

QUICK FACTS

Mission: Joyful, self-directed learners engaged in the world

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OWL Introductory Video. Watch here: https://youtu.be/c_cxLXv8Tw0

OPEN PHILOSOPHY

Open World Learning Community (OWL) was founded as St. Paul Open School in 1971 by a group of parents and community members to create a truly child-centered school. This ground-breaking school philosophy – still vital and relevant after 50 years – remains the foundation of our school today:

- **Small-by-design:** OWL is welcoming, family-like school of 460 students.
- **Student-centered learning:** All students are known and respected as individuals.
- **Self-directed focus:** Students take an active role in their learning.
- **Multi-age classes:** We respect each child's unique learning style and recognize that everyone learns at different rates. OWL students learn in multi-age environments where they can excel at their own pace and where all students have the opportunity to be leaders.
- We understand that nurturing social and emotional growth creates happier students who can soar academically.
- We use authentic assessments that go far beyond test scores to give a rich picture of student learning.
- **First names:** Everyone at OWL goes by their first name. Removing the formality of titles reinforces the fact that while teachers guide student learning, we all learn from each other.

Did you know...

- Open School was the **original magnet school** in the district
- **Our school colors are blue and white**, because ours was the first school in the district to eliminate the dress code so that students and teachers could wear jeans and t-shirts to school.

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Open World Learning Community is the original small school community in Saint Paul. Founded by parents and community members, for 50 years, our school has offered a small learning environment that nurtures every student's full potential in creative ways. Building upon our experience and strength as an open school, since 2009 OWL has been part of the national network of EL Education (EL) Schools. EL schools promote rigorous and engaging curriculum; active, inquiry-based pedagogy; and a school culture that demands and teaches compassion and good citizenship. EL schools are based on the Outward Bound model, which starts with the belief that we learn best through experience. In 2017, OWL became an EL Credentialed School, joining 33 other exceptional network schools that have shown evidence of strong growth over time.

Our program is based on:

- Engaging students in deep, multi-disciplinary learning expeditions
- Hands-on methods that encourage curiosity and discovery
- Self-directed learning guided by interests and abilities
- Multi-age classrooms that allow each child to excel at their own pace and learn from each other
- Helping students identify and hone their passions and abilities
- Ensuring every student is well prepared for a stimulating academic life in college and beyond

We work to build a school:

- Where families are involved in their child's education
- Where students of diverse backgrounds come together to form a community
- Where each student is valued as an individual and as part of the school community
- Where you're encouraged to be your true self



This overview of OWL's innovative model was created by Korean Public Television in 2020.

Watch here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SN1tvi0DAE

WHAT IS EL?

"The teaching in an EL Education school fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed." - elschools.org

Open World Learning Community is a member of the national network of **EL Education (EL) Schools**, which promote rigorous and engaging curriculum; active, inquiry-based pedagogy; and a school culture that demands and teaches compassion and good citizenship. EL schools are based on the Outward Bound model, which starts with the belief that we learn best through experience.

Three Dimensions of Student Achievement

When students have completed their academic career and entered adult life, they'll be judged not by performance on basic skills tests—but rather, by the quality of their work and the quality of their character. This premise serves as the foundation for EL Education's overarching vision of increasing student engagement and elevating and expanding student achievement. To realize that vision, we focus on student excellence in three core areas: **Mastery of Knowledge and Skills, Character and High-Quality Student Work.**

What are Learning Expeditions?

Our curriculum is designed around experiential Learning Expeditions - multidisciplinary projects that allow students to investigate issues in our school community and the greater world. The study of big ideas enables us to weave together work in science, English, social studies, math, technology, physical education and the arts. Our expeditions often result in high-quality products for audiences beyond the classroom.

We encourage our students to think in many ways:

- by offering choices of writing topics, projects and choices of selective classes
- by letting their individual curiosity and passion drive their projects
- by getting students out of school and into museums, colleges, work-sites and natural environments
- by bringing in experts in fields related to our studies
- by expanding their world through service learning
- by encouraging discussion, debate, and reflection in all classes



➤ For more information on EL Education Schools, visit www.eleducation.org



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Expeditionary Learning is built on ten design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Outward Bound. These principles also reflect the design's connection to other related thinking about teaching, learning, and the culture of schools.



1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. EMPATHY AND CARING

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

8. THE NATURAL WORLD

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.



