

Oyster-Adams Community Council

Annual Report for School-Year 2009-2010

May 26, 2010

We, the Oyster-Adams Community Council (OCC), are the parent-teacher organization. We do three things **to promote and support education** at our school:

- (1) we raise money,
- (2) we organize volunteers, and
- (3) we spend money.

As our Articles of Incorporation state, the OCC was formed to improve education in and for the Oyster-Adams school community: by promoting and supporting the best interest and welfare of the pupils of this school; by cooperating with the staff and community in the mental, physical, and social education of children; by working for continued improvement in the field of education; and by planning and conducting enrichment programs (such as the purchase of books and other teaching materials, hiring of supplementary staff, and sponsoring of field trips, guest speakers and similar programs). We fill in gaps in the DCPS budget.

We hope this report gives you an idea of the many things that *we all* contribute – by giving our time and our money – and ways that you might help in the future. Remember, only what *we all* set out to do gets done.

We assembled this report based on the OCC minutes from this past year, the budget discussions, emails, notes, and comments from event organizers. It is organized into sections:

- **Who are we?** – Board members from '09-'10. **2**
- **Where did we come from and what changed from last year?** **2**
– A brief explanation of the old budget and then the new budget.
- **What did we do? The Year in Review** – The major spending projects, fundraising events, and grants received over the past year. **3**
- **How much money do we have and how do we use it?** – The budget, what we spent this past year (so far), what we propose to spend next year, restricted funds, and corporate partners. **10**
- **Can we talk? Communication** – This is a separate section because it doesn't fit anywhere else but is critical to our community. **14**
- **Where are we going?** – New initiative for this year, committee or event chairs needed for next year, and suggestions for next year's board. **15**
- **Index** – An alphabetical listing of all the items listed to help readers navigate this report. **16**

There is a lot you can do. Would you help? Bring your friends! Some projects can be done at home.

Who are we? OCC Board Members 2009-2010

We, the board of the OCC, are elected to represent all of the parents to make decisions about how to allocate or spend the parents' money and to help coordinate the extra volunteer efforts within the school. We, the parent members of the board, want to begin by thanking the teacher members of the board for their invaluable contribution this year. They provided us with guidance and insight into the needs of the school.

Co-Chair, English: Jackie Alvarado (Steven, 4th)

Co-Chair, Spanish: VACANT

Co-Vice Chair, English: Vivian Portis-Escoto (Julian, 3rd, Jackson, 1st)

Co-Vice Chair, Spanish: Noemi Eversley (Elijah, 6th, Isaiah, PreK)

Co-Treasurer, English: Robert Osley (Melanie, 1st)

Co-Treasurer, Spanish: Deon Woods Bell (Moorea, 2nd, Jovan, Kinder)

Co-Secretary, English: Phoebe Schlanger (Henry, 2nd)

Co-Secretary, Spanish: Cristina Garza (Jimena, 2nd, Elena, PreK)

At-large representatives:

- Bill Bass (Margaret, Sarah, and William, 7th)
- Frank Johnston (Isabel, 4th)
- Denise Senecal (Reese, 3rd)
- David Snead (Marcelle, 8th)
- Kathy Vincent (Ariana, 8th, Andres, 4th, Mateo, Kinder, Diego, PreK)

Principal: Monica Liang-Aguirre

Assistant Principals: Ibis Villegas and Karen Lezmez

Teacher representatives: Carolina Clarens (KA), Missy Alden (4A), Carole Whelan (Art-Primary Campus)

Honorary staff representative: Edith Shorts, Oyster-Adams Business Manager. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ms. Edith Shorts for her volunteerism with the OCC. She has been the glue for the organization and helped us avert many crises. Thank you, Ms. Shorts.

Where did we come from and what changed from last year?

Last year, we adopted a new way of looking at the budget by sorting projects into broad categories: Educational Enhancement, Community Enrichment, Cultural Enrichment, Student Activities & Field Trips, Campus Enhancement (Buildings & Grounds), and OCC Administrative Costs.

Early on, however, this year's Board was faced with a series of unexpected expenses. For example, some were bills from last year that were neglected to be submitted before the end of the fiscal year that we agreed to honor, some were old funds from several years prior that had been unintentionally dropped from the budget, one was a penalty from the IRS that we are actively appealing. To address these emergency expenses, we reallocated funds on the SY2009-2010 budget that was presented last May. The Principal agreed to pay for some of these projects as part of her DCPS budget. We also engaged legal counsel to help us with some issues. They provided their services for free (*pro bono*). We also hired an accountant to bring us current on tax filing and to work with us on keeping the books current in the organization.

On the bright side, the school received several grants this year to fund activities above what was proposed to be supported by the OCC. Those grants are discussed below. They also highlight the need for a grant-writing team.

What did we do?

YEAR IN REVIEW¹

We had another busy year. This section explains the projects, events, goods, or services that we funded and/or organized this year. We tried to be thorough, though we apologize if we have omitted something. We describe these as: "MONEY OUT" and "MONEY IN." We hope to introduce or explain projects you may not have heard about, and to provide some commentary of what succeeded and what needs improvement for next year.

