



The Open Monthly: March 2018

Dedicated to keeping families informed about Open World Learning Community news, events & volunteer opportunities

OWL Upcoming Events

Committee Meetings

- o The next OWL Community Group meeting will be on **Tuesday, March 13 at 6 PM** in the cafeteria. Come and learn about what's happening at OWL and join the committees that support our school. Have dinner with us! Dinner is served at all meetings. Contact co-chairs Rebecca (rebeccabs@mac.com), or Sawyer (sneske002@gmail.com) for more information.

All parents, students and staff are welcome!

OWL Community News

OWL's Graduation Rate is Tops in St. Paul!



Last week, the Minnesota Department of Education released graduation rates for 2017. Open World Learning Community had a 90.7 percent graduation rate – which exceeded the state average of 82.7 percent, and was the highest graduation rate in St. Paul Public Schools. It takes everyone at OWL – including our counseling

department and all crew leaders – working with students and families to achieve this graduation rate. Thanks to our entire staff for the time and attention they put in daily to support our students.

How Minnesota Calculates Graduation Rates

The Minnesota Department of Education 4-Year Graduation Rate is defined and used by the state for accountability purposes. This formula counts the number of students graduating from high school within four years after entering grade nine, as a percent of all students who graduated, dropped out, are continuing high school, or have an unknown outcome. Students who transferred into the district are included in this calculation; those who transferred out are not.

March Calendar

Tues., March 6: Research trip to Wilson Library for History Day students, all day

Tues., March 6: U of M Field Day for College in the Schools math, all day

Tues., March 6: Homeless Day on the Hill, algebra students, all day

Wed., March 7: Fieldwork for theater class, *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Park Square Theater, leaving after crew.

Tues., March 13: OWL Community Group meeting, 6 PM, cafeteria

Tues., March 13: Ultimate Frisbee Parent meeting, 7:30 PM, Auditorium

Thurs., March 15: OWL Equity group, 6:30-8PM, first floor kitchen classroom

Sat. March 17: Regional History Day, Johnson High School, all day

Mon., March 19: Outdoor Ultimate Frisbee practice begins for HS students

Mon., March 26: Fieldwork for 9th and 10th English classes, *Diary of Anne Frank* at Park Square Theater.

Fri., March 23 & Sat., March 24: State Archery Tournament, Bemidji

Thurs., March 29: End of Third Quarter

Fri., March 30: No school for students,



Spring Break is Monday April 2, through Friday, April 6th. Classes resume on Monday, April 9th. **Enjoy the break!**

OWL Archery is On Target for a Great Season

By Tom Totushek

Archery is having a great year! With the addition of another cable in the gym, we are now able to have the whole team shooting at the same time. Our captains have created sub-teams for friendly competition and Donald's Ducks are starting to pull away from the pack. Tournaments have gone very well, with Emily Yang medaling for 4th place for high school girls, and Gus Holtan medaling for 5th place for middle school boys at the recent New Prague NASP Tournament. We have had several rounds of perfect 50s at tournaments, including newcomer Ale Castrejon having two already this year. We are ramping up for a strong showing at South Regionals on March 10th and the State Tournament two weeks later in Bemidji on March 24th. We have a good chance for some team members to qualify for Nationals again this year. Go OWL Archery!

Students Prepare for Regional History Day

The OWL History Day showcase was held February 21 where student projects were exhibited, evaluated, and selected to advance to the Regional History Day competition. The OWL staff wants to congratulate **all students**, whether their project was selected to advance or not. For many of our younger students, this is the first big research project they have done in their academic life. We're proud of our students and the academic skills they used to create these projects: deep research, analysis of their topic's importance in history, presentation skills, perseverance and hard work. *All students not advancing should consider revising your project to earn E-work. Talk to your teacher!*

Students advancing to Regionals have been revising their projects, including beefing up their bibliographies and conducting expert interviews. Regional History Day is Sat., March 17th at Johnson High School. Come support our OWL contingent! The full list of OWL students going to regionals can be found on the school website:

