



333 East School Street • Owatonna MN 55060 • 507-444-8600 • www.isd761.org

Dr. Tammy Champa

August 2025

❖ Important Dates

- August 25-28: Teacher Work Days
- August 28: Parent/Student Information Day at OMS, Grades PK-5 Classroom Connections
- September 1: District Closed
- September 2: Grades 9-12 First Day of School, 6th Grade Orientation, Grades PK-5 Classroom Connections
- September 3: Grades PK, 1-5 Classroom Connections; Grades 6-8 First Day of School
- September 4: Grades K-5 First Day of Schools
- September 8: School Board Work Session, 5:30 pm, District Office
- September 19: Homecoming
- September 22: School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Charles S Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

- As we approach the start of a new school year, there is a noticeable flurry of activity across all of our buildings. From classrooms to hallways, technology systems to curriculum resources, our staff is hard at work ensuring that everything is in place to welcome back our teams of educators and, soon after, our students.
 - This time of year is a powerful reminder that the opening of school is truly a collective effort. Every detail matters—and every hand plays a role. Whether it's polishing and preparing our facilities, updating curriculum to align with our strategic priorities, or making sure our technology systems and new tools are ready to go on day one, the work behind the scenes is extensive and essential.
 - The excitement is building, and thanks to your efforts, we are well positioned for a strong start to the 2025–26 school year.
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Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- Continuing recruitment efforts, interviews and selection of candidates for our open positions and onboarding new hires
- Recruitment of substitutes - all positions
- Teacher Licensing Applications
- Completion of new Applicant Tracking, Records, Evaluation and Absence Mgmt Software Implementation
- Induction week - 8/18-8/21
- Employee Relations issues
- Policy work
- Launch of the Cohort 2 Registered Teacher Apprentice Program
- Continued Efforts with our GYO student and adult pathway grant work and concurrent enrollment grant reports
- Negotiations with newly formed Health Office Nurses group

Community Ed/Roosevelt

Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director

- All four elementary SAC sites will open this fall with wait lists. We have a staff of 17 positions with just 3 remaining in limbo as we tweak final schedules and continue the search for viable candidates.
- Federal money to support the Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE) program across the country has been released to state education departments. Owatonna had a pending application for funding through 2028. Due to less than anticipated funds being released and an increase in applications for Minnesota, Owatonna's request was not funded. Previously the Adult Learning Center received 2 consecutive 3-year grant awards used to fund innovative adult education programming in career pathways, workforce readiness, work skill development and civics education. The Center will begin the process of reviewing and repositioning itself for this loss of \$94,814 of planned programming.
- Fall Adult and Youth Enrichment classes are prepped and ready for marketing through our quarterly CE Brochure and virtual venues. Brochures will be released for mailing on August 28th, with registration occurring on September 8th.
- Summer SAC served 138 students for the summer, which we topped off with taking 78 of them to the Steele County Fair for rides and merriment! Roosevelt had one of its smoothest transitions back to school year set-up, thanks in HUGE part to the amazing summer staff that left no nook or cranny unpacked and our highly capable Buildings and

Grounds crew that moved us quickly through a deep clean of all spaces in preparation for school year programming.

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director






By the end of this week, we'll have conquered two of our biggest summer PD trainings. Between August 6 and August 13, all but two elementary teachers were trained in Wit and Wisdom, our new elementary LA resource. The training was well done, and Kelly Kruger has done incredible work in laying out all of the resources for our teachers. This week, seven teams of teachers from different grade levels across the four elementary schools are being trained in Illustrative Math, our new elementary math resource. These seven teams are our early adopters and will have a full plate this year as they implement a new math and reading resource! This week we welcome all of the new staff to the district while next week all staff report for the week. In addition, many hours were spent this summer doing curriculum writing by staff across the district. We are excited about the work done to prepare us for the changes coming this school year!

- Monday, August 18: New Teacher Induction Week starts; Illustrative Math training for early adopters
- Tuesday, August 19: Illustrative training for early adopters
- Monday, August 25: Fall Workshop begins, including open houses and back-to-school meet and greets with families
- Tuesday, September 1: First day of school

Special Services

Shari Mensink, Director

- Induction Week: We welcomed eleven new staff members this week (six certified staff and five support personnel). These are replacement positions, not additional FTE.
- Workshop Week: We will be delivering two important professional development topics for certified staff: Time & Effort Reporting, and Re-Evaluation compliance. Non-certified staff will also be trained in Time & Effort Reporting, as well as Medical Assistance (MA) Billing procedures.
- We utilize four programs in grades E-12 to support the social-emotional needs of our students. Training was held in August in preparation for the upcoming school year.

			
De-Escalation Strategies			
<p>Purpose: Focuses on teaching adults to manage their own emotions and behaviors to better model and guide children in developing self-regulation and conflict resolution skills.</p> <p>Primary Target Audience: EC staff</p>	<p>Purpose: Ukeru is a simple, yet highly effective approach to crisis management that offers an alternative to physical holds and restrictive procedures.</p> <p>Foundations: de-escalation strategies</p> <p>Annual recertification: <i>as needed</i></p> <p>Foundations + Mats: Staff protection</p> <p>Annual recertification: <i>Mats</i></p> <p>Primary Target Audience: STRIDE teachers and paras</p>	<p>Purpose: Safety-Care® provides evidence-based training to assist school staff in responding to behavioral challenges with skill, respect, and care.</p> <p>Staff are trained in de-escalation strategies & physical restraint (only to be used in emergency situations.)</p> <p>Annual recertification</p> <p>Primary Target Audience: Discovery teachers and paras, Crisis Response Teams, Bls</p>	<p>Purpose: LSCI is a evidence-based, trauma-informed, relationship-building verbal strategy that turns crisis situations into learning opportunities for young people who exhibit challenging behaviors.</p> <p>Primary Target Audience: Discovery Staff and Bls</p> <p></p>

- We are finalizing our yearly department goals and mapping out the corresponding action plan.
- Most importantly, we are excited for the school year to begin!