The first change we will make for next year is that, for all projects, including fundraisers, we will assign a budget to help those parent volunteers in charge understand what their limits are. We also need to assign a parent to help track each project. Last year, we had proposed creating budget line coordinators. Because of the need to address the unexpected expenses problems and a lack of volunteers, we did not finish assigning budget line coordinators this year. Those parents would help decrease the burden on the treasurers, particularly Deon, who had to reconcile each request to confirm the money was available.

"MONEY OUT"

We attempted to institute firmer financial controls. We learned that everyone learns at different rates, particularly among parents and teachers who have been used to the OCC handling funds in a more flexible approach. For example, we requested that all bills be turned in within 30 days. This did not always happen and so it made planning budget lines difficult where more than one person had access. We have stated repeatedly that ***we will absolutely not pay any bills submitted after the end of the school year.*** If bills are submitted late, funds to honor the bill will be subtracted from the next year's budget line. We feel that these steps are necessary because our budget has grown larger and more complex. We also want to find a way to identify funds that will not be spent so that we can apply them where needed this year, instead of waiting until next year.

The budget lines below reflect the categories this year. Next year, some lines may change.

Educational Enhancement: Projects under this category generally happen during school hours as a way to supplement the curriculum.

Art Supplies – We provided \$10,000 for art supplies to be divided between the two campuses. Primary Campus Art Teacher & OCC Teacher Rep. Carole Whelan also obtained a \$9,700 arts grant from the Minneapolis Foundation. Ms. Whelan used the funding to implement innovative art programming bringing in guest artists, creating partnerships with museums such as the National Portrait Gallery and connecting the dots between our children's curriculum and the arts, and also collaborating with music teacher Sylvia Zwi.

Chess – We will pay (once we receive the bill) \$1,500 to the U.S. Chess Center to bring a chess program to the entire 4th grade, as part of the math curriculum. This is an ongoing program that we fund each year. Teacher & OCC Teacher Rep. Missy Alden helps to bring this to the school.

Classroom Funds – Based on the total amount that was allocated last year, we calculated classroom funds as approximately \$34 per student. Parent and OCC Co-Secretary Phoebe Schlanger took the lead in developing a formula that would be fair, given our school's expanded staff. Using feedback from the teachers, we changed the allocations so that each teacher had control of his or her own funds. For the elementary grades, this worked out to approximately \$17 per teacher in a team. The middle school allocations were developed using a formula based on the number of students in the grade divided by the number of teachers, with some adjustments. We also allocated small amounts to the various specialists throughout the school

¹ We are converting to using the terms "Primary Campus" and "Intermediate Campus" for the buildings known as "Oyster" and "Adams."

and to the special education team. We will tinker with this model further for next year based on our experiences. The methodology used this year is outlined in a report attached to the November OCC minutes (available on the OCC section of the school website). Once the budget is adopted for SY2010-2011, we would like to provide the teachers with information on their next year's funding amounts by the end of this school year so that they can use it to plan next year's curriculum.

Spanish Leveled Readers – We allocated \$10,000 to purchase leveled readers in Spanish for Kinder through 3rd grade (having spent approximately \$10,000 on English leveled readers last year). It took longer than anticipated to order the books. The school is ready to purchase them as of the date of this report. We hope that they will be available for use in the classrooms by SY2010-2011. Dual Language Coordinator Oscar Ramirez is in charge of this project.

Libraries – Every year the OCC supports the libraries. We allocated \$10,000 for library books to be split equally between the campuses. This year, we encountered several problems. First, there were several bills that carried over from last year. We need a dedicated parent (ideally one at each campus) to help the librarians with tracking their orders. Parent (and former board member) Susana Castiglione had stepped up to help us this year. Second, we discovered that last year we had spent money on books for the Intermediate Campus that had been collected in memory of a parent, Laura Dueñes. We worked with the family on a solution that would embrace the spirit of the gifts and would honor her memory and her love of reading. Both librarians have proposed summer reading programs. At the Intermediate Campus, parent volunteers, Marcia Maziarz and Mary Jo Kelly are collaborating to assist with the summer reading initiative. All the Heritage Committees are supporting the effort and hope to give our children culturally diverse reading options.

Music Teacher – We brought Sylvia Zwi back this year to teach music to the students at the lower campus grades. The DCPS budget allowed the Principal to hire a music teacher (Joseph Klapper) for the Upper Campus grades. We intend to continue this program next year. Also new this year was after-school music bands. We will use a small portion of unspent funds from the tutoring line to pay Mr. Klapper and Michael Bowie for their after-school work with Beginners Band (Klapper) and Advanced Band (Bowie). Sylvia Zwi supported several special projects this year at the lower campus, including collaborating with the Pan African Committee on an exceptional Martin Luther King, Jr. program and collaborating with Ms. Whalen on special arts-curriculum projects for third graders at the National Portrait Gallery. OCC Co-Treasurer Robert Osley managed our sole employee this year, making sure Ms. Zwi got paid.

Musical Instruments – We allocated \$5,000 for the purchase of musical instruments. The two music teachers, Ms. Zwi and Mr. Klapper, decided how to allocate the funds. For example, we purchased drums for use at the Intermediate Campus.