<https://tinyurl.com/2018RegHD>

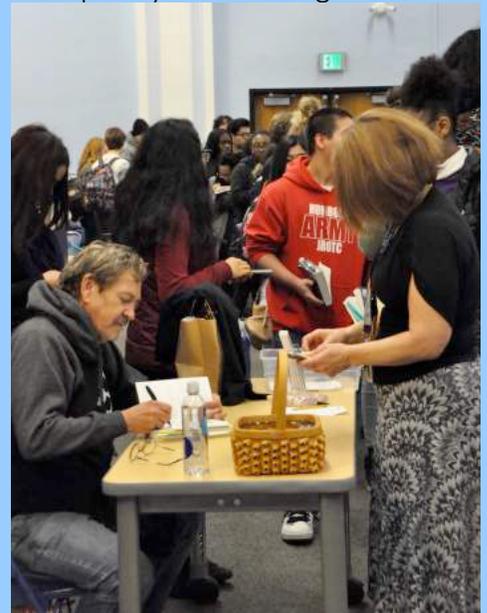
OWL has a New Video News Show!



There is a new video news program at OWL! The **Purple Wave** is a weekly video segment that is watched during crew every Monday. Hosts Sam, Leona, Kim and Sawyer talk about school news and interview students about their learning. The goal is to be able to report news in a timely manner, so that it is not old by the time the newspaper comes out. A link to each week's program can also be found on the Purple Press twitter page (@owlpurplepress) or the school website at <https://www.spps.org/domain/14259>.

Read Brave Inspires Students

Early in the morning on March 1, we welcomed author Benjamin Alire Sáenz to OWL! Ben shared stories, songs, and hope with OWL and Humboldt students in our auditorium. Students described his talk as "real, heartfelt, funny, open, genuine, great advice, honest, intriguing, amazing, and beautiful." The students all received their very own copy of his novel, *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, and after the talk, he signed each of their books. His visit was part of St. Paul Public Library's Read Brave, an annual, citywide program that invites youth and adults to read a chosen young adult novel to foster intergenerational dialog about contemporary issues facing teens.



Author Benjamin Alire Sáenz spent time talking and signing his books for every OWL and Humboldt student at the event.



"Literature does more than make us literate. It makes us human," Alire Sáenz told the high school students.

COUNSELING NEWS

Thanks to all families who attended OWL counseling team's presentation about **Post Secondary Enrollment Options** (PSEO.) A panel of current PSEO students talked about their experiences and reasons for choosing PSEO, and OWL counseling staff Jolene and Amy presented about eligibility criteria and the application process. Members of the student panel spoke highly of the smaller class sizes, cooperative learning environment, and the ability to take classes that interested them, but were not offered here at OWL. Jolene and Amy talked about the importance of paying attention to PSEO deadlines because each college has their own application deadline. Jolene noted that she has an earlier deadline for PSEO applications than each college so she has time to gather and submit supplemental materials, such as transcripts, for each application. **Jolene's deadlines are two weeks before each college's PSEO deadline. ALL PSEO applications with a deadline in June or July are due to Jolene by May 15, no exceptions.**

Amy explained that PSEO classes are real college classes with grades that go on the student's transcript. Colleges do not use standards-based grading, so deadlines are definite. She also noted that parents do not have access to student progress reports unless students grant access through a disclosure form from the college. Jolene does not have access to that information either.

Jolene encouraged students to see PSEO as a way to expand, not supplant, high school classes. OWL offers a good number of AP classes in rotation, so students can take many college-level classes while being present at school. Balance is important! Too much time off campus can create a disconnect between students and their OWL community, leading to a disjointed high school experience. To learn more about PSEO, contact Jolene Yang at jolene.yang@spps.org or 744-1430 or Amy Samelian at amy.samelian@spps.org or 744-3149.

ACCESS testing for EL students will take place between March 6 and March 13. Results of this test are used to identify students needing extra support in the classroom and to determine EL staffing, so we encourage all students who are eligible to participate in this assessment.

