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## **Dr. Tammy Champa**

*May 2026*

As we approach the close of another school year, the excitement, and momentum continue to build. Across our school district, students and staff are engaged in end-of-the-year celebrations, performances, assessments, field trips, graduations, and traditions that reflect both the hard work and accomplishments of the year. While we work to end the year on a positive note, there are a number of moving parts as we plan and prepare for the 26-27 year.

A few important upcoming dates include:

- June 1: School Board Work Session (5:30 pm), District Office
- June 4: Last Day of School
- June 5: Graduation
- June 19: District Closed
- June 29: School Board Meeting (5:30 pm), Charles S Crandall Center

While there is much to celebrate, one significant challenge emerging from the conclusion of the 2026 legislative session is a reduction in compensatory funding. Owatonna Public Schools will receive approximately \$690,000 less in compensatory revenue than in the previous year. This reduction will require thoughtful planning and difficult decisions as we work to minimize impacts on students and programming. Considerable work is underway to analyze the financial implications, identify adjustments, and develop sustainable solutions moving forward.

Even amid these challenges, there is much reason for optimism. We have an amazing staff who have demonstrated determination, innovation, resilience and a never-ending commitment to do “whatever it takes” for our students. We are also incredibly grateful for our many partnerships that strengthen and enrich our schools and community. Throughout this year, we intentionally highlighted these partnerships at each school board meeting as a reflection of their important impact. Owatonna is truly unique in the depth of community partnerships that provide meaningful, elevated, and often one-of-a-kind opportunities for our students. The collective commitment to ensuring every student feels a sense of belonging, is supported, and is prepared for the future is evident in our schools each day. As we close out the school year, we do so with gratitude, pride, and confidence in the important work ahead.

## **Human Resources**

*Chris Picha, Director*

### ❖ **HR Updates**

- Interviewing and hiring with a goal of May 31, 2026 to fill all positions that are open as of 5/1/2026
- Records Management and Data Requests
- Employee Relations issues
- Teacher Licensing and Renewals
- Policy Committee
- MNTJATC Committee Meetings and Policy Meeting
- Teacher Apprenticeship Cohort 2 & 3
- Grant writing for Teacher apprenticeship funding
- GYO Student and Adult Pathways
- 6 registered teacher apprentices, Cohort 1 - graduated on 5/9/2026!

## **Roosevelt/Community Ed**

*Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director*

Community Education has one foot firmly planted in each of 2 program seasons with much activity targeted towards closing up spring season programs and preparing to launch summer activities and events. Programs are being well received and a critical component of both seasons is capturing the data that will help our team fully understand the learner experience and guide our resources to ensure maximum value for our community.

- Summer School Age Care is full with many families taking advantage of part-time contracts;
- Forty-seven applications were screened for 15 full-time positions to support the Summer SAC program;
- Families with preK-middle school youth all received a special program program brochure this past week as a reminder to join the summer fun organized by our youth program;
- Adult Education will be hosting a regional hybrid ESL program for evening ESL instruction. Our daytime programs will utilize online instruction this summer with Open Labs available for students to connect with Adult Learning Center staff and receive support for their instructional progress.
- The Community Education survey was closed on May 18th, with results to be shared with staff and the board on June 1st. The exact count for participation is being calculated. The most current update showed over 1,300 households responding.

## **Teaching and Learning**

*Julie Sullivan, Director*

We're at that time of year when the buildings are working through the final days of the school year, and our direct work with teachers has taken a back seat, allowing them time in their classrooms to finish out the year. That doesn't mean, however, that our work has stopped. In fact, we have been busy planning for next year for months: PD, investigating interventions for secondary, preparing to roll out our new elementary math resource for K-5, preparing for 6-12 Language Arts teachers to prepare for their READ Act training, and working through quotes for our capital needs next year. Education has a cyclical nature to it, and there are some actions we take yearly while others are more specific to the key focus areas. Here are some updates on some pieces we are working on:

- ❖ **Interventions:** We have spent considerable time researching, visiting sites with particular interventions, and planning an MTSS system that meets students' needs and building structures. Below are the interventions we will be implementing next year. Items in bold are either new or are being supported with additional professional development.
  - K-2: Functional Phonics in core and Tier 2 with professional development on **intensification** of this resource
  - 3-5: Functional Phonics/Morphology in Tier 2 where needed; HillRap in Tier 3
  - 6-8: **Lexia PowerUp** as a core resource (this was what was piloted this spring). **REWARDS** in 6th grade ADSIS. **STARI** in the new 7th and 8th grade reading intervention class.
  - 9: **Lexia PowerUp** for students identified as needing additional support
  
- ❖ **Math:** New math standards go fully into effect during the 2027-2028 school year. However, much work is already being done with math teams K-12. The steps below will be in place for the 2026-2027 school year.
  - K-5: Full implementation of Illustrative Math (IM); standards work this summer for math work teams; training on IM for all but the early adopters being done this summer
  - 6-8: Continued work on standards and a regrounding in IM--work being done this summer
  - 9-12: The high school math team worked on standards alignment throughout last year and will continue this year during some of the PD time. Potential pilot of new Geometry text with one teacher.
  