WE ARE ALL CREW...NOT PASSENGERS

Crew is at the heart of the OWL experience. Every student belongs to a Crew – a multi-age student advisory group of 18-20 students that meets daily. During Crew time, we work to build an inclusive community and set a positive atmosphere for student achievement through team-building activities. We also offer individual guidance and teach study skills, organization, and time management. Crew helps students become leaders of their own learning while developing supportive relationships with adults and peers.

Relationships:

- Crew provides each student a one-to-one relationship with an adult advisor.
- Crew provides a consistent small-group peer community—a family within the school.
- Crew leaders monitor and support student progress and serve as the student’s advocate in difficult academic and social situations.
- Crew leaders act as the primary contact between parents and the school.
- Crew meetings are frequently used for team-building exercises.

Service:

- Crews identify needs in the school and in outside communities and propose and develop projects to address those needs.
- Crew leaders keep track of service hours and guide students in their service-learning projects.

Portfolios and Student-Led Conferences:

- Students use Crew to assemble, organize, and reflect on academic work portfolios for the year.
- Students present their work and reflect on their progress towards goals in fall and spring student-led conferences with Crew leaders and parents.

College Preparation:

- Crew leaders advise students on their academic progress to ensure that students are taking challenging course loads and have strong records for college admission.
- Crew leaders assist in exploration of a variety of post-secondary options and ensure all students have a personalized post-secondary plan.
- Crew leaders support and coach students in their exploration of options for higher education, PSAT and ACT preparation, college visits, application processes, financial aid, scholarships and college selection.



Crew: A Community at the Heart of Our School

Watch here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwB1ynScjAM



SCHOOL VALUES

The following five values guide how we learn and interact as a school community. The learning targets listed under each one further define how this value looks in action.

Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Integrity: I can do what is right.	
I can advocate for myself and others.	I can stand up and speak out for what is right, even if no one else does.
I can tell the truth.	I tell the whole truth.
I can imagine myself succeeding.	I believe in myself.
I can do my own work and I give credit for work that is not mine.	I take credit for my own work and give credit to others for theirs.
I can be curious.	I keep my mind curious.
I can treat myself and others kindly.	I can open my heart, treating myself and others with compassion.
Perseverance: I can keep trying.	
I can stay focused on my work even when things are difficult.	I continue to work through difficult tasks.
I can accept constructive feedback and use it to revise my work.	I accept feedback and revise my work and thinking.
I can strive to produce high quality work.	I always strive to produce high quality work.
I can complete long-term projects.	I continue in a long-term course of action until I complete my goal.
I can rise to meet new challenges and try new things.	I try new things and take necessary risks.
Responsibility: I can do my job.	
I can come to class on time, organized and prepared to learn every day.	I come to class on time, organized and prepared to learn every day.
I listen to and follow instructions, using my class time productively to meet deadlines.	I do the things I am supposed to do on time without being told or reminded.
I ask for help when I need it.	I have the courage to ask questions.
I can control my body and language.	I conduct myself in a professional manner.
I can reflect on my own actions and how they affect myself and others.	I can predict and reflect on how my own actions affect myself and others, accepting responsibility and making amends for my errors.
Collaboration: I can cooperate.	
I can work with anyone.	I accept personal differences and can work with anyone.
I can share my ideas and listen to others.	I can contribute my own ideas and solicit the ideas of others.
I can perform a variety of roles in a group.	I take ownership for my role in groups and perform a variety of roles.
I can cooperate in working towards group goals.	I can work actively and cooperatively with others to achieve group goals.
I can respect all voices.	I honor all voices and create opportunities for everyone to speak.
Stewardship: I can make a difference.	
I can take personal responsibility for shared space and materials.	I can take initiative to care for our classroom and our school community.
I can be a role model for my peers.	I can serve as a mentor for other students.
I can make a positive impact on my school and my community.	I ensure that my community and the world are better places than they were when I arrived.
I can reflect on the long-term effects of my actions.	I can create a positive legacy for future generations.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO STANDARDS-BASED GRADING AT OWL

WHY?

Before our transition to Open World Learning Community, and the EL Education model, our program used a grading system that provided written feedback in narrative form. There were strengths to this system, but this type of grade was difficult to communicate out for college transcripts, job applications, and even car insurance rebates.

THIS FEELS...DIFFERENT

It is different from many of the grading principles that students, families, and teachers have experienced. However, despite its familiarity, a more “traditional” approach to grading has very little research to support its effectiveness. OWL staff’s work with grading is centered around Ken O’Connor’s Repair Kit for Grading. This work outlines several ways to fix what he sees as a traditional grading system that is broken.

