

Open World Learning Community PTO

640 Humboldt Ave, St Paul, MN 55107

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

6:30p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Zoom Attendees

Amber
Donna
Jessica
Julia
Baer, Jane
Bietz, Janelle
Buettner, Frankie
Buettner, Steve
Faith, Vera
Gundale, Dave
Gunderson, Jennifer
Imholte, Joe
Laferla, Julian
Leone-Getten, MB
Matter, Kelly
Miller, Jennifer
Peterson, Kristin
Scholl, Tina
Sellers, Mary
Sturm, Tanya
Swanber, Beth

Welcome/Agenda/Introductions

We began the meeting with introductions.

Principal report

Dave began talking about how challenging it is to be both a teacher and a student right now. Dave applauds our teachers and support staff for their work they are doing.

We began the school year wanting to address needs we heard from surveys. More structure, more interactions with staff, and adding some community aspects. We began the year with introductions, norms, and habit-building. We've added clubs and groups to that later.

We're tired. Support staff are working hard supporting parents and students. We distributed supplies to every student who needed supplies. Art and science kits have been assembled to give kids materials to work with. We also know we need to get kids off of their screens and into other activities/books.

Over MEA we made a shift based on data, to connect with families during those days based on attendance data. Teachers were able to connect with families to help students. We're looking at doing that again in the three days prior to Thanksgiving to make sure we can connect with the students who need it.

Working on Community Meetings, highlighting seniors, highlighting student work, and community events. We're looking to maintain the college march, more details to come.

In summary, we're trying to maintain both structure and flexibility.

3rd-12th grade will not be reporting until at least January 19th. Dave's guess that for OWL we're looking at later than that as there is a phase prior to secondary.

Please exercise patience and grace with each other.

Treasurer Report

- Julian has not yet started our tax returns (the deadline is January 15). If anyone has an accounting background he'd love the help!
- A handful of families make donations to the PTO through their employer (thank you!). Julian has switched many of those from paper checks to automatic deposits.
- The current balance of our checking account is \$64,872.70. \$30,000 is designated for fall retreats the next time they happen.
- The current balance of our savings account is \$7,509.86 (\$7,500 in reserves was a goal we set in our annual budget last meeting).
- Jen Lodahl reports that we have made \$562 on Spirit Wear, and wants to remind folks to turn in their orders!
- Jen also said that the seniors usually receive t-shirts for the College March, wondered if the PTO could cover the cost of upgrading the t-shirts to sweatshirts at the cost of \$500 extra?
 - A motion was made to approve this expense. It was seconded and approved by vote.

Diversity and Equity Community Building

- Tanya Sturm provided the report for this group.
- Group is looking at how to continue the work of equity and inclusion at a time when everyone is tired of being virtual

- What racial equity work can we do as a school that will impact the entire community of students, families, and staff that:
 - Identifies and names whiteness.
 - Centers students, families, and staff of color.
 - Make sure students, families, and staff know that this work is ongoing
- Ideas discussed:
 - Virtual speaker series
 - Inviting local community speakers to talk with Dare 2 Be Real (D2) students
 - Record these conversations
 - Share video clips out with OWL community
 - Mission/vision statement around racial equity with participation from all in our community. (Dare 2 Be Real has started this work, build up from students through staff, admin, families.)
 - Shared learning:
 - Common Reads
 - Crew curriculum
 - Grade level time?
 - Virtual IZI

Discussion ensued regarding parent participation from all groups ensuring broad participation and input in the group activities.

Give MN

Historically we have put a big emphasis on GiveMN to not have too many fundraisers. This year, with everything going on, it feels uncomfortable to put a push on GiveMN.

Will still be lightly promoting GiveMN this year, being understanding that not everyone is in a position to give.

Teacher Appreciation

Started conversation about teacher appreciation. Some \$50 gift cards have been obtained to do a gift card drawing each month, and the PTO will support this as well. If there are parents who have access to gift cards, please reach out to the PTO or Dave to add to the fun.

