

Dr. Tammy Champa

April 2026

❖ Important Dates

- Monday, May 11: School Board Work Session, 5:30 pm, District Office
- Monday, May 25: Memorial Day, District Closed
- Tuesday, May 26: School Board Meeting, 5:30 pm, Charles S Crandall Center

❖ Superintendent Monthly Update

April has been a month of continued progress, strategic alignment, and proactive planning across Owatonna Public Schools. The district remains focused on financial and operational efficiencies, student outcomes, and strong community engagement.

➤ **Enrollment & Planning**

- The district continues to monitor enrollment trends closely, with regular updates informing both staffing and programming decisions. Particular attention remains on kindergarten enrollment, which is still fluctuating and will influence final placement decisions and potential staffing needs. Our Owatonna Online program continues to grow at a rapid rate. On behalf of the district, we're grateful for our staff and their continued ability to adjust to meet the everchanging needs.

➤ **Organizational Structure & Efficiency**

- Several structural adjustments were implemented to improve efficiency and alignment:
 - A Manager of Facilities and Safety position has been restructured from a cabinet-level position to a manager position within finance and operations.
 - A new Transportation Liaison role is expected to generate efficiencies by bringing internal oversight to our contracted transportation services.
 - Building on the strong foundation established by our current teams, the Director of Alternative Services model has been refined to more intentionally align the ALC, Owatonna Online, and English Learner programming. This adjustment is designed to enhance cohesion across programs while remaining responsive to continued growth and student needs.

- **Student Programming & Outcomes**
 - Preliminary graduation rate data indicates areas for continued focus, particularly within alternative and online programming. District leadership is closely analyzing data to ensure appropriate supports and interventions are in place. As noted below, our department of teaching and learning has had an incredibly busy year with a new literacy curriculum which will be followed by another busy year with the addition of a new math curriculum next year.
- **Community Engagement**
 - The district continues to prioritize transparency and connection with stakeholders:
 - Multiple State of the District staff presentations were completed, providing detailed insight into district operations and budget adjustments.
 - The Coffee and Conversation series remains a valuable forum for dialogue, with recent discussions including curriculum updates, legislative impacts, and the upcoming Community Education survey.
 - The Community Education team is preparing a survey to better align programming with community needs.
- **Legislative Update**
 - The legislative session continues to present both opportunities and challenges:
 - A proposed adjustment to compensatory funding could significantly impact the district. Current proposals would reduce the anticipated loss from approximately \$960,000 to an estimated \$419,000 through a partial hold harmless provision.
 - One-time funding proposals for school safety and other initiatives are under consideration, though broader agreement remains uncertain.
 - A potential constitutional amendment to the Permanent School Fund could provide more stable, long-term funding if approved by voters in 2026.
- **Financial Stewardship & Grants**
 - While grant success has been limited this school year, the district continues to pursue additional opportunities, including:
 - A resubmission of the Community Schools Grant
 - An application for an Early Learning Facilities Grant totaling \$500,000
- **Operational Decisions**
 - Boundary exception requests were reviewed with a commitment to maintaining the integrity of recent redistricting efforts; very few exceptions were approved.
 - Ongoing discussions at the high school level regarding cell phone expectations reflect a continued focus on student engagement and learning environments.

Overall, the district remains well-positioned as we move toward the end of the school year, balancing immediate operational needs with long-term strategic priorities. This time of year brings many moving parts, and we are especially grateful for our staff, whose dedication and extra efforts reflect the unwavering commitment to finishing the year strong. Continued

attention to enrollment, legislative developments, and program effectiveness will guide our decision-making in the months ahead.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- 67% completed with filling our current open positions
- Participant on Steering Committee for a new Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Cohort for ABS/ELEM/ELL with MNTJATC and MSU-Mankato
- MNTJATC Board Meetings
- Big 9 HR Meeting
- Employee Relations issues
- Transition WorkSkills Challenge
- Negotiations - 2 bargaining groups remaining - meetings scheduled on 4/27 and 4/28
- Policy Committee Meeting

Facilities

Bob Olson, Director

- Hiring summer help to mow grass
- Transitioning the machinery from snow removal to summer work machines
- Working on summer work schedules
- Finishing up evaluations
- Preparing for summer LTFM projects
- Sent out yearly staff survey on Indoor air quality

Roosevelt/Community Ed

Deb McDermott-Johnson, Director

It's all about Summer in Community Education as Summer SAC registration is now complete. The largest pool of applicants in years is being screened for the 12-14 positions working with our young people this summer. Summer enrichment programs are also registering and showing strong interest from the community. Roosevelt will "flip" to summer programming on June 2nd in preparation for students to arrive on June 8th.

ABE received a supplemental allocation from the SE ABE Consortium to provide the region with a hy-flex ESL program for the month of June. The framework of that program is being created that will allow local students to attend in person, and students from our partner sites to join online.

School Year SAC for the 2026-2027 program year is also underway. We will be seeing a significant amount of movement in available staffing based on early indicators from the current team. Positions to support the school year program will be posted in early June.

The Community Education Survey will launch on April 27th. Advance announcement of the ways to participate in the survey is currently being pushed out. Results will be reported at the June 1st School Board meeting and with targeted groups thereafter.

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.
- 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.