SO HOMEWORK DOESN'T MATTER?

A central principle of standards-based grading at OWL is that behaviors should have no direct punitive impact on a student’s academic grade. Formative assessment is incredibly valuable to students, families, and teachers as it provides feedback on performance, but a student’s scores on homework and class work has no direct impact on a final grade. Unfortunately, this is sometimes oversimplified as: “homework doesn’t count.” In reality, failure to complete formative assessments will almost certainly have a profound impact on a student’s grade. If he or she has not practiced the skill, they will most likely be unable to show proficiency on a summative assessment. In addition, students who do not complete required formative assessments will not have access to test retakes and/or revisions until completing missing work or alternative assignments.

HOW DO STUDENTS EARN AN A?

Students must show an understanding of a learning target that goes above and beyond “proficiency.” This can be done through E-work. In most cases, a student’s path to exemplary will be clearly outlined in a project rubric. However, there are some opportunities for a student to complete additional or alternative projects or assignments that allow him or her to show their mastery of a learning target in novel or creative ways. E-work is not extra credit.

HOW DO GRADES WORK AT OWL?

Staff at OWL have spent countless hours of research and years of refinement to develop a system of standards-based grading and reporting that provides specific, measurable learning outcomes, clear communication to students and families regarding academic achievement, and a foundation in the skills and concepts required for students to become self-directed leaders of their own learning. Standards-based grading and reporting at OWL (SBG&R) begins with our state standards. Instructors draw out the standards of focus for a particular unit, and use these to form the basis of a learning target (LT). A learning target is an objective or concept, written in kid-friendly language, that a student is expected to master in a given unit. These learning targets always start with the words, “I can...” and students monitor their own progress throughout a unit. On average, OWL students should expect three learning targets per class per quarter. Teachers measure a student’s mastery of a learning target through assessments, of which there are two main types. A **formative assessment** is the daily work done in class or at home that provides the teacher with incredibly useful information about what concepts students comprehend and what needs to be re-taught or modified. The feedback that students receive on this work will also help inform them, along with their families, what additional work is required to show that they are proficient in a specific learning target. Formative assessments help a student “form” an idea of what needs to be done to improve, and what a teacher can do to help.

So homework doesn’t matter? A central principle of standards-based grading at OWL is that behaviors should have no direct punitive impact on a student’s academic grade. Formative assessment is incredibly valuable to students, families, and teachers as it provides feedback on performance, but a student’s scores on homework and class work has no direct impact on a final grade. Unfortunately, this is sometimes oversimplified as: “homework doesn’t count.” In reality, failure to complete formative assessments will almost certainly have a profound impact on a student’s grade. If he or she has not practiced the skill, they will most likely be unable to show proficiency on a summative assessment. In addition, students who do not complete required formative assessments will not have access to test retakes and/or revisions until completing missing work or alternative assignments. How do students earn As? Students must show an understanding of a learning target that goes above and beyond “proficiency.” This can be done through E-work. In most cases, a student’s path to exemplary will be clearly outlined in a project rubric. However, there are some opportunities for a student to complete additional or alternative projects or assignments that allow him or her to show their mastery of a learning target in novel or creative ways. E-work is not extra credit.

The other major type of assessment is called a summative assessment. This is an exam, paper, project, or other measure that a teacher designs to assess if a student has truly mastered a learning target. A student’s performance on a summative assessment determines his or her learning target grade. Students can earn an exemplary, proficient, developing, or novice (E, P, D, or N) on a learning target based on their summative assessment. Of course, not all students will be proficient on a skill for the summative assessment. OWL works hard to foster a culture of perseverance and revision. Students who show progress towards a learning target after initially failing to meet proficiency on a summative assessment will have the opportunity to revise projects or retake a test to show their mastery of the skill. At the end of each quarter (as well as mid quarter progress reports) instructors will take a student’s learning target grades on our scale of exemplary to novice, and translate these to a letter grade using our faculty grading guide. Extensive interventions and incentives are in place at the end of each quarter to ensure student success. Because of these systems, it is required that students submit all work on or before the final day of a quarter. In the event of extenuating circumstances that prevent a student from achieving proficiency on a learning target prior to this date, a form may be submitted to a teacher requesting a revision window, of up to two weeks, to show progress on a learning target was not previously proficient. Standards-based grading is an adjustment for most of the stakeholders in our OWL community. If you have additional questions, you’re encouraged to attend our site council showcase on our grading and/or contact your student’s teacher or Crew leader for more information.

