

Dr. Tammy Champa

February 2026

❖ Important Dates

- March 9: School Board Work Session, 5:30 pm, District Office
- March 23: School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

- As a point of pride for our district and community, the following was received from a community volunteer who regularly serves as a ticket taker at our athletic events:

“I scan tickets at hockey, football and basketball games and am always impressed with how polite the students are when scanning or purchasing tickets and I think it's nice to acknowledge them for that and to make people aware of their behavior! Often we only hear the bad things and not enough of the good things and I think we should let them know that it's pretty awesome the way they behave.”

We are grateful for community members who take the time to recognize our students and appreciate every opportunity to positively recognize and support our students.

- Budget adjustments are never easy. The Owatonna School District has been incredibly thoughtful and intentional in this work, approaching each decision through the lens of our core priorities: student learning, safe and supportive environments, and staff support. Throughout the process, teams have carefully reviewed programs, staffing structures, and operational efficiencies while striving to minimize direct impact on the classroom whenever possible. While difficult choices were required to ensure long-term financial stability, this work was grounded in our shared responsibility to serve every learner, every day.
- Owatonna Public Schools has been diligently working to continue to support student engagement and learning by addressing barriers to in-person learning by providing temporary alternative learning options. Through many partnerships, the district was able to provide additional transportation support, remote learning options for students in grades PreK-3 and our Owatonna Online option for grades 4-12. Thank you to everyone who worked diligently to ensure students were at the heart of our work. At this time, all temporary supports are scheduled to return to normal on the 2nd of March.

- Currently, the district is working to establish the parameters for the 2027-2028 school calendar. A survey designed to guide the start date, staff development structure and the end of the school year is currently being conducted to provide guidance and rationale for the upcoming calendar.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- 2026-2027 staffing reassignments and transfers discussions
- Recruitment and selection of staff and substitutes for 26/27 and onboarding new hires
- Upcoming Job Fairs - River Falls, South Dakota, Iowa State, UNI, Wisconsin Area, University of Iowa, Eden Prairie
- Employee Relations Issues
- Teacher Apprenticeship and GYO programs - recruiting for our 3rd cohort
- Policy Committee work
- CEU and Lane Changes
- Negotiations

Community Ed/Roosevelt

Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director

- The Adult Learning Center team used their January 16th PD Day to work through new learning tools they were exposed to at the recent statewide Language and Literacy Conference, sponsored by Hamline University. The team has been researching tools that provide another level of intervention as we remediate and reinforce classroom learning experiences. On-demand virtual training available through GED Testing Service and the Coalition for Adult Basic Education provided additional PD for a full day of teacher learning. Adult students are currently enrolling in regional virtual training for Community Interpreter, CNA and Para Educator. Seven students have committed to programming that runs throughout the spring trimester. A few additional seats remain available.
- The School Age Care program is busy planning for 5 days of Fun Days during Spring Break. Work on their strategic goals continues around site safety plans, gathering user feedback and building a model to incorporate preK learners into the SAC program.
- Adult Programs Coordinator, Lydia Yahnke, hosted a statewide network of Adult/Family Enrichment Coordinators at Roosevelt on February 20th.
- Fund 4 programs migrated their registration software on February 21st to an upgraded version of the current software. The user experience will be fresh and updated in time for the March 9th Spring and Summer Registration.
- In addition to the Spring/Summer program launch, big events CE is immersed in for spring include the Fix-It Clinic, Community Connect, and the Enviro Show.

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

As I write this update, we have officially completed Capti testing for all qualifying students in grades 4-12. This is the state-required test for students who showed signs of dyslexia based upon FastBridge or the ROAR assessment. On Monday, February 16, representatives from the teaching ranks in grades 4-12 and some administrators had a session on how to interpret the Capti data in order to begin discussing interventions. We are also in the process of applying for a trial of a new reading intervention geared toward 6-12 students. Teachers at OMS will be piloting this intervention until the end of the school year and will be accessing data along the way to follow student progress. Our hope is to implement this intervention next year at both OMS and OHS for students who show the need to build on reading skills. We are also gearing up for the testing season coming up with ACCESS testing already completed at OHS and underway soon in our other schools. While testing is a necessary part of our work, it is what we do with the data that is the most important. We are working to fine tune our core instruction and interventions to best meet the needs of our students.

Upcoming events for the T&L Department:

- Wednesday, February 18: Mentor PD 3:15
- Friday, February 20: ALC Student Advisory
- Monday, February 23: AIPAC Meeting 4:45-6:00
- Tuesday, February 24: Early Adopter Math meeting 3:00-4:15
- Thursday, February 26: Reading Intervention Vendor Showcase in Rochester 8:00-2:15
- Friday, February 27: Visit Blue Ribbon School in Mankato--Kennedy Elementary