Science Labs – We allocated \$1,000 to the science labs at each campus. The theory behind this budget line was to purchase “durable” science equipment that would carry over from year to year, as distinguished from the classroom funds lines assigned to the individual teachers. We had hoped that a vertically integrated science curriculum could be developed so that the science faculty could advise us of their needs and their priorities. We discovered that it is too confusing for the teachers and the treasurers to distinguish between the lab lines and the classroom funds line. We also discovered that it is challenging for teachers to have to negotiate who gets to spend what amount. We will be using one line next year for the science curriculum, with the amount specified for each teacher, for both laboratory and classroom funds.

Tutoring – This year was the first (“launch”) year of the tutoring program, using OCC funds to pay seven teachers who now, at the end of the school year, are tutoring Oyster-Adams students ranging in age from Kindergarten to 8th grade. Parent coordinators Benita Ward Jarrett and Claire Taylor laid the foundations – researched possible sources of volunteer tutors in the surrounding community and reached out to program coordinators at area colleges and universities and DCPS – for an all-volunteer tutoring program next year. This year, the parent coordinators built and managed the program on a limited basis, using teachers paid from the

tutoring line and students identified by their teachers and/or their own parents as being in need of intensive instruction outside the classroom. Next year, their plan is to bring tutoring to more students who need it, and expand the program by incorporating volunteer tutors (both DCPS parents/guardians and volunteers from the surrounding community) in addition to OCC-funded teachers. This way, next year, the coordinators hope to meet their goal of bringing the right kind of help to every Oyster-Adams student who requests it. If you are interested in working with the program, the coordinators need you! Contact Claire Taylor at claire_elin_taylor@yahoo.com or Benita Ward Jarrett at benitawj@yahoo.com.

Teacher Recruitment & Retention – We spent funds on advertising for faculty openings and for a small appreciation gift for the teachers. Parent volunteers Susan Stevenson (also LSRT Co-Chair) and Tamara Belt assisted with teacher recruitment.

Community Enrichment: Projects considered community enrichment happen outside of school hours or outside of the regular curriculum needs.

Childcare at Meetings – We provided childcare for the big meetings at the school to enable parents to attend. These meetings included the OCC community meetings and the Back-to-School-Nights. Parent & OCC board member David Snead arranged for these services.

Directory – We provided a copy of the student directory to each family and teacher in the school. Once again, parent & OCC Co-Secretary Phoebe Schlanger took on this task. Data entry was easier than last year but obtaining the forms from parents was incredibly difficult. In a new development, Phoebe and two other parents, Cristina Garza (OCC Co-Secretary) and Claire Taylor (former board member), attempted to sell advertisements to help defray costs. We really need a committee of parents who know how to market advertising. This could be a source of revenue beyond tapping the families at the school. We also provided free advertisements to companies that sponsored Vamos or the Auction as a way to thank them. This year, when the directory was finished and came in under budget, Phoebe proposed that the board reallocate the excess funds immediately and we voted to give it to the classroom funds to help the instructional coaches.

Family Education – We funded the PESA program to help increase parent engagement. It met one day a week for six weeks. It taught parents how to improve communication with their children. It also provided helpful advice and skills to achieve meaningful conversations and improve school-family relations. Assistant Principal Karen Lesmez jumped right in to coordinate this program and manage the expenses.

Field Day – This line was transferred to the Principal's budget to help us cover our unexpected expenses.

Hospitality – We allocated a small amount for events at the school. This year it was used for an 8th grade open house (organized by parents Karen Smith and Magaly Gatti) and for supplies for the teacher appreciation luncheons (parent Julieta Lopez).

Interpretation Services – In keeping with the mission of the school, we conduct community meetings in both languages. We now get interpreters from the Office of Bilingual Education so we did not need to spend any OCC funds. Parent & OCC board member Kathy Vincent arranged for these interpreters.

Middle School Social Activities – This line was transferred to the Principal's budget to help us cover our unexpected expenses.

OCA Scholarship – We provided funds to the OCA after-care program to help families with tuition. This scholarship has long been a part of the OCC budget.

Parent Email Software – The school now uses ConstantContact to deliver the Friday Bulletin and periodic news announcements. The Principal pays for this service. Parent Wendy Jacobson handles this effort.

Parent Handbook – We had set aside money to print a parent handbook. The document has not been finished but Principal is working on this and hopes to have it available in SY2010-2011. The Principal agreed to take on this cost.

Parent Orientation – This line was transferred to the Principal's budget to help us cover our unexpected expenses.

Principal's Coffees – Principal Monica Liang-Aguirre met with parents approximately once a month (there were six this year) as an informal way to hear concerns about the school. Parent Andrea Del Vecchio coordinated getting donations/discounts for these gatherings: coffee from Open City for events held at the Primary Campus, (MLA paid for coffee from Starbucks for events at Intermediate Campus), and baked goods from Firehook Bakery at 50% discount. For next year, Andrea is working on getting Tryst to donate coffee for the Intermediate Campus.

Principal's Emergency Fund – We allocated money for the Principal to use at her discretion. She used the funds to help families in need and for emergency programming purposes.

Safe Routes to School – This program, run by parent Jeff Tackes, is a grant to the Primary Campus to improve the safety of students traveling to and from school. The program does not cost the school money but does involve some volunteer effort.