SERVICE

At Open World Learning Community, we value stewardship deeply. From the founding of our School in 1971, we have required students to go beyond state and district graduation criteria by fulfilling significant service commitments. All OWL graduates complete at least 150 hours of school service and 150 hours of community service. Opportunities to meet this requirement abound, within classes and through extracurricular groups. For decades, OWL graduates reflect on the profoundly heightened sense of competence, connectedness, and compassion that emerges from their service experiences.

Community Service Projects

Although many students complete service projects in their home or church communities, OWL offers coordination of service placements, service-based enrichment classes, and a community experience class.

- **Volunteering in the community:** Students work at local schools, churches, museums, and organizations based on their interests.
- **Kids Against Hunger:** OWL students organize and lead food-packing events at OWL and several schools throughout St. Paul.
- **Outward Bound Service Adventure:** OWL students travel to Outward Bound base camps, serve as maintenance crews, and learn about the Outward Bound philosophy through adventures such as rock climbing, ropes courses, and canoe trips.

Service Learning in the Curriculum

Expeditionary Learning provides a framework for incorporating service projects directly into classroom work, allowing students to apply knowledge in meaningful ways. Examples include:

- AP Environmental Science students studying ecosystems in Crosby Park work with St. Paul Parks and Recreation to restore an oak forest.
- English students examining teen culture in American literature develop materials to help parents better understand their teens.
- Social Studies students volunteer to support political campaigns of their choice.

School Service Projects

Students may complete school service as a class in their daily schedule or with their Crews.

- Mentoring younger students in reading, math, theatre, art, and physical education
- Assisting teachers in classrooms
- Recycling
- Office administration
- Grounds and maintenance



STUDENT LIFE: ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

OWL students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities to enhance their learning in the classroom and their connection to the school and each other. Our activities reflect our students and their interests.

- **Theatre:** OWL has a rich theatre tradition that puts on a play every fall and spring, involving a large number of students of all ages in the cast and crew. Students have significant input about what plays are produced, allowing for a nice balance between classic productions and lesser-known gems. Recent plays at Open include *The Importance of Being Ernest*, *Hairspray*, *Macbeth* and *Grease*.
- **National History Day:** While a required part of the social studies curriculum both at middle school (a project is completed each year in grades 6-7) and high school (part of the US History course), students may continue to compete in History Day each year. This program teaches extensive research skills, including work at college libraries, interviews of experts, and the chance to present high quality work to an authentic audience. We have many state competitors each year, and each of the past eleven years we have had students make it all the way to the Nationals in Washington, DC, including three National Champion projects and numerous top 10 finishes.
- **Archery Club:** Open boasts Saint Paul's only school-sponsored archery team, complete with an improvised shooting range and a full set of compound bows. The coed team practices three times a week after school. They compete in tournaments around the metro area, including the state championship every spring. The team has also traveled to Kentucky to compete at Nationals.
- **Ultimate Frisbee:** Open's Ultimate club - the Manatee - started as an informal after school pick-up session, grew into an obsession, and evolved into six competitive teams that compete in the Minnesota middle and high school ultimate leagues. As a self-officiated sport, Ultimate aligns well with the importance placed at OWL on integrity and conflict resolution.
- **Lego League:** OWL sponsors a team that participates in the FIRST Lego League competition. Students apply math and science concepts to research, design, build and program autonomous robots. Teams also identify and research a problem related to an annual theme, such as food safety. This activity is open to students under age 15.
- **Robotics:** The Open Circuits team at OWL participates in the yearly FIRST Robotics competition. Students apply math and science concepts to design, build and program robots. Students may also be a part of the business team, which is tasked with managing the budget, planning fundraisers and communicating with sponsors. Robotics is a yearlong commitment with an increase in meetings during the 6 week build season (from January to mid-February) and the competition (early April). This activity is open to students in grades 9-12.
- **Jazz Choir:** Do you like to sing? Are you a performer? Do you have an interest in a cappella music? Consider joining Jazz Choir! Currently, the group meets one day after school and during Club Fridays. We perform at a variety of school and public events throughout the school year. This group is for all grade levels.
- **Gender Sexuality Alliance:** The Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) is a student led group working to create an OWL community that is welcoming and values diversity. It is a safe place where students feel free to express themselves and discuss the challenges they face. These discussions spur actions to create change in our school and community.
- **Dare To Be Real:** Dare 2 Be Real (D2BR) is a group that talks about racial equity, race and racism. D2BR is an opportunity for students to have open, honest conversations about the role that race plays in their lives. Our goal is to provide a safe and sacred space for students to talk about their experiences and work toward greater equality and equity in our school and community. It's a systemic antiracist student leadership group.
- **Newspaper:** The Purple Press, OWL's official student publication, was launched in 1996 and publishes eight times a year. Students brainstorm stories, write, revise and layout their own product under the supervision of the staff advisor. The paper features a variety of stories, from hard-hitting editorials about school policy, to reviews of the latest films and video games.
- **Fraquetball:** Fraquetball is a sport invented by Open students that has grown into a mighty tradition. Two-person teams compete for spots in the playoffs in hopes of attaining the coveted Fraquetball trophy - and yes, there is a real trophy. Fraquetball is possibly best described as ping pong meets floor hockey; players use a ping pong paddle to try and whack the ball past the opponent's goalie. Games are played during lunch by both students and staff.



