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Dr. Tammy Champa

September 2025

❖ Important Dates

- October 13: School Board Work Session, 5:30 pm, District Office
- October 16: No School/MEA
- October 17: No School/MEA
- October 20: No School / Staff Development
- October 27: School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Charles S Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

- This year's theme for mission moments is to highlight the number of partnerships that strengthen and enhance the work of the district.
- Homecoming is more than just a tradition here in Owatonna! It's a celebration of community, school spirit, and unbelievable pride.
- This fall, Owatonna Public Schools is hosting numerous opportunities to engage with our community, share clear and factual information about the upcoming levy, and answer residents' questions. These sessions are part of our commitment to transparency, informed decision-making, and open dialogue with those we serve. While there are a number of public presentations on the calendar, we're always looking for additional opportunities. If you know of a group that might be interested, please reach out to schedule.
- This fall, Owatonna Public Schools is excited to launch a perception survey for our students, staff, and families. This important initiative reflects our unwavering commitment to our strategic directions and to ensuring that every stakeholder has a voice in shaping the future of our schools. Feedback is vital as we continue to grow, improve, and serve our community with excellence.
- Safety is a top priority in all we do. We are continuously seeking ways to improve and strengthen our practices.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- Continuing interviews and selection of candidates for our open support staff positions and onboarding new hires
- Policy Committee Work
- Employee Relations and student issues
- PELSB supply and demand report
- Opening of STAR (Staff automated reporting) report
- Continued work marketing and implementing the student and adult GYO programs and teacher apprentice programs (planning for cohort 3); development of new programs
- Exploring funding and writing grants for Teacher Apprentice Program - attempting to find sustainable funding sources

Special Services

Shari Mensink, Director

We finalized our 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.

Child Count as of 9/16/25: 1027

- EC 143
- Lincoln 111
- Washington + St. Mary's 133
- Wilson 95
- McKinley 113
- OMS 170
- OHS 159

- ALC 23
- OO 80

Preparing for Professional Development on 10/20:

- Procurement procedures
- Due Process topic 1: Administrative Designee procedures
- Due Process topic 2: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- September 24th-Bus Safety at Lincoln at 8:30
- September 26th-Bring Your Parent to PE Day
- September 30th-4th Grade Kindness Retreat

Updates

- Many students and parents attended Classroom Connection Days at Lincoln. Students met their teachers, took a learners survey and were given an overview of the year.
- The Back to School Bash and Foam Party was held on the Lincoln School East playground. It was well attended by Lincoln students and their families. Kona Ice was also part of the party.
- Lincoln staff took part in their first collaboration day of the year. All 4 elementary schools are implementing a collaboration schedule. Our first collaboration day focused on reflection of our implementation of Module 0 from our new ELA Resource, Wit and Wisdom. We also included time to dig into Module 1. Our collaboration days will focus on being reflective and responsive to student and staff needs. When we meet, our focus may be on Literacy, Math, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) or reflecting on data.
- During Homecoming week, students and staff had various dress up days. Friday will be the annual first grade Teddy Bear Parade. First graders will pull around a homemade float they designed for parents, students and staff to see.
- We have also started our PLC process and will be continuing that with goal setting and reflecting on data collected from our fall assessments.

McKinley Elementary

Justin Kiel, Principal

What a great start to our 25-26 school year! We're so excited to be back into routines, relationships, and learning!

Our school theme this year is “All In, All Welcome!” This theme focuses on our continued priority to ensure all feel welcome and valued at McKinley.



We started the year with a new reading resource (Wit & Wisdom) that is aligned to the Science of Reading. We’ve been excited to already see what our learners are discussing, reading, and learning as they finish up module 0. We are excited to see this resource in action.

Additionally, McKinley is starting a Collaboration model, much like Washington has run for the last few years. This provides consistent time for teachers to collaborate around resources, professional development, and student learning. We start our first collaboration on September 23.

We look forward to a great 25-26 school year!

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

- We are all leveling up learning as we begin implementing new curriculum resources during our language arts block.
- Students are leveling up kindness, engagement, focus and skills in all subject areas!
- We are building relationships with students and analyzing data to create some action steps for our building goals in order to level up in reading, math and students feeling valued at school!

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

As we embark on the opening weeks of this academic year, I am filled with excitement by the vibrant learning, laughter, and growth that have already flourished among our staff and students! Our dedicated educators have embraced the new literacy curriculum with enthusiasm, while students engage in enriching academic conversations that spark curiosity and

critical thinking. The annual PTO Ice Cream Social was a fantastic way to kick off the year, and I am delighted to report that we surpassed our previous record by serving an impressive 20 buckets of ice cream! This event beautifully highlighted the enthusiasm and involvement of our families. Such opportunities are essential in cultivating a strong sense of community and support for everyone involved, and I am genuinely thrilled about the positive foundation we are building together.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Sept. 23 - Deadline for Fall Fundraiser
- Oct. 1 - Wilson Student Leader Meeting
- Oct. 2 - Multilingual Night (5:00-7:00 pm)
- Oct. 14 - Picture Retake Day
- Oct. 16-17 MEA Break No School

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

Greetings from Owatonna High School and happy homecoming week!

It is an exciting time at OHS. We are in the midst of setting routines and finding our pace as we begin the school year with our freshman class and all of the new students to our school. All students are fully engaged in classes and have refined schedules as well as supports needed to find their way through the various courses they are registered for this quarter.

Our staff is prepared to meet the needs of all learners and to have conversations with them and families to ensure that we are all aware of the needs of our learners and how they can be successful as they set goals and routines for their year at OHS.

Homecoming week is a fun time for all students and it is filled with dress up days, royalty, games, parade and our dance! It is a time of celebration and brings out amazing school spirit. A huge shout out to our student council and their advisors for the amazing energy they put into the events. We look forward to seeing our community celebrate and fill the town with Husky Pride!

Finally, on October 9th we will host our first all school conference night. Families are invited to come to OHS to check on student progress and have conversations on student engagement in courses. This is a critical opportunity for us to partner with all families and ensure we are supporting them in the new school year.

We look forward to seeing you at OHS events and thank you for your support!

ALC

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Enrollment: The ALC is currently serving 83 students.
- Team Focus: Staff are actively engaged in collaborative teaming, setting clear school-year goals, and utilizing 761 Foundation grants to provide additional opportunities for students.
- Student Success: Our continued priority is enrollment, attendance, and high academic achievement, with graduation as the ultimate goal for every student.
- New Support: This year, we were awarded Title Grant funding that allowed us to hire an Academic Educational Assistant. This role is dedicated to supporting student agency, increasing academic engagement, and helping to close the achievement gap.

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Enrollment
 - Grades 4–6: 19
 - Grades 7–8: 36
 - Grades 9–12: 304
- Student Support
 - Implemented Achievement Mentorship for grades 7–12, operating like an advisory: weekly achievement checks, live supports, and ongoing encouragement tailored to online learning.
- Family Engagement
 - Ongoing program webinars for new and prospective families.
 - Next webinar: Tuesday, September 23 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. (two sessions). See Website under Owatonna Online for the Google Meet link
- Partnership Districts: We continue to grow our partnership districts:
 - Bemidji, East Grand Forks, Waseca, Northfield, Fertile-Beltrami, Pequot Lakes, Waterville–Elysian–Morristown (WEM), and Triton.