- ❖ **READ Act:** We are entering the work for Phase 2, which includes all 6-12 Language Arts teachers. STRIVE is the platform we have chosen for this. Teachers will get their materials and begin work this summer.

- We have 2-3 educators who will go through CORE training this year, including a new reading interventionist and a teacher who completed his first year of teaching this year.
  - We have some support staff we need to catch up on their training from this year who were out for various reasons during some of the sessions. We also need to create a plan for ongoing training of new support staff hires.
- June 9-11: Math standards work; pacing guides for math with this year's early adopters
  - June 10: MEP Summer Institute @ Tri-City
  - June 16-17: COMPASS Institute in St. Paul

## **Special Services**

*Shari Mensink, Director*

Department goals have been met:

- 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.

25-26 goals have been met, and projects are wrapping up:

- student transition meetings have been held across the district
- certified staffing is nearing completion: one speech clinician opening
- paraprofessional openings will be hired this summer: 3 retirees
- summer training logistics are set for restrictive procedures and curriculum interventions
- Extended School Year plans are in place
- The Special Education Resource Fair, held on 4/20, was well attended by our community. A special thank you to Kimberly Baker for coordinating this event.

26-27 goals will align with district priorities, building on the current year's departmental foundation.

## **Lincoln Elementary**

*Justin Lang, Principal*

### **Important Dates**

- May 4th-4th grade in house field trip, The Works Workshop and staff meeting after school
- May 4th-May 8th Staff Appreciation Week
- May 5th-PTO meeting at 6:00pm in the Art room
- May 7th-Ambassadors for Respect visited 4th grade classrooms
- May 8th-Kdg field trip to Kaplan's Woods and Morehouse Park and 5th Grade SCRATCH Program 11:10 to 12:10
- May 12th-K-2 Field Day at Lincoln
- May 13th-5th grade visit to OMS 10:15 to 11:15 and Student Council meeting in room 118
- May 15th-Kdg field trip to Turtle Creek at 8:30, 4th field trip-Ag Day at the Fairgrounds and 5th Grade SCRATCH program at 11:10
- May 19th-Lincoln Track Meet at OHS for 3rd-5th graders and Kdg field trip to The Village of Yesteryear
- May 20th-2nd grade field trip Children's Theater and Site Team meeting at 2:50 in room 113
- May 21st-Collaboration Day
- May 22nd-5th grade SCRATCH Program at 11:10
- May 26th-1st grade field trip to Como Zoo at 8:40 and birthday book giveaway
- May 27th-Student Council meeting 2:45 in room 212
- May 28th-4th grade field trip to Niagara Caves at 8:15 and Author visit for 1st and 2nd grade at 12:10
- May 29th-Lincoln Color Run and Kickball

### **Lincoln Updates**

- Collaboration has been a mixture of activities this May. As a reminder, collaboration is an hour of time each week that we have devoted to supporting our grade level teams with curriculum adoption, data reflections, planning for interventions and a host of other necessary activities. This month, we are using it for our class placement process for next year. In this process, we look at how we can best balance a classroom roster. We look at a host of things so that we can ensure the best learning experience for all students.
- The Works Museum visited Lincoln and 4th grade students experimented with the components of simple circuits: power, loads, wires and switches and built their own motor-powered fan or wiggle bot to take home.

- Again this year, Federated Employees are leading SCRATCH programming for Lincoln fifth graders. SCRATCH is a program for kids where they bring their stories, games, and animations to life and share them with peers around the world in a safe, moderated online community.
- The Ambassadors for Respect Program visited Lincoln 4th grade to teach students about including others, to use Person First language, and to advocate for themselves and others.

## **McKinley Elementary**

*Justin Kiel, Principal*

I can't believe it's already the end to another great school year! May is a busy time - finishing up the year, celebrating growth, and fully underway planning for the 26-27 school year! Below are some events in the next two weeks:

- K-2 Field Day - Friday, May 29
- Lots of Field Trips!
- Dress Up Days to celebrate another great year - June 1-4
- End of Year Stations - June 4
  - A McKinley tradition - students move throughout the building and visit fun stations run by our staff!
- 5th Grade Celebration - June 4
  - Our students spoke! We surveyed our 5th graders who overwhelmingly wanted to move away from a graduation this year to more of a celebration. We are taking our 5th graders to the park for lunch, some activities, and a special food truck treat!

