

**OCC Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021**

In attendance:

Scott Dafflitto (Chair)	Elizabeth Ruiz (At Large – Finance)
Hilary Benson (Secretary)	Eva Mazier (Teacher Rep)
Kevin Kurzendoerfer (Treasurer)	Veronica McKillop (Teacher Rep)
Jessica D’Amico (Information & Process Chair)	Lauren Peña (Teacher Rep)
Catrin Morris (Calendar & Community Chair)	Matilde Sarmiento (Teacher Rep)
Francisco Serrano (Room Parent Chair)	Jen Harris (Director, Story of Our Schools)
Catherine Depret (Fundraising Chair)	Mike Benson (Teacher, Story of Our Schools)
Purnima Boominathan (Educational Investment Chair/LSAT Liaison)	Ana López (Teacher, Story of Our Schools)
Mark Bromley (Fundraising Strategy Chair)	Jen Jessup (Parent)
	Elizabeth Vaquera (Parent)

Unable to attend:

Claudia Aguilar (At Large – Community Events)	Carla Ferris (Community Events Chair)
Monique Worrell (At Large – Community Events)	Mayra Cruz (Principal)

Opening & Welcome: (Chair)

- Call to order at 8:38 pm.
- Chair reminded attendees to assume the best of others’ intentions and efforts, to practice patience with ourselves and others; and to remember that we are here for the best interests of the children who attend Oyster-Adams.
- Chair welcomed the guests from Story of Our Schools who are participating in this meeting.

Story of Our Schools Update: (Jen Harris, Mike Benson, Ana López)

- Dir. Harris summarized the SOOS program for board members and included a link to the video made by OA kids to promote & fundraise for OA’s SOOS project:
<https://www.storyofourschools.org/schools-exhibitions/oyster-adams/oyster-adams/>
- Dir. Harris reported that the SOOS was awarded a \$12.5K grant for the OA exhibit and that along with the \$10K + \$10K matching funds pledged by the OCC the project could be fully funded.
- Dir. Harris would like to share the concept sketch, working budget, script, photos, etc. w/the OCC. Principal Cruz selected the front hall of the Oyster building for the installation site. The installation at Oyster will be permanent and SOOS will also feature the installation on their website. The exhibit will incorporate some early history but will focus on the school’s bilingual program. Dir. Harris mentioned how exciting it would be to have this installed before school opens this fall to welcome kids back.
- Teachers Mike Benson & Ana López reported on how enthusiastically the students involved with SOOS have worked on the research and how well they adapted to working virtually during the pandemic. Teacher Benson discussed plans for fundraising this summer and the club’s desire not to impinge on OCC fundraising.

OCC Meeting Minutes May 20, 2021

- Chair noted SOOS' sensitivity to competing for OCC fundraising targets and said he can set up a fundraising strategy group, to include Catherine Depret, Jess D'Amico, Jen Harris, Mike Benson, Ana López.

Chair's Update: (Chair)

- Chair noted the Oyster playground renovation still has to be approved by the DC City Council and that they will solicit community feedback.

Principal Selection Process Update: (Chair)

- Chair reported that LSAT Representative Sweta Shah is the point of contact between DCPS and the OA community for the principal selection process. Shah in consultation with Principal Cruz has selected a panel, including members nominated by the OA community; the panel will interview several DCPS candidates for the principal position.
- The panel has submitted their planned questions to DCPS and will find out on Monday, May 24 who the candidates are. Chair noted that LSAT Reps Shah and Dan Gordon received a lot of feedback on what the community is looking for in the new principal, during the parent listening session they convened and from the parent survey they circulated. Chair noted that Chancellor Ferebee will make the final decision of which candidate to hire.
- Chair noted that while DCPS does not consider bilingualism a prerequisite for OA's principal, the community panel plans to ask many of their questions for the candidate in Spanish.

Budget Update: (Treasurer, Chair)

- Treasurer stated that with \$20K going to SOOS, if we do not spend anything else (e.g. tutoring or graduation) we will have \$160K at the end of the fiscal year.
- In considering the 2021-2022 budget Treasurer stated we should consider the OA mission and focus on the students, the school and the community. All of our expenses should be allocable to one of those 3 categories. Treasurer noted there is a lot of pent-up demand for spending -- e.g. professional development, field trips, supplies. Considering this, he estimates allocating (out of \$288K for the year): \$130K for students, \$110K for the school (including \$105K to teachers), \$48K for the community.
- Chair noted that we will need to do a lot of fundraising to meet \$300K for next year's budget and that we may need to choose between priorities. He noted that teachers' needs should come first (e.g. professional development, teaching tools, supplies).
- Fundraising Chair asked whether QuickBooks could be leveraged to send invoices for school supplies to families. Treasurer noted that non-profit organizations cannot invoice donors but that the program can send out emails.
- Discussion of budget line items included concerns about events competing against one another for donations, i.e. the auction and the musical. Chair noted the need for a critical evaluation of our fundraising strategy.
- Teacher Reps McKillop and Mazier discussed the need for high quality professional development for teachers and for aides, including possibly providing scholarships for the expensive Praxis

OCC Meeting Minutes May 20, 2021

certification exam; McKillop said she would survey teachers for their input on where funds are most needed. Teacher Rep Peña noted that it makes sense to consider where funds will be needed as early as possible.

