

Open World Learning Community PTO  
640 Humboldt Ave, St Paul, MN 55107  
In Person and Google Hangout Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 21 2021  
6:30p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Welcome: Welcoming folks in person and online. Introductions were made.

Principal Report:

- Introductions of new staff were made.
- Enrollment: Right at projections. Usually we are about 10 above, but we are right on at 465. October 1 is the enrollment lock in point for the budget.
- Spaces: We have four lunches now (up from three). About 110 students per lunch (down from 150 when there were three). Students are responding well to the new procedures.
- Masks: Mask wearing is going well, students are following protocols. Students present concurred - mask wearing is going well.
- Programs:
  - Hahn Leadership Program (Outward Bound) launched today (10th graders). This program is run by a senior this year as a senior project.
  - Pilot class with Angela Duckworth (U Penn) with two other EL schools, [Grit Lab](#).
- Transportation: Surprise for OWL when buses did not show up in the AM of the first day. Also had buses not come at the end of the day. District is at least a 50 bus driver deficit. It will likely stay the way it is now through the semester. It is going to take a while to get the capacity back into the system. District facing similar challenges in nutrition services and teaching assistants.
- Fall Retreats: We're having trouble getting buses to bring students to retreat locations. Retreats being impacted for all grades. Also impacted are the college visits for 10th and 11th graders.
- Sports: Great start to the year. Middle school sports are shifting - there will be a season, but with an intramural schedule.
- Flip Side: Also being impacted by buses. If it can't be offered equitably (due to not everyone having access to transportation) should it be offered at all? Being discussed.
- School photos: October 6
- Fall Family Gathering: October 13 at Harriet Island. Masks will be required in the building. Tables will be set up inside and out. Silent auction to support Outward Bound and cakewalk. More information to come in the newsletter. A really good time to make connections with other families, especially for new families.

Treasurer Report:

- Federal taxes have been filed for 2020.
- We recently received an unexpected private donation from former school alumni and principals following an Open School reunion in the amount of \$550.
- Our largest fundraiser is the private donation event called Give to the Max Day, which will be held on November 18. After raising over \$30,000 at the event in 2019 we earned less than \$4,000 in 2020 (because of the pandemic). It is hard to predict this year's giving outlook but we

budgeted an income of \$20,000. If anyone has ideas on how to help make that event a success please let us know! One thing we will do is emphasize to families that the school did not ask for an activity fee this year.

- The PTO recently contributed \$20,000 to the school to help fund fall retreats, which was an approved budgeted expense.
- The current balance of the PTO checking account is \$56,524.11.
- AmazonSmile is the charity feature on Amazon.com. If you shop at Amazon you can designate our PTO as your charity of choice and we will receive a small percentage of your purchase price. There is no fee to register, and the prices are identical to Amazon.com. Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to register and search for "Open World Learning PTO". Last year we received over \$200 and to date we have received over \$1,000.

#### Teacher/Student Grants:

Grants are available to teachers and students to fund projects or experiments that teachers/students would like to do. Two grant periods \$2,000 in the fall and \$2,000 in the spring. Deadlines are October 15 and March 15. Looking for folks to help review grant applications. Commitment is about an hour of time to review grants. Grant application is online. Contact Diana Ditsch [dlditsch@gmail.com](mailto:dlditsch@gmail.com) for more information.

#### Testing:

PSAT is happening on 10/13 for 11th graders. Optional for 10th graders (contact Ronda if interested). \$15 for 10th graders (scholarships available) free for 11th graders. PSTA is great prep for the ACT which happens in March.

#### Upcoming events:

All conversation for the Family Gathering was consolidated in the Principal's Report, above.

Dia de los Muertos Celebration October 27. More info to come later.

Spirit Wear campaign coming up this fall. Orders due by Thanksgiving, with orders arriving by the end of December. Exploring changing vendors that could allow for year-long online ordering.

#### OWL PTO Volunteer Opportunities:

OWL PTO wants your time and talents with many small and larger volunteer jobs! Sign up on your own or with a friend or tell us if you'd like to do part of a job and we will pair you with another volunteer. We would like to have students involved in these activities as well. Students can count these activities as school service hours! Contact Kristin Peterson at [kapeters500@gmail.com](mailto:kapeters500@gmail.com) with questions or to volunteer.

#### **Leadership Team Members**

We are looking for an adult and student chair to work with Kristin and Mae this year to take over the role for 2022-23. No experience necessary. Contact Kristin Peterson if you are interested at [kapeters500@gmail.com](mailto:kapeters500@gmail.com).

**Teacher and Student Grant Committee (3 -5 people: at least one student)**

OWL PTO Program Community Grants are designed to provide funds to support the extracurricular and education experience for all OWL students, staff and families. Funds can be used to support activities that take place during normal school hours, after school, or on weekends, and may include projects in the arts, reading, math, sciences, language, school culture/climate, environment or nature, music, theater, sports, student clubs and organizations. Committee members review grant applications and determine which grants will be funded. This is done once in the fall and once in the spring. If you are interested in helping contact Diana Ditsch [dlditsch@gmail.com](mailto:dlditsch@gmail.com)

**Teacher Appreciation (1 - 2 people)**

Organize teacher appreciation week in the Spring and other ideas throughout the year to show OWL teachers and staff how much they are appreciated. This volunteer can work with PTO members to come up with ideas and solicit help from parents in the OWL Community as well as work with David Gundale on teacher shout outs throughout the year. Contact Kristin at [kapeters500@gmail.com](mailto:kapeters500@gmail.com) if you would like to help with this.

**Theater Refreshment Coordinator (1 - 2 people)**

Organize the sale of refreshments during our fall and/or spring plays. Schedule volunteers online and organize/set up items needed for the refreshment sale at each of the three nights of the play. This is a great job for someone who has a student in the play and a great way to meet lots of other OWL parents. Please contact Kristin at [kapeters500@gmail.com](mailto:kapeters500@gmail.com) if you are interested.

**MCA Snack Coordinator (1 person)**

Work with the OWL testing coordinator to determine testing dates and number of students. Purchase predetermined snacks (things like granola bars, bottled water, and mints/gum) and deliver to the testing coordinator 1-2 times during the year. Please contact Kristin at [kapeters500@gmail.com](mailto:kapeters500@gmail.com) if you are interested.

**Student Involvement:**

How can we get more students engaged in the PTO? One idea: communicate more about the opportunity through email. Perhaps create a video? Also could look to pair a student for each of the volunteer opportunities as well as a parent. Volunteering in such a way (or attending a PTO meeting) could count as service hours.