Cultural Enrichment:

Heritage Committee Activities – We have three long-standing heritage committees at Oyster-Adams: Asian (Marcia Maziarz, Chair), Hispanic (Claudia Cauterucci, Chair), and Pan-African (Stephanie Black, Charlene Evans, Monique McCray-Osley, Co-Chairs). We gave each committee \$2,000 to spend. The committees organized social and cultural events during certain months of the year and brought outside speakers and/or entertainment. The events are held both during school hours and after school or evening hours and are open to everyone. We funded a new Jewish Heritage Committee (Laura Flegel, Chair) for a small amount (as requested), who played an active role in making sure there was visibility of Jewish people and culture in not only the library, but in other discussions and things at school. Some Heritage funds were used to purchase relevant books for the library (per their direction).

Assemblies – This line was used to fund school-wide or campus-wide performances (Copoeira and Teatro De Luna).

Student Activities & Field Trips: We have several grade-level trips that are considered traditions at Oyster-Adams. We provide funds to help allow every student to go, regardless of ability to pay. In most cases, students have to contribute additional funds to attend the trip. As part of the budget revision process, we separated field trips and student activities from other curriculum-based or cultural events.

General Field Trips – This line was created to compensate for the adherence to the DCPS rule that field trips not use parent vehicles. The program was designed for each grade to take one field trip by bus. This line was used to pay for the buses, not any admission fees (those come out of the classroom lines). The First Grade was particularly innovative this year, taking a tour bus to study the history of DC.

5th Grade Field Trip – We allocated \$1,500 toward the 5th grade trip. Each year, the students in the 5th grade choose where to go. As of the date of this report, no trip has been scheduled. One area that needs attention is coordinating with the teachers and administration to develop a curriculum-appropriate trip and to determine who is in charge of organizing it.

6th Grade Field Trip (Echo Hill) – This Oyster-Adams tradition takes our students out of the city for a two-night hands-on science trip to rural Maryland. Due to Echo Hill's loss of sponsor funding, the costs of this trip increased dramatically from years past. Thanks to parent Wendy Jacobson, the school received a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to support the trip. Any money remaining in the grant will be used for next year's trip.

7th & 8th Grade Field Trips – The budget did not originally provide for funding any trips for these grades. When we ascertained that certain budget lines were not going to be spent, we reallocated money to support the 8th grade trip and promotion. In collaboration with the Principal, we allocated a small amount to the Spain trip (with coordination from Parent & OCC board member Bill Bass).

Middle School Sports – This year, this line supported DC Scores and volleyball. Parent Sally Hunsburger became the school's after-school Athletic Director. Sally worked tirelessly to coordinate the teams and the needs of the students for the Intermediate Campus. The after-school athletic program offers students far more choices than before and is looking to expand further next year. We need more parents to be involved in coaching and supporting the teams. Ideally, we would love a group of committed parents to step up and create an athletic scholarship fund. One possibility would be to approach all of the professional sports teams in the area, and possibly the colleges, to ask for funds to buy shoes and other equipment beyond what will be provided by DCPS or OCC.

Poetry Contest – This line was transferred to the Principal's budget to help us cover our unexpected expenses.

Science Fairs – We conducted two science fairs this year, one for the elementary grades and one for the middle school grades. These events require many parent volunteers to support the science teachers. Parents Margaret Ernst and Trish Mitchell, among others, took the lead. The events require table set up, checking in experiments, locating volunteer judges, and breaking down the events. As always, we are proud of how well our students do on their projects and in representing the school at the city-wide science fair. One problem we encountered this year had to do with money and communication. The OCC had allocated money for these Science Fairs. When faced with our series of unexpected expenses, the Principal agreed to assume these costs to help us. We neglected to communicate clearly the implication of this transfer. The parents who volunteered to help on these projects proceeded as if the OCC were paying not realizing DCPS has a different purchasing process. The OCC did pay for some of these expenses because DCPS does not reimburse for items after an event has happened. This was a learning process that should run more smoothly next year.

Spelling Bee – This line was transferred to the Principal's budget to help us cover our unexpected expenses.

Student Council – This line was transferred to the Principal's budget to help us cover our unexpected expenses.

Technology – The OCC did not allocate funds for technology in this year's budget, though we did provide some emergency purchases at the beginning of the school year. We want to return to funding at least some amount to support Melissa Muhammed, Oyster-Adams Technology Coordinator, for all of her efforts to help the school and the OCC's needs.

Campus Enhancement (Buildings & Grounds): Projects considered campus enhancement involve longer-term improvements or items that should last past the current budget year.

Acoustics at Intermediate Campus – We had allocated funds to install proper acoustics and a sound system in the gym at the Intermediate Campus. DCPS took over the project and, in doing so, renovated the entire gym. No OCC funds were spent.

OCC Administrative Costs: We try to keep administrative costs to a minimum, but, as a 501(c)(3) organization, we are required to do certain tasks. We have also grown as an organization. We hired an accountant to help us with our taxes and some bookkeeping tasks. We must also pay insurance, corporate filing fees, fees to PayPal, copies, and stamps. We started using a new software program this year called PTO Manager, with assistance from, parent and OCC board member Frank Johnston. PTO Manager assists with both finances and organizing volunteers. Although it has many positive attributes, it is not as robust as Quicken or other financial packages. We plan to further experiment with PTO Manager next year and

thereafter to make a recommendation regarding whether we should continue with it or use another package.