## **Washington Elementary**

*Libby Zeman, Principal*

### ❖ **Washington Updates:**

- Our students and families enjoyed our K-2 field day and 3-5 track meet! Students really leveled up their athletic skills and teamwork.
- We were all wowed by our talented students at our talent show.
- Outdoor learning is on the rise with the amazing weather!

## **Wilson Elementary**

*Cassie Mitchell, Principal*

As we conclude another remarkable year at Wilson, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the incredible journey we've experienced together this 25-26 school year. Serving as the Wilson principal for my 2nd year has been an inspiring experience. This year, we've continued to build a strong community that fosters both learning and personal growth, creating countless wonderful memories along the way. Looking ahead, we have an exciting lineup of events planned, including field trips, our fabulous Quarter 4 celebration, and the heartfelt 5th grade graduation. We also look forward to the friendly competition of the 5th grade vs. staff kickball tournament, an event that always brings our community together in fun and camaraderie. It's clear that we are making great strides, and I am eager to see how we can finish the school year on a high note. Thank you for your support as we look forward to more wonderful adventures ahead!

**Important Upcoming Dates:**

- May 29 - PTO Carnival
- June 2- Q4 Celebration
- Jun. 3 - 5th Grade Graduation
- June 4 - 5th Grade Kickball Tournament
- **Jun. 4 - Last Day of School**

**Owatonna Middle School**

*Christina Mattson, Principal*

OMS is a busy place in the spring! Students wrapped up MCA testing during the first week of May, and since then we've been preparing for Husky PRIDE Day and the Kyle DeKam Leadership Award celebrations. Students have also enjoyed some great grade-level field trip experiences.

Our 7th graders recently took a trip to the Minnesota Zoo after their planned visit to the Guthrie Theater was canceled due to flooding in the theater the day before the trip. Despite the change in plans, students had a fantastic day at the zoo, supported by many parent and family volunteers — and we were even lucky enough to have beautiful weather!

Next week, our 6th graders will head to JA BizTown. Students recently interviewed for their jobs and leadership roles within the BizTown village, and they did an outstanding job meeting with community members throughout the interview process.

With only 12 days left in the school year (as I write this!), you can imagine the energy and excitement throughout the middle school. It's been a great year, but everyone is ready for summer...and hopefully actual summer weather to go with it.

**Owatonna High School**

*Kory Kath, Principal*

We are 3 weeks away from the end of the school year and the excitement is felt everywhere at OHS. We are busy celebrating our students with many events and activities that honor the incredible work our students and staff show each day. This week we host the Pops concert and

our scholarship and academics night. We are so honored to have so many local scholarships provide resources for our students' post-secondary plans. We also have many activities that are going into section playoffs and look forward to seeing teams advance in competition. Finally, we are ending the year strong with a focus on learning to the final day of school and supporting students along the way. We wish the class of 2026 the best and are ready for a great commencement ceremony on June 5th!

### **Area Learning Center**

*Martina Wagner, Principal*

#### **Student Engagement**

- **Downtown Cleanup (May 14):** Students participated in community service efforts supporting civic engagement and connection to the community.
- **Como Zoo Field Trip (May 19):** Students engaged in experiential learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

#### **Graduation & Academic Progress**

- **Graduation Ceremony (June 3):** Currently, 36 students are potential graduates for the Class of 2026.
- **Night School:** Spring Night School concludes on May 21, supporting credit recovery and graduation progress.
- **Summer School:** Summer programming will run June 10–25 at the ALC, focused on credit recovery and continued academic support.

The ALC remains focused on student engagement, credit attainment, and creating flexible pathways toward graduation success.

### **Owatonna Online (Grades 4–6)**

*Martina Wagner, Principal*

Owatonna Online's Grades 4–6 program continues to grow, with enrollment increasing from 29 to 48 students, with the largest increase in 6th grade. Additionally, 100% of current 6th grade students will continue into 7th grade programming, reflecting strong retention and family satisfaction.

This year, the program increased parent/guardian access to the Pearson Connexus platform, strengthening family engagement and monitoring of student progress. Students participate through two support pathways:

- Pathway 1: Parent/guardian-supported learning with teacher guidance
- Pathway 2: Increased synchronous instruction and direct access to teachers throughout the school day

The program provides instruction in core content areas along with specialist courses in Art, Music, Physical Education, and Educational Technology Applications, supporting a well-rounded elementary experience.