- Treasurer noted that our fundraising and our spending are not in parallel; he noted that we will need to fundraise in order not run out of cash. Chair suggested that fundraising energies would be more effective if focused on high-yield targets and that events that require a lot of time to organize without realizing commensurate gains should be carefully considered.
- Information & Process Chair noted that since the Story of Our Schools project received a time-sensitive grant the OCC could help them fundraise through the end of this school year. Chair noted that the 50th anniversary of the bilingual program will be celebrated this coming school year and that fundraising around that will tie in nicely with the SOOS installation.
- Chair noted that we will need to schedule a special meeting to vote on next year's budget.

Business: (Quorum Present)

- **Approval of past minutes:**
 - Motion moved and seconded and minutes from 4/22/2021 approved.
- **Promotion Ceremony Expenses:**
 - Chair discussed Principal Cruz' proposal for the OCC to fund expenses for the 8th grade promotion ceremony, to be reimbursed with DCPS money allocated for middle school teaching supplies. Chair noted that customizable items cannot be paid for with the DCPS MGI funds.
 - Teacher Rep McKillop noted that \$5K seems like a lot of money for 8th grade promotion. Fundraising Chair objected to funding yard signs which privilege families with private houses over those in apartments or group/unhoused situations; she noted that the 8th grade could fundraise for the stage backdrop and that the portal for OA gear could be used for purchasing t-shirts.
 - Chair noted that \$5K seems like a lot of money for the OCC to front and that middle school teachers will not want to lose that money from their supplies funding next year.
 - Teacher Rep McKillop noted that teachers and parents would love to volunteer to help on the day of the ceremony. Chair noted it's an important question to ask, how the community can be involved with graduations in the future.
 - Chair moved for a vote on the proposal; motion seconded; board voted not to approve the proposal as written.
- **Staff Departure Recognition Expenses:**
 - Chair noted Principal Cruz' departure and Teacher Nilda Ramos' retirement and opened discussion on OCC contributions for recognition of these events.
 - After general discussion it was moved and seconded to approve \$250 in OCC funds for Principal Cruz' departure party and \$250 in OCC funds for Teacher Ramos' retirement party.
- **Teacher Appreciation Gifts:**

OCC Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021

- After general discussion, Room Parent Chair will have room parents spread out donations for teacher appreciation to include aides, specials teachers and other non-teaching staff.

Elections Committee: (Chair)

- Chair asked for volunteers for the Elections Committee for next year's board: finalized as Purnima, Monique, Mark, Francisco, Elizabeth & Catherine.
- Chair requested that all board members send him a note re. whether or not they intend to be part of the OCC next year.

Kudos: (Everyone)

- Chair to everyone for giving their time and effort for our kids and school community.

Action Items and June Meeting: (Secretary)

- Please email Chair re. your interest in continuing on the OCC next year.
- Chair to assemble a fundraising strategy group to work with SOOS through the end of this SY.
- Chair to schedule a special meeting to vote on the board's SY 2021-2022 budget.
- Please email agenda items and budget proposals to the Chair or Secretary by June 11.

Adjournment: (Secretary)

- Board meeting adjourned at 10:58pm.

**OCC Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021**

Appendix: OCC funding requests

8th grade Promotion MGI transfer

Given the extenuating circumstances of SY 2020-2021, OA is excited to host an in-person 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony this year that will take place at the soccer field at the Columbia Heights Educational Campus located on 310116th St NW, Washington. This year we have opted to partner with CHEC as our location for our promotion ceremony as it is more accessible to our 8th Grade families who ride the metro (green and yellow line). OA has an excellent relationship with their principal and operations team and their auditorium meets the capacity of our event as outlined by OSSE for promotions in case of inclement weather. We are also partnering with DPR for stage and audio to ensure a successful event. Parent data from the 8th grade parents is clear, 90% of them want an in-person outdoor promotion and we want to make sure our tigers have a beautiful promotion after so much loss they have experienced.

Given the constraints on how we are able to spend the MGI funds allocated by DCPS for our middle school grade initiatives, we are to use the 5K funds allocated to purchase custom goods for our 8th grade promotion. However the promotional items that we plan to purchase this year are all customizable.