Unscheduled Costs and Corrections: As we have explained, several items appeared that were not in the SY2009-2010 budget. Bills from last year included mirrors in the bathrooms at the Intermediate Campus, library books, and trees for the Intermediate Campus playground. Funds that dropped off the budget by accident included Canta Conmigo (Sra. Saavedra's music CD) and Ms. Reeve's Unsung Hero's Grant. One program (DC Scores) was supposed to be co-funded by the participants but there was confusion in asking for those funds.

For the Laura Dueñes Memorial Fund, we allocated \$2,000 for SY2009-2010 and \$2,000 for 2010-2011. We are working to reallocate \$11,000 originally intended for these purposes. These funds were spent last year, though not in as directed a fashion as was supposed to happen. Last year, the libraries spent nearly \$27,000 (see 2008-2009 Annual Report), using a line in the budget that was not clearly identified as being the memorial fund.

The item that took the greatest amount of OCC time and energy was a penalty from the IRS for failure to file a tax return in OCC's FY07-08 (with a possible further penalty for late filing in FY08-09). We have not yet paid this bill while we actively appeal it, with the help of *pro bono* counsel. We have recently learned that the IRS has forwarded our appeal to a different department. We will not know their decision until after the end of this year. We must set aside this money as a precaution. Parent & OCC Treasurer Deon Woods Bell worked tirelessly with *pro bono* counsel and our new accountant to address these crises. The board and the community owe her our gratitude for her thoroughness.

This year, especially in light of so many unexpected expenditures, we also partnered to a large extent with our Principal. She absorbed some school-wide expenditures into her DCPS budget, as appropriate. We are grateful for this productive partnership.

"MONEY IN"

We could not have supported all of these programs without money.

We continued with the trend to focus primarily on asking parents to donate directly because this provides the greatest benefit to the school. We still have events where we share the funds with a corporate entity (e.g., Christmas trees, book fair, Vamos). We tried to make sure with each project that we were getting the most for our efforts. We also tried to coordinate the events to spread them out throughout the year. Scheduling is another area that needs improvement for next year. The events are presented in order that they occurred.

(OCTOBER-MAY) Annual Family Giving Campaign (Parent Campaign) – This is our most significant method for raising funds for the school. Each family is asked to contribute some amount, from \$20-\$500+ per child. We tried to focus on increasing the number of families that participated. Parent Anne-Marie Bairstow, aided by parent & OCC Vice Co-Chair Vivian Portis-Escoto, headed up the effort. We offered a Wii or iPhone as an incentive. We continued with the practice of hiring a data entry person to handle all of the inputting and reporting of parent donations. Now that the school has more than 600 students, the task of keeping track has become too difficult for parent volunteers to tackle. Unfortunately, parent participation dropped off this year, as did overall contributions. As of the date of this report, we had received \$83,400 representing 35% of families. We need all parents to contribute and we need a bigger committee – or at least several co-chairs – to help spread the burden. Another lesson learned is that the request letter to parents should go out within the first two weeks of school to capture enthusiasm. We are looking for enthusiastic parents to accept this challenge for next year.

(OCTOBER) ¡Vamos! – This was the second year for the Oyster-Adams 5K race/walk and kids' fun run. A team of parents, led by parent Maria Elena Nawar, coordinated the steps involved in putting the event together including negotiating with the race company, acquiring permits, and organizing volunteers on race day. ING provided a \$2,000 grant towards costs; once again, the Mayor's office pitched in \$12,000 to cover police overtime. As a result of this income, the race

made a profit of \$1,200. While there were 306 registered participants on race day, only 197 runners participated, including 78 students. This represents a decline of 40% from last year's race, which may have been due, in part, to cold and rainy weather leading up to and on race day. ¡Vamos! is modeled after the Capitol Hill 10K Classic, run by a cluster of schools, which after 30 years is able to attract 3,000 runners/walkers and raise \$50,000 from race fees. It is hoped that VAMOS will one day achieve this level of success. In connection with Hispanic Heritage Month, ¡Vamos! is a way to bring the community together and to promote physical fitness while raising money. Importantly, it is a fundraiser that can leverage resources from non Oyster-Adams families. To build the event for 2010, the ¡Vamos! committee is working on new internal and external recruitment strategies as well as making changes to the race itself to attract more people.

(DECEMBER) Book Fair – This event offered families the opportunity to buy books in both languages. We set up the Primary Campus cafeteria as a bookstore and then we received 25% of the sales generated. Primary Campus librarian Laura Kleinmann and parent Serena Wiltshire lead the effort that required many volunteer hours to order, receive, and inventory books; to set up the “bookstore;” to staff the store; and to return the unsold books. It takes over 50 parent volunteers. Serena and Laura work extremely hard on the Book Fair. We owe them a debt of gratitude for this community building and enriching event. When the fair was over and we reconciled the accounting with the book company, they offered us the opportunity to take some of the proceeds in the form of books instead of cash. This has created some accounting difficulties within the OCC's budget and we are working to resolve them. The school's portion of the sales was \$5,165. The librarians accepted \$2,434 in books as a portion of the proceeds. For next year, we will need to discuss with the librarians the use of credits in relation to their budget line. We have discussed whether the event should be held before Thanksgiving, sometime in November, instead of during December when many parents are pressed for time. Another proposed reason to have the book fair earlier is that December may have inclement weather. Because the fair requires students to eat lunch in their classrooms for the week, students might not have enough opportunities to get outside of their classrooms.