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- 2/2/26 Lincoln staff meeting
- 2/03/26 PTO meeting 6:00 to 7:00
- 2/10/26 & 2/12/26 Read and Feed during lunch
- 2/10/26 Lincoln conferences 3:00-7:00
- 2/11/26 Student council meeting at 2:45
- 2/12/26 Lincoln conferences 3:00-7:00
- 2/12/26 4th grade NAEP assessments
- 2/13/26 Lincoln conferences 7:40-12:00
- 2/17/26 CHAMPS starts (Lincoln's after school program)
- 2/18/26 Site team meeting at 2:50
- 2/19/26 Rotary Club will deliver journals for all 3rd grade students
- 2/20/26 3rd Annual Glow Dance at 6:00 at Lincoln
- 2/25/26 Student council meeting at 2:45

Lincoln Updates

- I Love to Read month started on February 1st. Lincoln's theme is Read for the Gold. Our theme is centered around the winter olympics. We have many fun activities going on during this month including a door decorating contest, DEAR (drop everything and read) time once a week, classrooms are keeping track of minutes read each week and will receive gold, silver or bronze medals and dress up days.
- During our Read and Feed event, we invited parents to attend lunch with their students and the PTO book fair was open during the lunch hour. The Lincoln kitchen served 48 parent lunches between the two day event. Many other parents chose to join their students in the lunchroom without eating.
- Lincoln conferences were well attended over the three days last week.
- Collaboration with Wit and Wisdom and next year's new math curriculum continues. We recently went through our winter data review and discussed what changes we would want to make in regards to interventions. We also met on 2/17 to talk through the Multilingual Learner Guide, a resource provided within Wit and Wisdom, and how that tool could be used to enhance our instruction. Being we are in year 1 (Learn Year), we recognized most of our staff have not had a chance to look through it or access it so we wanted to bring it to their attention and engage in conversations around the use of it.
- CHAMPS, Lincoln's after school program, starts on 2/17/26 and will run for six days through 3/5/26.

McKinley Elementary

Justin Kiel, Principal

- We've had a great winter at McKinley!
- Assessments - we are entering into our assessment period where ACCESS (multilingual learners) and MCAs (grade 3-5) are being administered. We are excited for our students to show their growth!
- Pout Pout Fish - McKinley, Washington, and Wilson are having a Title Family Night on March 24. Families will receive the book Pout Pout Fish, along with some activities to support literacy. If families complete it, they will get a ticket to the movie at our Owatonna Theater! We are excited to have our kids experience a book and movie with their family!
- Science Fair - our Science Fair is March 5. This is a time for many of our students to shine by showing their scientific thinking! A huge thank you to Rachel Peterson and Jessica Zupansic for organizing!
- Stop by anytime and see the amazing things at McKinley!

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

- Students had so much fun at our PTO's glow dance!
- Staff are looking at progress monitoring data for the literacy and math interventions that were put in place after the winter benchmark and adjusting as needed.
- Our students enjoyed the Healthy Husky Challenge in PE class!

Owatonna Middle School

Christina Mattson, Principal

- Over the past month, OMS students completed the FastBridge Reading and Math assessments. As a component of the READ Act, students who qualified have also taken the CAPTI Reading screener and we are just wrapping up those additional assessments. We had over 300 students qualify to take the CAPTI test. ELA teachers will be participating in a training on February 19th to learn how to interpret and use the results of this screening. Working in an additional round of assessment is always challenging for both students and teachers, but we are looking forward to having better information on how to intervene for students with specific reading needs.
- Our last OMS Activity Night was a huge success. The Winter Wonderland themed event brought in about 450 students for games, swimming, basketball, snacks, and a good time with their friends. We are thankful to our volunteers and staff for supporting Activity Night events for our students.

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

- OHS is well into 3rd quarter and it is time for conferences! We will be hosting conferences on Thursday, February 19th and invite all students and families to connect with teachers to support our students. We will also host meetings for 8th grade families, FAFSA for seniors and PSEO/CIS options for all 10th and 11th graders. These are great opportunities to guide families as we begin registration for the 26-27 school year.
- We are wrapping up winter activities and are excited that our gymnastics team and our Mock Trial teams are once again headed to state competition! Way to go to both groups! Best of luck in your competition. We still have many other teams competing and will hopefully be able to celebrate individuals and teams heading into further competition. Finally, our winter musical, Les Miserables, will open the last weekend of February and run for two weeks. Get your tickets now!

Owatonna Online (OO)

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Serving approximately 600 students across grades 4–12, with a recent increase in multilingual learners enrolling in the program. Staff are working diligently to onboard students and provide first-language support to ensure equitable access to online learning.
- Continued focus on academic integrity, attendance tracking, and course completion, with counselors, ELD staff, and achievement mentors providing individualized Tier 2 support for students needing additional guidance.
- Staff recently attended the Edina Virtual Online Summit for professional learning and networking to strengthen online instructional practices and student engagement strategies.

Area Learning Center (ALC)

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Serving approximately 70+ students with a strong emphasis on credit recovery, on-time graduation, and re-engagement for students needing an alternative pathway.
- A recent group of students participated in a tour of the Aveda School of Cosmetology to explore career pathways and post-secondary options.
- Increased focus on improving daily attendance and strengthening integrated supports through collaboration with special education, ELD, school-linked mental health, and career pathway programming.