- **Service-Learning:** Open has long been a leader in the service-learning field. Students need to log 150 hours of community service and 150 hours of school service to graduate. Crew leaders help students connect to valuable opportunities in their own neighborhoods and throughout the West Side community. Many students participate on the OWL Against Hunger Team, leading food-packing events at OWL and other St. Paul schools. There is also an Outward Bound Service Adventure trip every spring that visits Outward Bound base camps throughout the country.
- **OWL Community Group:** Direct student involvement in the running of the school has long been a philosophical priority and pedagogical reality at Open. Students can have input about school policy decisions by attending the OWL Community Group meetings. This group combines our PTO and Site Council. In fact, the site council bylaws allow for a majority of students as voting members.
- **Athletics at partner schools:** Students who are interested in playing sports are eligible to participate with our co-op schools, Humboldt (most sports) and Central (Nordic and Alpine Skiing, Gymnastics). Despite going to a small school, OWL students have access to all athletics available in the district. Please note: if your child would like to take part in a high school fall sport (which begin practice in mid-August), please notify us the previous spring so that we can help make arrangements.
- **After school Enrichment Classes:** In addition to all the activities mentioned above, OWL offers a variety of enrichment classes through our partnership with Humboldt Secondary and funded through a 21st Century Grant. These classes currently include: Science Museum, Youth Farm, Dungeons and Dragons, Video Game Design and Coding, Urban 4H, Debate Team, Math League, Mobile Jazz, Bridge Building, Youth in Government, Video Production, Public Achievement, Soccer Club, Academic Support in Math and Reading, and Homework Help. This program is offered free of charge on Monday – Thursday from 3- 5 PM. Snacks are served to all students. Busing is provided to all students participating at least 2 days a week.

6-8 EXPERIENCE

Adolescence is a period of dramatic growth and change when young people seek to define and assert themselves. It is an important and challenging time, both for young people and for the adults in their lives.

At OWL, we strive to create a school community where students are valued and respected, a place where they can struggle, work hard, be challenged, take responsibility, and have repeated opportunities to test themselves.

The main components of our middle school program are:

- **Crew:** The heart of our program, each crew includes students in grades 6-12. Crew time focuses on activities that promote social and emotional development, group process, and academic skills like time management and organization.
- Our experienced, dedicated, accessible staff gets to know each student and help them navigate the new challenges of middle school.
- **Small by design:** students get more staff time and develop stronger relationships in our small-school community.
- **Core academic classes** (English, Social Studies, Science and Math) with engaging Learning Expeditions embedded into the curriculum
- **Electives:** Art, Physical Education, Health, Spanish, Music, Theater, Engineering, Journalism
- **Opportunities for acceleration:** When ready, students have access to higher-level courses, particularly in math.
- **Academic support,** when needed, is available in the form of: Reading and Math interventions, ELL, Study Skills class for students with IEPs
- **Mentoring program:** Our middle school students are members of a learning community, interacting with and being mentored by older students in academic and social settings.

Overnight adventures:

- **6th grade Orientation:** a two-day overnight trip to Baker Near-Wilderness Settlement in late September where students engage in outdoor education and team building exercises while being welcomed into our school community. Classes include rock climbing, archery, orienteering, canoeing and outdoor survival.
- **Deep Portage Experience:** a four-night, five-day trip at this northern Minnesota environmental learning center. Students learn about our state and its environment while developing outdoor skills and doing teambuilding exercises.