(DECEMBER) Christmas trees – Thanks to parent Karen Smith, this event was even more successful than last year, raising nearly \$11,000. Karen did the ordering and organized the volunteer sellers. She proposed ordering fewer trees this year to avoid having any unsold, which would come off our bottom line – and she sold out her inventory by Sunday afternoon! This is an example where we need to spend money to make money (this year almost \$10,000). We relied on Karen's expertise to know how much to order to make this venture worthwhile. Karen will be leaving us because her son graduates this year. We will miss her tremendously and the entire community is indebted to her for developing this fundraiser. Karen, always a responsible leader, has found her replacement, Neil de Bhaile. Neil is the parent of two young students so we hope he will spearhead this effort for many years to come. One problem we discovered from an OCC administrative perspective (not the administration of the sale) is that we accept credit cards for the purchase of these trees. Those are processed through PayPal. The treasurers and Michael Settels, a parent volunteer who helped with the bookkeeping, struggled to determine which PayPal transactions should be credited to the trees and which to other events (such as the parent campaign). Michael found some entries that were miscoded, so the Christmas tree sale did not get proper credit until he fixed them.

(APRIL) Auction – Thanks to parent Theresa Minni who headed the committee, this successful event raised about \$52,400 (25%-30% of our annual budget). For the second time, there was an on-line auction to allow greater participation for those parents who are unable to attend the actual event. The software created this year can be used again next year and we can continue to use it throughout the year to sell merchandise. The location, the food, and the staffing for the event were donated, which reduced our costs. With the donation came trade-offs, such as a cash bar. Theresa has agreed to head the committee again next year and has found two co-chairs: parents Claire Taylor and Sandra Gonzalez. They have already begun planning.

(APRIL-MAY) Raffle – This event raised approximately \$10,100, with the drawing held during Fiesta. Parent & OCC board member Denise Senecal and parent Bev Paul took the lead in ordering tickets, coordinating the necessary license, distributing and collecting tickets to/from students, and tracking the money and prizes. Because the Auction was held so late this year, there was not much time to sell tickets. Also, we heard some complaints that we started asking folks to sell raffle tickets too soon after the Auction. We are considering whether it makes sense to move this fundraiser to the Fall.

(MAY) Fiesta – Our annual Fiesta, a large outdoor event, is traditionally held the first Saturday in May (though this year we held it the 2nd Saturday because of the timing of DC-CAS). We owe many thanks to parent Tomora Redman for running the Fiesta this year. Although tremendously popular, the timing makes it a challenge to find volunteers because many parents are burned out. The board also discussed the use of bracelets at the February meeting and resolved that \$10 was reasonable for unlimited rides, but food would be purchased separately. The event requires spending money to rent equipment (moon bounces, dunk tank, cotton candy machines), to purchase supplies for the food and games, to pay for security guards and custodial staff, and to pay for a DCPS permit. Due to heavy winds, the moon bounce and slide were forced into the gym. As a result, the field was left open for the older kids to use, and less trash was created for the volunteers and custodians to clean. The Principal suggested that this be the set up going forward. There was no International Cafe this year, which also meant less trash to clean. Once all of the bills have been reconciled, we will determine if the pricing met all of our needs and expectations. As of the date of this report, the Fiesta raised \$3,900. Tomora has agreed to return to run it next year, which should make planning a bit easier. The hope for next year is to have the Fiesta at the Intermediate Campus.

(DECEMBER & JUNE) Photos – We arranged to have a company take individual pictures and class pictures twice a year. We received a portion of the proceeds. As of the date of this report, we had raised \$2,200 from the Fall photos, but we had not received our the Spring payment.

(ALL YEAR) Box Tops – Box Tops for Education pays us 10¢ per box top from specially marked products. Parent Angela Juarez handled this project again this year – assembling the box tops or sheets of box tops contributed by students, checking the expiration dates, and submitting them for reimbursement. The corporation issues checks twice a year but we submit them as we collect them. We need to send a note home to remind parents to collect these over the summer. One suggestion for next year might be to turn this project over to the student councils. If they take on the responsibility for distributing flyers and collecting the box tops (Angela would still forward them to the company), then they could be in charge of spending those funds. This year, the checks went to the school instead of the OCC.

(NEW) Merchandise – Parents Linda Kulman and Jodi Enda took on the Spirit Committee, and with it, the challenge to create merchandise to show support for the school. They held a contest to design a new mascot, chose two versions of a tiger, and designed a new t-shirt with one tiger on the front and one tiger on the back. They sold all of the shirts they had ordered at the Auction and at Fiesta. They have asked for seed money to create more items to be ready for the start of the new school year.

