. For all events please go to the Big 9 website for updates.

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Welcoming a new partnership district — Kasson-Mantorville Public Schools — beginning second quarter.
- Enrollment continues to grow, with 377 students enrolled in grades 4–12.
- OO counselors and social work teams are actively participating in BRISC training to strengthen interventions that support student engagement and achievement in the virtual space.

Area Learning Center

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Wrapping up the first quarter with 82 students enrolled. Preparing to onboard new students for the second quarter.
- Hosting our First Quarter Achievement Day to celebrate academic success and strong attendance.
- The ALC team is centering PLC goals around collaborative teaming to enhance student achievement.
- Staff have flourished in their professional learning, maintaining a strong focus on helping students meet individual goals throughout the year.