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- August 28th, September 2nd and September 3rd Classroom Connection
- September 4th-First day of School
- September 11th-Back to School Bash
- September 10th through 22nd-PTO Fundraiser
- September 8th-Lifetouch Picture Day
- September 19th-Homecoming Early Release
- September 26th-Bring Your Parent to PE Day
- September 30th-4th Grade Kindness Retreat

Lincoln Updates

- 3 new staff members joined the Lincoln team
- Teaching staff took part in Wit and Wisdom training in August.
- Lincoln Site Leadership Team will embark on a book study this school year. Goals and other topics were also discussed pertaining to the new school year.
- Lincoln hosted elementary summer school programming as well as served 2,550 breakfast meals and 6,135 lunch meals for a total of 8,685 meals this summer.

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

- We are excited to welcome families for our Classroom Connection days (8/28, 9/2, 9/3) before school starts (9/4).
- Our PTO is hosting a welcome back ice cream social for our families on 9/5.
- Teachers have been working hard to prepare to implement our new literacy resource that aligns with our Science of Reading learning work.
- Our 2025-2026 theme is “Level Up!” We are going to focus on taking learning and kindness to the next level!

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

We're thrilled that the 2025-26 school year has arrived, bringing with it exciting changes at Wilson Elementary! As we welcome back our new and returning students, families, and staff, we are also pleased to introduce 11 talented new team members to our school. Together, we look forward to fostering growth and strengthening our Wilson community throughout this year!

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Aug. 28- Classroom Connections
- Sept. 2- Classroom Connections
- Sept. 3- Classroom Connections
- Sept. 4- First Day of School
- Sept. 9- PTO Fundraiser Kick-Off
- Sept. 11- PTO Ice Cream Social
- Sept. 12- Picture Day
- Sept. 16- PTO Meeting

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

Welcome to the 25-26 school year! We are excited to share important information for our students, staff and families as we all prepare for our first day together at Owatonna High School on September 2nd!

OPEN HOUSE FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

- All Student & Family Open House will be held Tuesday, August 26th from 1:00pm-5:00pm in the Auxiliary Gym at Owatonna High School. You will receive your schedule, activity tickets, take pictures, pay technology insurance, walk your schedule, get a locker if needed and participate in an activities fair for all OHS clubs and activities.
- 9th Graders:
Information will be shared by mail and phone call about our LINK CREW ORIENTATION for all freshmen. It will be held at OHS on Tuesday, August 26th at 8:00am. At this event they will connect with Junior and Senior Mentors, get schedules, take school photos and tour the school.
- New Students in 10th, 11th & 12th Grades:
New students to OHS will have an information meeting with our team of OHS counselors along with a staff member from our Health Dept. and Food Services Dept on Tuesday, August 26th from 2-3pm in the Counseling & Career Center. This will be an opportunity to tour the school, meet staff and help answer any questions they may have before the 1st day of school.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Tuesday, August 26 - 9th Grade Orientation Link Crew (8am-1pm)
- Tuesday, August 26 - 10th-12th Grade Student & Family Open House (1pm-5pm)
- Tuesday, September 2 - 1st Day of School!
- Wednesday, September 17 - COMPASS DAY SCHEDULE
- Friday, September 19 - HOMECOMING PARADE DAY (Early Release)
- Wednesday, October 1 - COMPASS DAY SCHEDULE

ACTIVITIES OFFICE UPDATES

- ACTIVITY PASSES: OHS Families - Activity passes or electronic tickets are required for events in 2025-2026. NO cash will be accepted at events. Activity passes will go on sale electronically on August 13 at www.owatonnaactivities.com. We strongly recommend students purchase an electronic activity pass rather than a hard pass. Students in grades K-12 will need either an activity pass or have a pre-purchased ticket to attend games. There will be a table at the OHS open house on August 26 if you have any questions or feel free to contact the activities office at (507) 444-8988.
- ONLINE TICKETING: The Owatonna School District has changed their ticketing platform to GoFan for the 2025-26 school year. The Big 9 schools and MSHSL used GoFan for 2024-25 so many spectators are already familiar with this system. Download the GoFan app to purchase tickets OR click on the large blue GoFan box at owatonnaactivities.com to find tickets. There are "how to guides" listed on owatonnaactivities.com to assist with ticketing.

- Please note - no screen shots are allowed for tickets. GoFan has the ability to transfer a ticket or activity pass ONE time. The person receiving the ticket needs to accept the transfer. To avoid transferring a ticket or activity pass to a student, please use the student's phone to purchase the ticket/activity pass.

Area Learning Center (ALC)

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Facilities: The new PA system and HVAC upgrades are nearing completion, and the team is gradually moving back into the building.
- Enrollment: We continue to enroll students daily in preparation for the start of the school year.
- Instructional Focus: This year, we are excited to strengthen our work around collaborative teaming with a focus on promoting and maintaining high student attendance rates.
- Staff Readiness: Teachers and support staff are energized and looking forward to welcoming students back to the ALC.

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Virtual Open Houses: Preparations are underway to host virtual open houses to welcome both new and returning students and families.
- Partnership Expansion: We are excited to begin the year working with new partnership districts—Triton, Waseca, NRHEG, and Pequot Lakes—while continuing our strong collaborations with Northfield, East Grand Forks, and Bemidji.
- Curriculum & Instruction: For grades 7–12, our learning management system now includes updated EdgeX content, offering engaging resources that both teachers and students will enjoy utilizing this year.