

Dr. Tammy Champa

March 2026

❖ Important Dates

- March 26: End of 3rd Quarter
- March 27: No School, Teacher Work Day
- March 30-April 3: Spring Break/No School
- April 3: District Closed
- April 13: School Board Work Session, 5:30 pm, District Office
- April 27: School Board Meeting: 5:30 pm, Charles S Crandall Center

❖ District Updates

- Last month, the 2026 State of the District presentation provided a comprehensive overview of Owatonna Public Schools, highlighting a continued commitment to our mission of inspiring excellence for **every learner, every day**. The district serves approximately 5,248 students across 8 schools with a diverse student population and strong community support. Student feedback reflects high levels of engagement and belonging, while instructional priorities remain focused on literacy implementation, math pilots, and strengthening intervention systems to improve outcomes. The district continues to support a wide range of learners, including 22% of students receiving special education services and a growing multilingual population, alongside expanded optional programming such as Owatonna Online. Focused academic efforts across the district are aimed at increasing achievement and closing opportunity gaps. Investments in technology, facilities, and safety remain a priority, guided by multi-year planning and strong partnerships. Additionally, the district has worked diligently to implement more than \$3.7 million in budget reductions while maintaining a strong student-centered focus. As the legislative session progresses, the district continues to advocate for stable and predictable funding. Overall, Owatonna Public Schools remain committed to the identified strategic directions as we move forward with our students at the center of all we do.
- Our recent MN weather has caused disruptions to our schedule with a delayed start due to a power outage followed by a district-wide closure due to the weather. We are grateful for the many partners who support our decision-making processes and assist in ensuring timely and effective communication with our families and staff.

Human Resources

Chris Picha, Director

- 2026-2027 staffing discussions continue
- Upcoming Job Fairs - Minneapolis, SDSU, Wisconsin Area
- Employee Relations Issues
- Policy Committee work
- MNTJATC, GYO Student and Adult Pathway work
- Negotiations

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.
- February PD: Demonstration Project (MTSS Social-Emotional Learning); Special Transportation
- planning for summer & next school year's Restrictive Procedures training
- 2026-27 planning: staffing, student transitions (building to building)
- served ice cream to Wilson Elementary staff - United Way

Teaching and Learning

Julie Sullivan, Director

As you read this, the elementary principal, coaches, Kelly Kruger, and I are preparing for our final Wit & Wisdom's walk-throughs for the year. This will complete 12 days of guided walk-throughs with a Wit & Wisdom trainer. These days have been invaluable in helping our team highlight the strengths of our implementation along with solidifying next steps as we plan ahead. Each day spent in schools exposes us to four to five classrooms of guided observations. The overall feedback from our W&W trainer is that our teachers are well beyond first-year

implementation, which is exciting to hear. This adoption has been a significant amount of work for our teachers, and we are proud of the work they are doing.

Next year, we will do the same with Illustrative Math, the new math resource we are using in the elementary schools. We started these snapshots this year but will formalize them next year. At the same time, we will keep W&W walk-throughs on our schedules. Not only do these guided observations help our leadership team learn about our new resources, but they allow us to give positive, targeted feedback to our teachers.

OMS is currently piloting a new reading intervention called Lexia PowerUp. We have approximately 430-450 students participating in this intervention that requires roughly 15 minutes per day on a responsive program that targets skills for each student and gives a plethora of feedback to the classroom teachers. We are excited to see how this plays out for our students as we are looking at an intervention that can be used at both the middle and high school levels next year.

Upcoming Dates:

- Monday, March 23-Wednesday, March 25: W&W Guided Observations
- Tuesday, April 7-Friday, April 10: Illustrative Math Snapshot Walk-Throughs

Lincoln Elementary

Justin Lang, Principal

Important Dates

- March 5th-Lincoln Science Fair
- March 9th-Lincoln Concert for choir, 2nd and 3rd grade at OHS at 7:00
- March 3rd, 10th, 18th-Collaboration days for Wit and Wisdom and/or the new math curriculum
- March 3rd-Last day of the CHAMPS program
- March 11th Student Council meeting at 2:45
- March 19th PTO Open Gym at Lincoln at 6:00
- March 22nd Band Concert at OHS at 3:00
- March 23rd OMS Principals will be visiting the Lincoln 5th graders
- March 23rd-March 26th-Student Dress up days leading up to spring break
- March 25th-Student Council meeting at 2:45
- March 26th-End of the 3rd quarter Celebration stations at Lincoln
- March 26th-Birthday book giveaway sponsored by the Lincoln PTO
- March 27th-Teacher work day
- March 30th-April 2nd spring break
- April 3rd-District is closed

