

## **Open World Learning Community PTO Meeting**

Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Google Meet

### **Welcome/Agenda/Introductions**

Welcome returning and new families. We will do some virtual and some in person meetings this year.

Dave provided a history of the OWL Community PTO.

### **Principal's Report**

The year has started out well. It is a more normal year, with COVID being treated more like the flu.

Goal setting conferences started off the year. Starts the long process of setting, refining, and reflecting on our work for the year, and the student's time at OWL.

1 student out of 470 did not attend at the beginning of the year that was expected. The normal rate of no shows is 15%.

The first week of school was a lot of time in crew, getting students back into the swing and introducing new students to their crews and to OWL.

Getting ready for fall retreats, happening next week. A huge undertaking.

While a few buses were late at the beginning of the year, we have all our buses this year. Last year we lost routes at the beginning of the year. As a second start time school, our buses can be impacted by the first drop off.

Back to regular lunches - three lunch times. We open the outside for students - eating for 10-15 minutes then going outside.

We had about 25 cases of COVID in the first couple of weeks, but cases have plateaued. The flu season may be challenging this year, flu shots are encouraged.

We are fully staffed with teachers. We are short one EA Specialist.

Lots of students asking about Eric, our security guard last year. He was shifted to another school that was a higher priority. Security guards help a lot with outdoor/lunch times.

Fall retreats are back! All grades except for 10th (college visits) and 6th will be doing overnight fall retreats. Fall retreats can't be covered by the school budget alone. Total cost of fall retreats are \$60,000 - lots of increases. A bus that cost \$2,000 a few years ago costs \$6,000 now. We ask for a \$120 fee. This group does fundraising to help support fall retreats. This year the PTO is contributing \$25,000 towards the cost of fall retreats. Fall retreats have been difficult to schedule this year. Initial 11th grade retreat fell through, but Clara was able to find a replacement in the 11th hour.

Questions? What would you like to get out of these meetings?

Q: Money for food for a retreat?

A: Yes, for the 11th grade retreat due to timing of when they leave and the length of the trip.

Q: \$20?

A: \$20 is plenty.

Q: When do we find out about volunteering for fall retreats?

A: The team will reach out to you.

Q: Where is 11th grade going?

A: It is the second largest YMCA camp in Iowa! Wapsie.

Q: Is OWL the only school in SPPL that does retreats and trips like these?

A: Yes. It is a way for OWL to grow community, do service work. and it is something we hear back from seniors that it is one of the most impactful/memorable experiences. As a small school that can't offer all the things bigger schools can, it is something impactful we can do.

Q: [Dave mentioned that service hours are required for graduation.] Will the service hour information be shared as we get further along in the school/grade?

A: Yes. Students will be introduced to Zello next week where they can record their service hours. These hours can come inside or outside of school.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Our current balance in the PTO checking account at BankCherokee is \$84,420.63.

We have written two uncashed checks totaling almost \$10,000 to help cover the school's interim program expenses from last spring.

We also anticipate a large check to the school to offset the costs of the Fall Retreats (we budgeted up to \$25,000).

There will be upcoming expenses and income related to the Fall Family Gathering, with the goal of breaking even on the community-building event.

We are gearing up for our online fundraiser on Give to the Max Day on November 17, which is our largest fundraiser of the year. Thanks to Mary Beth Leone-Getten, who is passing the administrative baton to the PTO Treasurer; Mary Beth gave the school several years of extremely successful fundraising!

Our fiscal year ended August 31, and the PTO's annual federal tax filing for Fiscal Year 2021 was completed on September 18, 2022.

### **Nominations and Electing Leadership Positions**

The OWL Community PTO is lead by the student chair(s), adult chair, and Dave. Kim Totusheck has stepped forward for the adult co-chair position.

Kim is the mother of a 7th grader and a 10th grader at OWL, a spouse of an OWL teacher, and has been an employee in the district of Saint Paul for over 20 years; more than 10 of which were as a Special Education teacher at OWL. She is a product of public education, having graduated from Minneapolis South, and has dedicated her life to making sure students from all backgrounds have access to the best education for them. Her position as a Supervisor in the Office of Specialized Services in St. Paul has given her additional perspective about what is going on in the district at large and wants to help OWL continue to be a place where students can thrive regardless of prior educational background, socio-economic status, zip code, or any of the other factors that can otherwise negatively impact a youth's future. Kim knows that engaging the village around students is the best way to go about that and that is why she is interested in being the adult co-chair of the OWL PTO.

Kim's nomination was voted on and unanimously approved by the community. Welcome and thank you, Kim!

### **Fall Family Gathering**

The Fall Family Gathering will take place on October 12 at Harriet Island. The event is held in conjunction with Outward Bound and is fun opportunity to meet other families. Delicious food is provided!

Jen Lodahl and Kristin Peterson are the co-chairs for the event this year, but we do need additional volunteers. Keep an eye on the weekly email for more information - if you are able/interested in helping with the event please contact Jen at [lodahl.stp@gmail.com](mailto:lodahl.stp@gmail.com).

**Around the Room/Last Words**

The meeting ended at 7:15. Dave always welcomes celebrations, questions, and concerns - please feel free to reach out.