FALL RETREATS

Each fall, OWL students engage in a five-day intensive experience. The objective of the fall retreat is to begin the school year with an experience that will build lasting friendships and provide the foundation for future collaborative fieldwork. Below is a sample of what students did at each grade level recently

Grade 6 Baker Park/Fieldwork

9/24: Camp 6: Middle School Orientation at OWL—an introduction to the year and what to expect when starting middle school.

9/25: Museum Fieldwork at the Bakken Museum: students will learn about the different ways museums convey information and engage the visitor.

9/26-9/27: Two-day, one overnight to Baker Near-Wilderness Settlement in Maple Plain, MN. This will be an action-packed 2 days of canoeing, archery, cooperative games, rock climbing and more!

Grade 7 Audubon Center of the North Woods/Fieldwork

9/23-9/25: Three day, two night trip to Audubon Center in Sandstone, MN.

9/26: Day trip to Belwin Nature Center

9/27: Green Line Light Rail Tour

Grade 8: THE RIVER: Upper Mississippi Expedition

The eighth graders' expedition will focus on the Mississippi River, so their fall retreat is a visit to important sites around the Twin Cities.

9/24: Interstate Park

9/25: Bruce Vento/Mounds Park

9/26-9/27: Fort Snelling State Park/Base Camp overnight trip

Grade 9: Voyageur Outward Bound Trip

Students will begin high school with a 5 day, 4 night Outward Bound expedition to either hike on the Superior Hiking Trail or canoe on the St. Croix River. This is a time for students to connect as a class and to challenge themselves in the natural world.

Grades 10 : College Tours!

A series of daily visits to colleges and universities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Colleges we plan on visiting include: Gustavus Adolphus, Minnesota State—Mankato, University of Minnesota—Twin Cities, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Hamline University, University of Wisconsin—Stout, University of Wisconsin—River Falls, St. Olaf College and Carleton College.

*Families are invited to join us on these trips free of charge. Please contact Counselor Jolene Yang jolene.yang@spps.org if you would like to attend.

Grade 11: Service Adventure to YMCA Camp DuNord

A four day, three night trip Camp DuNord in Ely, MN. We will be working on a variety of maintenance and cleaning projects around this wilderness camp on the shores of Burntside Lake. Students will have two 3 hour work sessions each day, followed by time to canoe, hike, and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. We will stay in group cabins.

Grade 12: Voyageur Outward Bound School

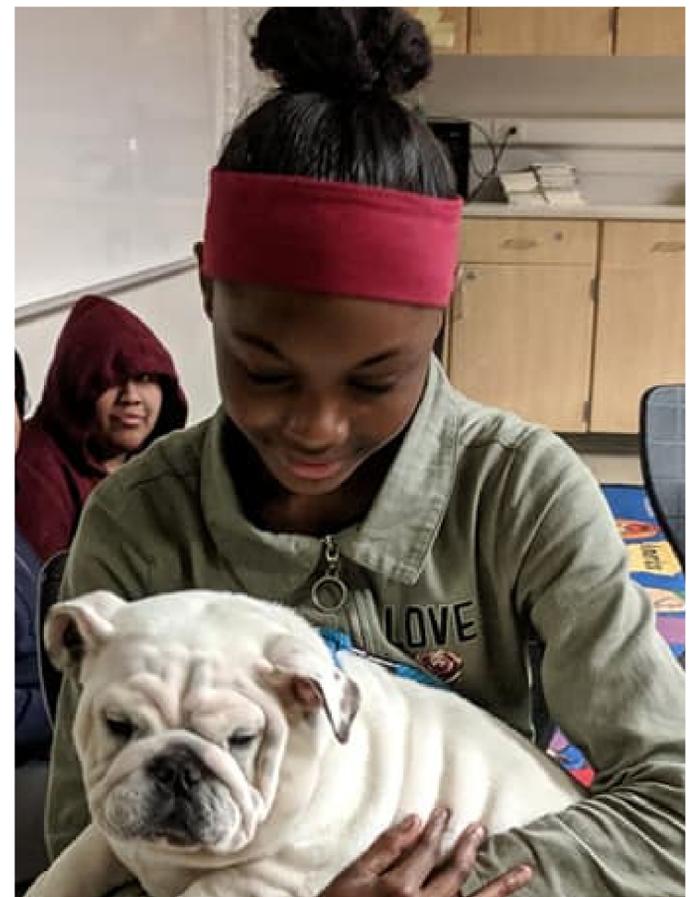
A five day, four overnight Senior Insight Leadership Retreat at the Voyageur Outward Bound School in Ely, MN. We will kick off senior year with teambuilding, service and adventure on the edge of the Boundary Waters. We stay in group camper cabins.