Lincoln Updates

- We had a total of 31 projects at the Lincoln science fair. Judging took place in the morning and parents were invited to view the projects in the afternoon. The winners will be attending the regional science fair in Mankato on April 25th.
- The focus of this month's collaboration days have ranged from Wit & Wisdom planning and preparation for Module 3, while wrapping up Module 2 and their End of Module Tasks. We have also spent time with some grades digging into our phonics resources to see how we can potentially intensify our work. For grades 4 and 5, we specifically looked at the CaptiReadBasix assessment results and scratched the surface of what this means for us. What will we do with it and how can we make an impact? Finally, we gave teams a choice during our final week of what they would like to spend time on. Some chose additional W&W planning while others wanted to look at next year's new math resource!
- Each month we do a birthday book giveaway for student birthdays' in that month. Students get to pick out a book of their choice from many different genres.
- To celebrate the end of the 3rd quarter, students will be able to travel from room to room and take part in various activities of their choice for one hour on March 26th.

Wilson Elementary

Cassie Mitchell, Principal

As we wrap up March and celebrate the conclusion of Quarter 3, we look forward to the End of Quarter 3 Celebration before we head off to Spring Break! This celebration promises to be a fantastic event filled with fun and engaging activities for all students across the school. Students will have the opportunity to travel throughout the building, participating in various activities and stations that are designed to celebrate their hard work and accomplishments over the past quarter. Each station will offer exciting games, creative projects, and interactive experiences that allow students to unwind, socialize, and enjoy the day with their peers. Upon our return from Spring Break, we will dive into the implementation of Mindfulness as our next Social Emotional Learning skill. Mindfulness is essential in fostering emotional well-being, enhancing focus, and equipping our students with tools to manage stress and anxiety. By integrating mindfulness practices into our daily routines, we aim to create a more supportive and reflective school environment that encourages personal growth and resilience. Additionally, we will be preparing for our MCA testing, which will help us assess student progress and ensure we're meeting educational goals. We're excited to embrace these opportunities to nurture our students' social and emotional development as we move forward into the final quarter of the school year.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Mar. 26 - End of 3rd Quarter Celebration
- Mar. 27 - No School - teacher work day
- Mar. 30-Apr. 3 - No School - Spring Break

Washington Elementary

Libby Zeman, Principal

Washington Updates:

- Students filled the ticket jar again and will be enjoying a school-wide trip to bowling!
- Our PTO put on an amazing spring bingo night!
- Staff are digging into the extra components of the new curriculum resources we have to support our students! Implementation is going well!

Owatonna Middle School

Christina Mattson, Principal

OMS is gearing up for the busy spring season. This week our 6th and 7th grade students are completing registration for the 2026-27 school year.

We will begin the Kyle DeKam Leadership Award nomination process next week. 7th and 8th grade students are eligible to be nominated by their peers and OMS staff. This is always an awesome opportunity to celebrate the students who stand out as leaders amongst their peers--it's such an honor for students to be nominated by both their classmates and their teachers.

Our first session of MCA testing will begin the week before Spring Break with Reading MCAs at each grade level. After we return from break in April, students at all grade levels will complete their Math MCAs. In late April we'll wrap up testing with the 8th grade Science MCA. Testing season gets long for middle schoolers, so we're hoping for good weather to get them outside and enjoying time away from their computer screens.

Owatonna High School

Kory Kath, Principal

Students and staff at OHS are busy with less than two weeks remaining in the quarter. Students are using the time to connect with teachers, retest as needed and seek support that will support them ending the quarter strong. Our staff does a great job reaching out to students and using our Compass Time twice a month to invite students to receive support and to ensure they get further instruction as needed.

Registration has just wrapped up for the 26-27 school year and now we will begin the task of course numbers and assigning those courses to teaching staff. This is exciting and really allows us to see where students are being guided for course experiences.

Finally, we wrapped up most of our winter activities with only speech and knowledge bowl left to compete. It was a great season for all and I know our teams and groups are proud of what they accomplished. We are especially proud of our gymnastics team, individual wrestlers for representing OHS at state competition.

We look forward to spring arriving and getting outside to enjoy more OHS activities! We hope you will join us.

Owatonna Area Learning Center (ALC)

Martina Wagner, Principal

The ALC continues to focus on student progress and end-of-year planning. ACCESS testing was successfully completed on March 3–4.

Spring Night School enrollment is now open with over 100 students participating to support credit attainment and graduation progress. Staff are also preparing for the upcoming ALC graduation.

To enhance safety, a new office doorbell system has been implemented. Additionally, staff are planning upcoming experiential field trips, including opportunities such as the Minnesota Zoo and Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Owatonna Online (OO)

Martina Wagner, Principal

Owatonna Online completed Trimester 2 on March 6 and is focused on a strong finish to Quarter 3. Enrollment continues to grow, with current enrollment at 612 students.

Planning is underway for the 2026–2027 school year, including professional learning for virtual instruction, evaluation of a potential new LMS in grades 7-12, and exploration of program re-structure to support continued growth.