If you have ideas for creative ways to show appreciation to teachers, please let Dave or the PTO know.

Upcoming Events:

- Latinx Night 10/29
- Prospective Family Showcase - 11/17
- Asian Culture Night - 11/19

Family Mentoring Program

- 12 mentors and 20 mentees have been assigned based on crew or comparable grades. Messaging went out, happening.

Testing

- October testing has been postponed to January 26.
- PSAT offered to all Juniors and some Sophomores, based on interest.
- ACT with writing scheduled for March 2. More details to come.
- District will be offering test prep classes - information to come.

Zoom chat notes:

18:43:39 From Jessica : Thanks! I recognize a few Adams names!

18:49:40 From Tanya Sturm : I'm so glad to hear about the outreach happening!

18:58:04 From Jessica : Maybe Mary might know, do you want to know where other parents went to college, in case juniors/seniors want to connect and ask questions about that college?

18:58:49 From Mary Sellers : That's a great idea, Jessica. Yes we would love to share that information with students considering your schools.

18:59:53 From Jennifer Gunderson : sorry for your loss, dave!

19:00:27 From Tanya Sturm : Thank you for your honesty Dave. I am sorry to hear about the death in your family. Grateful for all your work.

19:01:46 From Michael Dawson : Our condolences for your family's loss, Dave.

19:03:38 From frankiebuettner : I would really love that!

19:09:00 From V. Faith : Was there an invitation to that conversation?

19:15:54 From Beth Swanberg : I think there is an option to send info by texts. that might be more accessible for some.

19:17:09 From Amber : briefly what is some work done in the past

19:17:26 From Amber : and what sorts of things are in the works now

19:19:07 From Tina Scholl : Beth's comment about texting is a good point. As someone contacting families on a regular basis, this is the primary method of communication for some people.

19:19:39 From V. Faith : So is this about teaching white parents how to participate in equity? I would think the first people you would ask about the diversity and equity would be directly asking the people on the underside of the hierarchy... that seems logical.

19:29:42 From Beth Swanberg :
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/23692271-sapiens>

19:30:06 From Amber : thanks Beth

19:38:23 From V. Faith : I think it's great to still say that there are ways to support without making folks feel guilty about what their situations may be.

19:41:25 From Mary Beth Leone-Getten : mb.leone.getten@gmail.com

19:43:50 From V. Faith : Yes <3

19:47:18 From Amber : i got one and pretty excited

19:47:25 From Tina Scholl : I would echo what Dave said about sending notes to teachers. I received an email from a colleague sharing a positive email she had received and talking about how she was going to save that email to read on the "hard days". She was soooo appreciative of this simple email.

19:47:43 From V. Faith : <3

19:47:59 From Julian LaFerla : Thank you Jennifer and Adam for your work on the mentoring program!

19:48:03 From V. Faith : is there a way to send notes in to school and they be delivered to teachers?

19:48:28 From Amber : thanks v that was my question too. would love to send some

19:48:40 From Mary Beth Leone-Getten : Thanks for all the work everyone. I REALLY can't wait until we can all be together. I miss people— especially OWL folks, many of whom I haven't met yet.

19:48:43 From V. Faith : and treats! right? :)

19:48:51 From Amber : yesss

19:49:08 From Beth Swanberg : love the mentoring idea!

19:49:10 From Janelle Beitz : yes - should we just mail things to the school?

19:49:26 From David : Notes can be sent to me and I can deliver them. I am typically the only one at school so I would get them out. Great idea. Treats are the best!

19:49:59 From V. Faith : sweet! maybe we can work on some calendar days to get things in to you?

19:50:48 From Beth Swanberg : I drive to WI often and would be happy to take something.

19:51:14 From Joe Imholte : Thanks all!

19:51:28 From Michael Dawson : Thank you!

19:51:28 From Tina Scholl : Thank you, everyone! I appreciate this ability to be able to get and eat dinner and still participate!