INTERIM

Each spring, OWL students participate in a week of intensive, experiential courses called Interim. The courses are designed to give students the opportunity for in-depth focus on a compelling topic or experience of their choice that most often takes students out into our Twin Cities community and beyond. Listed below are the a sample of previous course offerings.

- **Clay Everywhere!** What sounds better then spending a week with your hands in Clay? If your answer is "NOTHING!" then you should definitely join the CLAY EVERYWHERE interim course. Students will be exposed to the beautiful struggle of working with a sculptural medium that is messy and unpredictable. They will gain skills in wheel throwing, hand building, and finishing pieces. We will have the opportunity to see professional potters in action and view museum quality sculptures. There will be multiple deliverables at the end of the session including a water-holding vessel, an expressive piece, and a portion of a community mosaic.
- **It's a Doggy, Dog World!** Many people often wonder how dogs think, what the world looks like to them, and why they do the things that they do! Do you want to know, too? Then this course is for you! You will gain a better understanding of the silly, quirky, and crazy behaviors that make dogs, well, dogs! See the world through a dog's eyes and learn how to get them to understand their humans better, including you! Community experts will guide us on this journey and take us where we never thought that we could go before. Into a dog's world! You will learn all about dog training, dog breeding, showing dogs in competition, and how dogs are used as service workers to do a variety of different jobs.
- **Game Theory: Hate to Lose?** Lose less by learning how to out-think your opponents. In Game Theory you will learn about basic games that teach people how to think about games and play games where you will get to crush your opponents. Examples include: Scavenger Hunts in Minneapolis, Amazing Race in St. Paul, Lawn Games like Bocce Ball and a Virtual Maze, table games like Kool-Aid Pong, team games like Conquer, and finally Quidditch. We will also try to team up with an area elementary school to teach them how to play Quidditch. Athleticism is option, as the muscle we will rely on and train the most is your brain.
- **Outward Bound Service Adventure** trips (Northern Minnesota, Colorado and Maine) High School students will travel to Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Northern Minnesota and the Colorado Outward Bound School in Marble, Colorado or Hurricane Island Outward Bound School in Maine for a six-day service trip in this immersion experience. Surrounded by Outward Bound culture, students work collaboratively as painters, cleaners, carpenters, cooks, and more. In the meanwhile, students will trace our school's Expeditionary Learning framework back to its roots in Kurt Hahn's Outward Bound schools, creating historically rich lesson plans that we'll use during Crew. Students also participate in outdoor adventures organized by camp staff. There is no direct cost for this trip as participants earn their way through service and fundraising throughout the school year.



FAQ

Who attends OWL?

OWL Community is diverse, drawing 450 students from all parts of the district and beyond. Because we are a small community, exclusive cliques that plague other schools scarcely exist here. Friendships develop across many demographic groups, providing an enriching experience for all.

How do we know our students are learning?

At OWL, we believe that standardized test scores are just one measure of achievement. Teachers use ongoing, standards-based classroom assessments that look beyond the scores and provide a richer picture of student learning. We also rely on students' self-assessments, which incorporate rubrics and written reflections.

How does OWL help students to find and begin to hone their passions?

In 1971, our school was founded by parents seeking a school that would ignite curiosity and nurture self-directed learning. Today, we help students discover and develop their passions by incorporating student choice in classrooms, extracurricular activities, and school-wide programs. OWL offers many opportunities for customized academic acceleration as well as individualized service-learning.

What does “self-directed learning” mean?

Self-directed learning nurtures every student's individual learning potential and is guided by each student's interests and abilities. With teachers as guides, self-directed learners think about their learning processes, ask difficult questions, and seek out resources to answer those questions. OWL is a place where students become leaders of their own learning. We provide a model that challenges all students to engage in higher-order thinking, which we believe is the true meaning of academic rigor.

How does OWL teach students to be kind human beings and responsible citizens?

During Crew time each day, teachers deliver carefully crafted, engaging lessons focused around our five school values: integrity, perseverance, responsibility, collaboration, and stewardship. The Crew model guides our classroom culture and discipline processes and helps create a caring context for learning. In addition, OWL has a strong focus on school and community service, which helps our students see that they are members of something larger than themselves.

How does OWL communicate with families?

