

OPTO Meeting Notes June 16, 2020, 5:30pm

Attendees:

Teachers, Administrators, Parents, and OPTO Board (30+attendees)

Meeting Notes/Summary:

Notes: This a summary of the discussion and not verbatim, as it was an open dialog vs agenda driven meeting.

Update from Trish:

- Two task forces are in place at the district level, determining what can we do and what can't we do for a successful fall reopening of schools. Based on the guidelines that come down, each building and configuration being different, we will determine specifics for our building and program once those guidelines are released. But everything must be equitable, and ODY has different classrooms. Once we know what we can do – we will need teachers and parents to implement within the guidelines using our specific spaces and footprints.
- Where can parents be informed and what part of the process? How do we collaborate. You will all, we will all, know more after the first task force meets and have clear options (“A” plan, “B” backup plan.) As summer progresses, we resume in August and we will know more specifically then. Then we can look at ODY specifically and Commodore campus and how can we make it happen. (Examples: Lunch in classrooms, mobility of kids, parent volunteers.) We don't know the answers right now.
- Question from Parent – At ODY we have a unique opportunity to be creative about where we meet, use yards, beaches, etc. to elevate this. As we have done with mini classes/ILBs in the past. Can we look at utilizing these type of resources? Trish says it will depend on school hours, as not a lot of that can happen during school hours. Will have to be those agreements we have about safety. Round 1 will likely be restrictive of field trips. So many unknowns that less is more, and the priority is kids to be back in school. We need to use our school footprint to best of our ability. (Use tents, etc.)
- One of our parents (Sarah Frost) is school social worker. She has been going out to do home visits to homes of kids that are not engaged. Helps determine what the family needs, if they feel stuck. There is a lot of resources and support available, so please reach out if you are in need of support or know of some one who is.

Teacher Comments/Input:

- Emma - The teachers are been looking at options for individual classes vs the whole group. Different ways to make it still an ODY community but keeping it closer. (Walk to Math example.) The teachers would like parent feedback/input and may develop a parent survey to ask what we want.
- Barry – when we know what the district policy will be, then we can work on solving the community questions. (Example, A/B schedule, half day, number of kids in classroom, etc.) As soon as we have that we can be electric in our solutions. We can assess. Distance learning was never part of our training and distance learning at its best isn't the solution. We do know more now than we did when this started, if there is going to be distance learning in the future. We are smarter and better and brighter in June than we were in March.

- Anne – this was a different situation. We won't be in emergency mode next time. It won't look like it did this spring because we would be planning for it.
- Margareta – really trying to think of the whole child. This time period is so small compared to their whole education. They are going to learn and pick up – when they are ready to learn.

Parent Comments/Input

- Would like to provide feedback about what did/didn't work if distance learning is required again in the future – via a survey or otherwise 1) what works best for kids 2) what is necessitated by the parent community. Look at all parts of the distance learning vs just the educating.
- We can think outside of the box because we are ODY – use the outdoors and shift our learning a bit, most effective way to use this time.
- If we must do distance learning, use it most effectively. But the ultimate goal should be how to avoid distance learning.
- Overarching thankfulness to Staff, Administrators and Teachers for all they have done for our kids and families during this difficult time.
- ODY has an amazing community. BI Prepares, as an example. Huge list of resources. Mark who comes into the 1/2s. Lots of free resources under BI Prepares website. Encourage us to share amongst ourselves.
- Note: If you don't already check slack please do, as it is the fastest way to communicate with you. Also asking the reps to communicate out. But slack is the fastest.
- Question about kids in high risk groups. That is being addressed at the govt/BISD level.
- Discussion around supporting each other as a community over the summer and into fall. If we are going to do something as a parent community officially to support each other, we need to be intentional about classrooms. (creating pods, small groups, etc.)
- Discussion of tracks/siblings/schedules for the Fall - We are in an unusual position. We have siblings – all in same track. We have some strengths with that and the small community. Might be as easy as green m/w, blue tues/thurs. No other school may be as easily divided that way.
- Discussion of ODY parent(s) as liaison with BISD in terms of infection control. Having parents brainstorming ways to look at the way we do our learning is important. We may not have a vaccine for at least a year. We can act as a liaison. The school district nurse may be overwhelmed. Chrissie Pitts offered to be this liaison (assuming fundraising would need other support.)
- But in terms of demanding outside time, that is something that a lot of people have spoken about, examples of that working in other places, it is part of our culture, outdoor ed, garden, sit spot. If there is any push back that “this is how we do it” we need to use our voice to reiterate our focus on outdoors and how this blends with this situation to ask for money to put tents up to make that happen. If we need to raise a barn or picnic shelter on the soccer field, we should do that. Better than inside with masks on. Colleen Huck suggested she would like to be on whatever committee that could help with this.