(NEW) Grants – As we have explained throughout this report, the school received several grants this year to fund activities above the OCC and DCPS proposed to support. Primary Campus Art Teacher Carole Whelan received a \$9,700 arts grant from the Minneapolis Foundation. Parent and LSRT Co-Chair Susan Stevenson obtained a \$1,500 literary grant from the Weatherspoon Charitable Foundation. Principal Monica Liang-Aguirre obtained a \$5,000.00 special education grant from National Restaurant Association. Parent Wendy Jacobson obtained a \$5,000 grant from ING Foundation to help defray the costs of ¡VAMOS! Technology Coordinator Melissa Mohammed and Dual Language Coordinator Oscar Ramirez obtained a \$2,500 grant from State Farm for the Advisory Project at the middle school. Wendy Jacobson also obtained a \$5,000 Chesapeake Bay Trust that helped support the Echo Hill field trip this year (and next).

How much money do we have?

We hope that the new format for the OCC budget has made it easier for the community to understand the many projects we fund. We worked hard this year to be responsible stewards of the parents' money. We reduced expenditures while at the same time expanded programming.

CURRENT BUDGET SY2009-2010

This is the money we have spent this year through May 17, 2010. Not all receipts have been submitted for reimbursement and not all programs have finished. Some out-standing expenses include: (1) salaries through the end of the year; (2) classroom funds; (3) 5th grade field trip; (4) the last OCC meeting; and (5) 8th grade promotion activities. The board reserves the right to review the budget and reallocate unspent funds in case of an emergency or unforeseen situation.

<u>Budget Expense Category</u>	<u>Revised Amount</u>	<u>Spent as of 5/17/10</u>
Educational Enhancement	\$114,020	\$58,739
Community Enrichment	\$24,548	\$21,316
Cultural Enrichment	\$7,300	\$3,963
Student Activities & Field Trips	\$21,239	\$20,404
Campus Enhancement (Buildings & Grounds)	\$0	\$0
OCC Overhead Costs	\$18,000	\$4,695
Unscheduled Corrections & Problems	\$32,277	\$18,626
Total Projected Spending	\$217,384	\$127,743

PROPOSED BUDGET SY2010-2011

Current Budget Items

Educational Enhancement

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Arts Curriculum	\$10,000	split 50/50 Primary/Intermediate
General & Special Education Curriculum	\$25,800	classroom funds
Math Curriculum - Chess Program	\$1,500	4th grade
Music Curriculum - Instruments	\$3,000	
Music Curriculum - Teacher	\$23,000	PreK - 3rd grades
Reading Curriculum - Intermediate Campus Library	\$5,000	
Reading Curriculum - Inter. Campus Libr. Mem. Fund	\$2,000	Laura Dueñes Memorial Fund
Reading Curriculum - Primary Campus Library	\$5,000	
Reading Curriculum - Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)	\$500	
Science Curriculum - Early Childhood Life Cycle	\$800	ECC through Kinder
Science Curriculum - Elementary Grades	\$1,500	1st through 5th grades
Science Curriculum - Middle School	\$3,000	\$1,800 7th/8th grade, \$1,200 6th grade
Teacher Recruitment & Retention	\$250	
Technology	\$1,500	
Tutoring	\$15,000	split 50/50 Primary/Intermediate
Educational Enhancement Total	\$97,850	

Community Enrichment

Childcare (BTSN, OCC meetings)	\$1,280	
Hospitality	\$600	Ice cream social, teacher luncheons, etc.
OCA Scholarships	\$15,000	
Parent Education (LSRT)	\$5,000	geared toward increasing parent involvement
Parent Orientation	\$1,500	geared toward new parents to the school
Parent/Principal's Coffees	\$320	informal gatherings on monthly basis
Principal's Emergency Fund	\$1,000	discretionary
Room Parent Support	\$100	
School Culture Initiatives	\$2,500	to address discipline, anti-bullying, school culture
School Directory	\$2,000	
Sensitivity Training	\$2,500	to address diversity issues
Community Enrichment Total	\$31,800	

Cultural Enrichment

Assemblies	\$1,000	school-wide or campus-wide events
Heritage Activities		
Asian Heritage Committee	\$2,000	
Hispanic Heritage Committee	\$2,000	
Jewish Heritage Committee	\$600	
Pan African Committee	\$2,000	
Cultural Enrichment Total	\$7,600	

Student Activities & Field Trips

PK-4th Grade Field Trips	\$4,500	funding for buses
5th Grade Field Trip	\$1,500	TBD, curriculum based
6th Grade Field Trip	\$10,000	Echo Hill, curriculum based
7th Grade Field Trip	\$3,000	
8th Grade Field Trip	\$3,000	
DC Scores	\$10,500	partial funding for program
Middle School Promotion	\$500	"8th grade graduation"
Middle School Social Activities	\$1,000	dances, etc.
Middle School Sports	\$1,000	miscellaneous expenses; most covered by DCPS
Science Fairs (2)	\$200	miscellaneous expenses; most covered by DCPS
Spelling Bee	\$100	admission fee to citywide
Student Councils (2)	\$400	split 50/50 Primary/Intermediate
Student Activities & Field Trips Total	\$35,700	

Campus Enhancement (Buildings & Grounds)