In addition to monthly newsletters, weekly school-wide emails and automated phone calls, families rely on Crew leaders (advisors) as primary contacts within the school. Student-led and goal-setting conferences offer three opportunities of in-depth communication each year—other secondary schools hold two short conferences annually. Crew leaders maintain open communication via email and phone throughout the school year. Current assignments and scores can always be viewed through Schoology. Mid-term and final grades are posted on Parent Portal.

What does OWL do to ensure a quality post-secondary experience?

See “Beyond Graduation” for more details.

How does OWL provide opportunities for academic acceleration?

Our Learning Expeditions naturally offer opportunities for acceleration and enrichment. Additionally, we offer a variety of advanced course offerings including: AP English Literature, AP English Language, AP Environmental Science, AP Biology, AP American History, AP Human Geography, AP Spanish Language, AP Statistics, AP Computer Science, College in the Schools Mathematics, a nationally competitive History Day program. Because OWL does not “track” students, they may move into accelerated courses as soon as they are ready. Our small school community allows teachers to know each student well and provide support to ensure success.

Students who have completed OWL's advanced offerings and meet other criteria are eligible to enroll in tuition-free classes at local colleges through the Post-Secondary Education Options (PSEO) program in grades 10-12.

How does the school prevent bullying and respond to discipline issues?

OWL Community takes bullying seriously, working proactively to prevent and immediately address bullying and discipline issues. Our small school community allows close connections between students and staff. Subtle interactions between students do not go unnoticed. Our model provides a fair, interactive, and attentive discipline process that empowers students to identify and make amends when necessary.

Would the faculty and staff send their children to this school?

Yes! We have staff who became school parents and parents who later became staff. There are currently many staff members who are the parents of OWL students or alumni.

What extracurricular activities are available to OWL students?

In addition to a variety of long-standing activities at OWL, activities are often driven by student interest and leadership. See “Student Life: Activities Beyond the Classroom.”

What are the roles of parents at OWL?

It's a well-known fact that parent involvement and student success go hand in hand. Our school was founded in 1971 by parents who were in search of a more creative, student-centered school for their kids. Today, parents remain a vital part of our school. Parents attend conferences and participate in the creation of their student's learning plan. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer in our classrooms, on field trips, at special events, and on the committees and boards (PTO and Site Council) that shape our school.

BEYOND GRADUATION...

Finding the right college is a highly personal process. The right college can expand a student's lifelong love of learning and provide the foundation for a successful and fulfilling life. At OWL, we guide a student-centered college search process that helps our students find the right fit for their next academic and social home. Not only does OWL have the highest graduation rate of any public or charter school in St. Paul or Minneapolis, but unique to Minnesota, for the past 9 years....

Our graduates have a 100% College Acceptance Rate

Colleges our graduates have attended:

- Augsburg University
- Augustana University
- Bard College
- Beloit College
- Binghamton University
- Bowdoin College
- Brandeis University
- Bryn Mawr College
- Carleton College
- Century College
- Colorado College
- Colorado State University
- Columbia College (Chicago)
- Cornell College (Iowa)
- Concordia University (St. Paul)
- Culinary Institute of America
- DePaul University
- Earlham College
- Evergreen State College
- George Washington Univ.
- Grinnell College
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Hamline University
- Hampshire College
- Hendrix College
- Hope College
- Inver Hills Community College
- Iowa State University
- Ithaca College
- Lewis and Clark College
- Luther College
- Macalester College
- Massachusetts Institute of Tech (M.I.T.)
- Michigan Tech University
- Middlebury College
- Mills College
- Minneapolis Community & Technical College
- Minnesota State University Mankato
- New York University
- Northern Michigan University
- Northland College
- Northwestern University
- Oregon State University
- Prescott College
- Reed College
- St. Catherine University (St. Kate's)
- St. Cloud State University
- St. Olaf College
- St. John's University
- St. Paul College
- Savannah Coll of Art & Design
- School of Art Institute of Chicago
- Scripps College
- Union College
- University of Arizona
- University of Chicago
- University of Manitoba
- University of Minnesota – Morris
- University of Minnesota –Duluth
- University of Minnesota –Twin Cities
- University of North Dakota
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Puget Sound
- University of Redlands
- University of St. Thomas
- University of Toronto
- University of Vermont
- University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- University of Wisconsin, River Falls
- University of Wisconsin, Stout
- Vermillion Community College
- Wartburg College
- Washington State University
- Wesleyan University
- Willamette University
- Winona State University
- Whitman College



OWL Rallies for College-Bound Seniors

Watch here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU0LdnwPySA&feature=emb_logo