This year we plan to purchase masks, yard signs, yearbook, backdrop for pictures, refreshments, DPR stage and audio system:

8th grade promotion yard signs	\$1,300.00
8th grade t-shirts	\$1,000.00
OA masks	\$700.00
Backdrop	\$1,000.00
8th Grade Promotion Party	\$400.00
Yearbook as 8th Grade gift	\$1200
Other supplies	\$200.00
Total	\$5,800

We are asking for OCC to make a money transfer so that OA can successfully have a safe outdoors promotion without the “red tape” of DCPS funding. Promotions are special because they are personalized, but DCPS money does not allow us to buy any supplies that are personalized for individual children. Usually, there is an OCC budget line item for promotion, this line item doesn’t exist currently and due to covid, there’s an increase in cost in making it happen. Our proposal is for OCC to fund our promotion and in return, OA will pay for middle school supplies for fall 2021 that normally comes from parent contributions to school supplies that funnels through the OCC. We can commit \$5K from our DCPS budget, MGI (Middle Grade

OCC Meeting Minutes May 20, 2021

Investment funds) line. With the return to in-person learning, middle schoolers will need added executive functioning support and this would need to be an additional cost for parents. We usually ask parents to contribute \$44 dollar per child, but we anticipate middle school organizational needs to be much higher than normal (approximately \$70 per student). DCPS budget would pay that instead, so that the parent cost does not need to be added.

- $\$70 - \$44 = \$24$ per 210 students = \$5,040

Long-Term Sub Support

Partner teachers (instructional aides) provide critical support for students, families, and teachers in our bilingual programming. In a virtual setting, they reduce the teacher-to-student ratio, increase levels of feedback, and help with virtual norms for the lead teacher. In the case that an instructional aide is not able to perform his/her duties in support of the lead teacher, this puts a significant burden on the lead teacher and negatively impacts the learning experience for students. Given this, we would like to submit a proposal for long-term substitute pay to hire an individual to fill the role of an instructional aide when the need arises. This need would apply to an individual who falls into both of the categories below:

- **Ineligible to receive DCPS substitute pay:** While the individual may meet the educational requirements of an instructional aide, which is an Associate's degree, s/he does not meet the educational requirements of a DCPS substitute teacher, which is a Bachelor's degree, therefore, would not be eligible to receive DCPS substitute pay.
- **Instructional aide position is not yet vacant:** In order to hire the qualified individual into an instructional aide role, the current instructional aide must vacate the position. However, due to DCPS Human Resources protocols around Paid Family Leave, retirement, etc, this process could take several weeks.

As an amendment to our initial request of **\$2,400 total** (\$120 per day for 4 weeks), which was approved by the OCC Board in November, we would like to include an option to request additional funding to pay for long-term substitute support should there be a delay in the DCPS Central Office hiring process and/or an additional instructional aide vacancy arises. To solicit this additional funding, we will submit a written request to the Treasurer for any future needs from this fund in advance.

Our goal is to ensure that we have the funding, when needed, so students and teachers have the continued support of an instructional aide, which is vital to successfully implement our school's bilingual program.

Club Payments

Due to budget constraints, DCPS cancelled extra-duty pay for student facing virtual clubs, however, they are proving to be a necessary and effective intervention for students. These clubs are critical for providing engagement opportunities for students that need extra social support, especially in a virtual learning environment. These clubs include:

**OCC Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021**

- “Black Girls Rock” affinity group
- HER girl empowerment group
- Homework help for middle school students who have increased babysitting duties at home
- Baking Club as stress relief
- Reading clubs for students reading below grade level
- Art portfolio club for 8th graders who need help getting their virtual portfolio ready for audition for Duke Ellington High school

For term 1, OA admin decided to use our admin premium to pay these club sponsors, but we’ve already committed 50% of our funding, so will not be able to provide any virtual club programming for students past January 27th. We usually pay \$319 per semester per club. **We propose to be able to host 10 virtual clubs in Term 3 and Term 4 and would need \$3,190 allocated to this need.**

Substitute Additional Compensation for Instructional Aides

During a typical school year, Oyster-Adams is able to secure substitute teachers to support instruction, when either a teacher or instructional aide is out. These substitute teachers are paid through the DCPS Central Office. Given the transition to virtual learning, securing a substitute teacher has become more challenging as many are unfamiliar with the online platforms, uncomfortable with using technology to deliver virtual instruction, and, therefore, unwilling to take on these roles. At Oyster-Adams, we are fortunate to provide a teacher and an instructional aide in every classroom in PK4-Grade 3 and grade-level instructional aides in grades 4-8. This affords us the ability to reduce the student-to-teacher ratio and provide more focused support through small group learning. When an instructional aide is out, the teacher must provide the full extent of instruction to students, which they are qualified and capable to do. However, when a teacher is out, the instructional aide now must assume the full responsibilities of a teacher, which goes above and beyond their role. Given the dedication of our instructional aides to our students and the dual-language curriculum we provide, they do not hesitate to step into this role to ensure a seamless continuation of online learning. We believe this is an additional responsibility for which they should be compensated. An additional \$50 for each time an instructional aide takes on this responsibility would equate to an average increase in their daily rate of about 33%, depending on their current hourly wage. For term 1, at this rate, the cost of additional compensation for instructional aides would be \$500. We are requesting the OCC board to consider setting aside \$3500 to provide additional compensation to instructional aides who take on the role of the classroom teacher for the 2020-2021 school year, given the challenge we are facing this school year to secure DCPS-funded substitute teachers to provide virtual instruction.

OCC Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021