MCA testing will begin after spring break from April 17-May 11 on iPads. You can help by making sure your child brings their iPad to school fully charged and attends school each day on time. Once again, we have scheduled testing so as to have minimal impact on instructional time and with multiple grades testing at the same time in their classrooms. If you have any questions about this or any other test, contact Mary in the Family Room at 651-744-2950.

Looking Ahead:

Sat., April 21: Prom at SOKOL Hall, 5:30PM for middle school students, 7:30PM for high school students.

Fri., June 1: Celebration of Learning, Dinner and Raffle-O-Rama FUNraiser



OWL students Emily, Matteo, A.J. & Sawyer discuss their PSEO experiences



The OWL **National African American Parent Involvement Day** event (above and below) was great fun, as always! Students entertained us with spoken word, songs, double dutch jump rope, and dance. We also shared a meal of student-made macaroni and cheese, and other delicious dishes. Thank you to the students, staff and families who organized the event! Special thanks to Abby Davis for the photos.



Senior Update: It's crunch time for seniors! The OWL senior experience is unique with its focus on the creating a senior portfolio, senior project, finishing volunteer service hours, and provides lots of support for college planning and applications. Each senior has a mentor in the building as a resource and support in completion of these requirements for graduation. The culmination of this process is the senior meeting, where seniors present their portfolio to their crew leader, an administrator, their senior mentor, and their family and friends. Seniors, its time to schedule your senior meeting! If you have any questions about this process, or about your senior's progress toward graduation, please contact Jolene or Mary.

Fraquetball: A Brief History

What's behind OWL's quirky, student-created obsession?

This school year, Fraquetball was back! After last year's gym flood put an abrupt end to the season, students were eager to play this beloved lunchtime sport. Fraquetball is an OWL-invented game that looks a bit like doubles ping-pong, played on the floor (or off the ceiling and walls) in a narrow hallway near the gym. Teams of two people (students or staff) face off in games to seven during lunch. Fraquetball has an entry in Urban Dictionary and was featured in a 2007 Pioneer Press article that featured current OWL Ultimate coaches and alums Liam Shramko and Nathan Jesson: <https://www.spps.org/Page/15787>

Fraquetball has student commissioners who set the schedule and occasionally modify the rules to make the game more fair or exciting. Since this is the third OWL building to be used since the advent of the game – and each hallway court has its own quirks – the rules have been adjusted to fit the new space. After pool play and playoffs, this year's first semester champions for each lunch are:

First Lunch: Bum Lookas (students Jalen & Dabi)

Second Lunch: The Flaming Ducks (students Donald & Nael)

Third Lunch: Alpha Numericals (teachers Tom & Damon)

This semester's playoffs will result in one team being crowned the 2018 World Champion. Fraquetball champions get bragging rights and their names on the official trophy – kept in display case off the cafeteria. The team with the most wins in Fraquetball history is Los Geezers (teachers Leo and Tim), but as teachers, they have unlimited years of eligibility, whereas students only have seven. For more information, check out the Fraquetball website at <https://fraquetball.wixsite.com/about>.

NEWS BRIEFS:

Our **Race and Equity with Family and communities at OWL** group will meet Thursday, March 15 from 6:30 - 8:00 PM. We will discuss our shared beliefs about OWL and how we see ourselves from an equity lens: What is OWL's community and family vision of equitable schools and how do we want to achieve this vision? Does our narrative of OWL match outside community perspectives? Join us! Questions, contact Michelle Bierman at Michelle.bierman@spps.org.

Jobs and Scholarships:

Amy Samelian of OWL's College and Career Center has a wealth of information about jobs and scholarships. This information is updated regularly and emailed as the Counseling Bulletin to all OWL families. If you are not receiving this mailing, or for more information, contact Amy at amy.samelian@spps.org



From the archives: An early Fraquetball game in the old, old, OWL building on Western Ave., with alum Liam Shramko jumping up for a block.



The OWL newsletter is published semi-monthly. If you have an idea of something you'd like to see in the newsletter, contact dave.gundale@spps.org.