This is the time of year we start wrapping up 25-26 goals and projects while also planning for summer and 26-27:

- student transitions
- staffing at each building (certified and non-certified staff) based on student needs
- summer training logistics for restrictive procedures and curriculum interventions
- Extended School Year planning
- special education budget
- legislative updates

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

This is always an interesting time of year as we work to wrap up this year's meetings and initiatives while planning for the next school year. Our schools are deep into testing; there are times we feel testing takes up more time than it should, but we look forward to seeing results to help us assess the work we have done and the work we have yet to do. (*Just a reminder that MCA Reading results will not be available until October as this is a new assessment.) A huge

shout out to Kenneth Griswold, who coordinates our testing efforts that includes planning testing sessions across the state of MN for our online students as well as ensuring all of our teachers and students have everything they need to successfully complete these tests.

While Wit & Wisdom was a primary focus for this year, including ongoing professional development for our teachers, principals, and district leaders, next year's focus will be on implementing Illustrative Math and new interventions 6-12 while keeping attention and support on Wit & Wisdom. We attended a training last week that included this line that best sums our implementation process: **"We promise you sustained pressure to implement as intended, but we also promise you sustained support throughout the process."** That is our goal with all of the work we do!

Upcoming Events:

- Tuesday, April 21: Last K-5 ELA Meeting (3:00-4:30)
- Thursday, April 23: Last DCAC meeting (3:15-5:15)
- Monday, April 27: Last AIPAC (American Indian Parent Advisory Committee) meeting (4:45-6:00)
- Tuesday and Wednesday, April 28 & 29: Last Wit & Wisdom walk throughs and PD
- Tuesday, May 5: Last Illustrative Math Early Adopters Meeting (3:00-4:15)

McKinley Elementary

Justin Kiel, Principal

It's a busy time of year!

Kindergarten Interviews - We are excited to welcome our newest McKinley Huskies to the building on April 28 & 30. Families sign up for a time to come see Kindergarten, meet our teachers, and learn more about Kindergarten.

Class Placement Process - We have started the extensive process of placing students into their next year's classroom. There is a lot of thought, energy, and people who support this process. Our goal is to ensure that every student is placed into their best environment to learn and grow.

Breakfast Pilot - Starting May 4, McKinley is piloting breakfast before school (7:45-8:10am). The goal of this is to increase instructional time. We will monitor this throughout May to ensure that all kids have access to breakfast. If the pilot is successful, the goal is to implement this at the other elementary sites next year.

Celebration Weeks:

- Educator Appreciation Week - May 4-8
- National Interpreter's Day - May 6 (Thank you Sylvia and Nura!)
- Nurse's Day - May 6 (Thank you Christa!)

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

Washington Updates:

- We had a successful Math Festival (family night) with over 60 students and their families in attendance solving problems.
- Families of students who receive EL or Title came in for a family engagement night with the master gardeners.
- Students continue to level up their effort and achieve their goals! We have had a record number of positive office referrals this year!
- Students completed state testing and are ready to show what they know on our local assessments next month.

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

As we near the end of April, it's hard to believe that we have just six weeks left of the school year. Our MCA testing for 3rd-5th graders has been going really smoothly, and I'm so proud to see our students taking their time and showing what they know. Beyond the focus on testing, we've also witnessed incredible growth in our social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, reflecting our strong sense of community and teamwork. Our students are learning not only to excel academically but to support one another as friends and classmates. I couldn't be prouder of the positive strides we're making together!

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Apr. 28 - 30th - Science MCA Testing for 5th grade
- Apr. 28 & 30 - Kindergarten Interviews
- May 18 - Wilson Track Meet - 3rd - 5th grade
- May 25 - No School - Memorial Day
- May 29 - PTO Carnival (4:00-7:00pm)
- Jun. 3 - 5th Grade Graduation (1:00pm in Big Gym)
- Jun. 4 - Last Day of School

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

Spring is upon us at OHS! We are in the middle of 4th quarter, awaiting prom and testing is in full swing. We are excited to report an increase in MCA tests at OHS as a result of communicating the importance to families and structuring testing during the regular school day. This has been a positive change and will allow us to reach more students. Registration is

complete and department leaders are working with our office team to create the schedule for the following school year. We have some new classes and a great opportunity to continue to connect real world learning with our students through all of the courses we offer. Finally, we have distributed caps and gowns to seniors and will be celebrating them over the next 6 weeks as we lead up to graduation day. As always, we invite you to attend spring sports, concerts and our recognition ceremonies!

Owatonna Online

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Enrollment & Reach: Owatonna Online continues to grow and now serves 630+ students from Owatonna and several partner districts. It's becoming a strong, flexible option for students who need something different from the traditional setting.
- Student Engagement & Progress: With reset days and more intentional progress monitoring, we're seeing more students get back on track, complete courses, and stay engaged in their learning.
- Program Innovation: As we look ahead to next year, we're planning adjustments to our team structure to strengthen intervention supports and create more purposeful collaboration across staff and programs.

Area Learning Center (ALC)

Martina Wagner, Principal

- Student Growth & Outcomes: ALC continues to focus on helping students earn credits and stay on track for graduation. We're excited to celebrate at least 20 seniors graduating this June.
- Whole-Child Supports: Our partnerships with School-Linked Mental Health, career pathways, and community organizations continue to grow, providing students with strong support in and out of the classroom. Students will also be working with Brian Coleman and participating in "Made in Owatonna" Day.
- Culture & Connection: Structures like I-Time and team supports are helping build stronger relationships, increase daily engagement, and create a more connected school community. We're also looking forward to partnering with the Chamber on May 14 for our annual downtown clean-up.