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Dr. Tammy Champa

January 2026

❖ Important Dates

- February 9: School Board Work Session, 5:30 pm, District Office
- February 13: No School Grades K-5, Conferences
- February 16: No School / Staff Development
- February 23: School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

- Owatonna Public Schools is working to continue to support student engagement and learning by working to address barriers to in-person learning and by providing alternative learning options. The district has also hosted multiple community engagement events to review School Perceptions Survey data, share district updates, and respond to questions. Work is underway to finalize budget adjustments for the 2026–27 school year, with all decisions centered on ensuring that the approach was student-focused. Additionally, Owatonna Online continues to experience rapid growth, and we are grateful to our staff for maintaining program quality while expanding capacity to serve more learners.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

❖ HR Updates

- 2026-2027 staffing discussions continue
- Recruitment and Selection of staff and onboarding new hires
- Upcoming Job Fairs - River Falls, South Dakota, Iowa State, UNI, Minneapolis
- Continued work on GYO Grants, Special Education Pipeline and Teacher Apprenticeship grants
- Employee Relations Issues
- Brightworks Policy Work
- Policy Committee work
- Principal Apprenticeship research
- Negotiations

Facilities / Security

Bob Olson, Director

- Continuing work on department goals
- In process of planning summer facilities projects
- Working with Custom Alarm to install security buttons in school offices to make all of our buildings secure and uniformed. Once installed, all visitors will need to be buzzed into the office instead of just walking in.

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.
 - Mid-year progress: 40% complete
- 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.
 - Mid-year progress: 75% complete
- 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.
 - Mid-year progress: 65% complete

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

As I write this, there are a few big items on the plates of the T&L Department.

1. Testing: Bilingual Seal testing is getting ready to start. At the same time, we are preparing for the ACCESS testing for our EL students. While these tests take place soon, we are in the midst of mid-year FastBridge and Capti testing while preparing for MCA tests. Kenneth Griswold and Matt Berg-Wall do an extraordinary amount of work to ensure all of these tests are ready to go.
2. Data Dives: With winter testing comes the chance to look at how our students are performing, giving us a good indicator of our instruction. From here, we determine what adjustments and/or interventions are needed to help students grow. Each of the buildings, particularly at the elementary level, spends collaboration time digesting their mid-year data.

3. READ Act PD: Last year, our K-5 classroom teachers and K-12 Special Education and EL teachers completed the READ Act training. This year, our 6-12 EL teachers and support staff are working through their training. At the same time, we are getting our staff registered for Phase II training, which will start this summer and will include our 6-12 Language Arts teachers. They will complete their training by the spring of 2027.
- January 22, 23, 26, 27: Wit & Wisdom walk-throughs with building principals and coaches
 - Friday, January 30: International Fun Day at Work at the DO!
 - Tuesday, February 3: Elementary Early Math Adopters 3:00-4:15

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- 1/12/26-PLC meeting from 2:45 to 3:45
- 1/13/26-PTO meeting 6:00 to 7:00
- 1/14/26-Student Council meeting 2:45
- 1/16/26-2nd quarter EOQ celebration-Bounce House day in PE
- 1/19/26-MLK Day-No School-Teacher work day
- 1/20/26-No School Professional Development Day
- 1/22/26-Open Gym Night
- 1/23/26-Dress Up Day: USA Day
- 1/26/26-PLC meeting 2:45 to 3:45
- 1/27/26-Choir 2:40 to 3:30
- 1/28/26-Student Council meeting 2:45
- 1/30/26-National Fun Day at Work for Staff

Lincoln Updates

- Lincoln staff attended various trainings focusing on The Read Act and math learning work and also spent time collaborating with their teams on Professional Development day.
- We are wrapping up our Winter benchmarking with Fastbridge in reading and math. This is also inclusive of the new Read Capti Basix assessment which is a part of the new READ Act and the efforts to screen students for better intervention support.
- Lincoln students celebrated the end of the quarter jumping in bounce houses during their PE time.
- Ongoing learning continues for Wit and Wisdom. The teaching teams continue to collaborate, share knowledge and progress.
- Second quarter report cards will be sent home Thursday, January 29th.
- Planning has started for the science fair and I Love to Read month.

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

Updates:

- Students leveled up expectation following and have filled our ticket jar again (earning another schoolwide celebration)!
- Staff are examining data and adjusting interventions as needed following winter benchmarking.
- The growth in writing this year has been notable! Staff are getting ready to share and celebrate that growth.

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

We successfully completed our Quarter 2 celebration last week, recognizing student growth in academics, attendance, and behavior. We have now entered Quarter 3 with strong momentum. The leadership and intervention teams are actively analyzing the latest FastBridge data to identify trends and gaps. We are currently rearranging small groups and intervention schedules based on that analysis, and every student has been entered into the updated intervention tracking system for real-time monitoring and adjustments. We are excited to see the progress we make this third quarter.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Jan. 23 - Support Staff Pancake Breakfast
- Feb. 2-6 - National School Counseling Week
- Feb 10, 12, 13 - Conferences

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

We are officially half way through the school year. It is hard to believe this, but we are full steam ahead with new classes, new relationships and new opportunities to engage with students and families. This time of year we also begin the registration process for the 26-27 school year.

Students at OMS had visits from counselors and administration to begin their registration and transition to OHS. We only have a couple of new course offerings for next year but have a solid number of fields of study for all students to choose from within the Career Pathways program. All students will be given an opportunity to review these options and to select what is best for them in the following school year.

Finally, we will begin moving into testing season where we will offer the ACT, Accuplacer and ASVAB to all Juniors and qualifying Seniors. We will also test our EL students using the ACCESS

test and all 10th and 11th graders will take the MCA test. Our hope is to increase participation by ensuring families know the importance of these exams and how they will benefit their child.

We are also excited for the rest of the winter activities season, Snow Week in February and of course the OHS musical, Les Miserables. We hope that you will all join us for these events which can be found on the Big 9 calendar.

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

Owatonna Online continues to experience strong growth and regional interest. We have onboarded two new partnership districts: Waconia Public Schools and Mankato Area Public Schools, bringing our total number of partnership districts to 12.

Current partnership districts now include: Waterville-Elysian-Morristown, Kasson-Mantorville, Northfield Public Schools, Bemidji Area Schools, Fertile-Beltrami, East Grand Forks Public Schools, NRHEG, Waseca Public Schools, Pequot Lakes Schools, and Triton School District.

Additionally, Owatonna Online experienced a recent surge of 134 new student enrollments for the second semester, bringing total enrollment to 534 students in grades 4–12. Staff continue to monitor caseloads and supports to ensure high-quality instruction and services as enrollment grows.

Area Learning Center

Martina Wagner, Principal

As the quarter concludes, the Area Learning Center continues to support student progress toward credit completion and engagement. A focus area this quarter has been student leadership development through MAAP Stars, a program that promotes accountability, self-advocacy, and positive school citizenship by recognizing student growth in attendance, academics, and behavior.

The ALC is onboarding 10 new students for second semester, with transition planning underway to support a successful start. Teachers and support staff continue to build capacity through collaborative teaming and professional development, strengthening instructional practices and coordinated student supports.