School Beautification	\$2,500
Campus Enhancement Total	\$2,500

OCC Overhead Costs

OCC Administration	\$3,000	i.e., corporate filing, PayPal, insurance, copies
Accountant	\$4,000	professional CPA
OCC Business Manager	\$20,000	part-time position
OCC Overhead Costs Total	\$27,000	

Budget Expenses Allocation Summary

<u>Budget Expense Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>% of Total Budget</u>
Educational Enhancement	\$97,850	48%
Community Enrichment	\$31,800	16%
Cultural Enrichment	\$7,600	4%
Student Activities & Field Trips	\$35,700	18%
Campus Enhancement (Buildings & Grounds)	\$2,500	1%
OCC Overhead Costs	\$27,000	13%
Total Projected Spending	\$202,450	100%

Projected Income and Future Planning

<u>2009-2010 Revenue/Fundraising Events</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Notes (e.g., expenses)</u>	<u>% of Total 2009-2010 Budget</u>	<u>Expenses Budget 2010-11</u>
Auction	\$60,700	\$8,330 expenses	31%	\$12,331
Bake sale	\$25		0%	\$0
Book fair	\$6,000	\$920 expenses	3%	\$1,350
Boxtops	\$253	<i>estimated</i>	0%	\$0
Christmas trees	\$20,737	\$9,880 expenses	11%	\$10,000
Fiesta	\$7,000	\$3,121 expenses	4%	\$6,850
Interest	\$0		0%	\$0
Merchandise	\$3,510	\$2,444 expenses	2%	\$4,000

Parent donations ("Parent Campaign")	\$83,400	35% part.; \$2.7K exp.	42%	\$3,700
Raffle	\$11,764	\$1,650 exp. to date	6%	\$2,435
School photos	\$2,200	<i>incomplete</i>	1%	\$0
Vamos race	\$1,200	<i>estimated</i>	1%	\$6,850
Unexpected unrestricted income	\$601		0%	\$0
Total Projected Revenue	\$197,390	\$167,744 net to date	100%	\$47,516

Anticipated deficit, current revenue projections - \$5,060

There are some out-standing income items, for example: (1) some parents make payments on a monthly basis so all of the parent contributions are not included; and (2) the income from the photos has not yet been added.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

In the past, all money raised was put into the OCC's general fund and then divided according to where the board determined the needs were. Sometimes, during the transition to from one board to the next, information about specific budget lines fell between the cracks. When our budget was less complex, it was easier to keep tabs on funds that might be considered restricted (that carryover from year to year). As we learned painfully, we need a better system. Parent & OCC board member David Snead drafted a document for us to use in the future.

Grants are a wonderful way for the school to get needed support from sources beyond the community. Generally, grants come with explicit restrictions for how the money may be spent and usually the grant donor requires a follow up report to make sure we have followed the restrictions.

The follow funds are in our accounts but are not part of the unrestricted budget. They must be spent in a specific fashion and they will carryover past the fiscal year.

Grants/Dedicated Giving/Carryover Bills	Amount	Notes
Art Grant (Minneapolis Foundation)	\$9,700	\$7,545 remaining as of 5/17/10
Canta Conmigo	\$2,000	\$2,000 remaining as of 5/17/10
Literacy Grant (Weatherspoon Foundation)	\$1,500	\$714 remaining as of 5/17/10
Middle School Advisory Grant (State Farm)	\$2,500	\$510 remaining as of 5/17/10
Special Ed. Grant (Nat'l Rest. Ass'n)	\$5,000	\$3,930 remaining as of 5/17/10
Teacher Memorial Fund (Alden-Ogle)	\$130	\$130 remaining as of 5/17/10
IRS penalty	\$10,000	currently appealing
Total Restricted Funds	\$20,830	

CORPORATE PARTNERS

The money that we spend – the parent-raised money – is significant. But it is not the only source of funds. Sometimes parent efforts lead to others spending money at our school: DCPS, corporations, and philanthropic organizations. Oyster-Adams has been the beneficiary of many generous individuals and companies, big and small. They provide monetary donations, goods, and services for free or for greatly reduced prices. They include:

BaseCamp	Firehook Bakery	National Asso. for Sport & Physical Education
Chesapeake Bay Trust	Fleet Feet Sports	National Restaurant Asso.
Cricket	Hilton Hotel	Open City
Devis	Infinitywellness	State Farm
DLA Piper	ING Foundation	Twin Springs Fruit Farm
Eng Garcia Group	Minneapolis Foundation	The Washington Post
FannieMae	Mint, the Gym	The Weatherspoon Trust
Evy Mages Photography		Yolanda Lee

We have noticed, however, that we need to improve our manners. We need to say thank you to our sponsors in a consistent and timely fashion. Next year, one suggestion is to assign an OCC board member to make sure this simple but important task gets done.

Can we talk?

COMMUNICATION

We are addressing communication separately because it doesn't fit anywhere else but is critical to our community. We, the OCC board, continue to struggle to communicate our actions and activities. We have two secretaries and yet the responsibilities seem to expand. One suggestion for next year is to have a board member (possibly an at-large member) take on the role of communicating outward (posters, signs, bulletin boards) and relying on the secretaries for recording the business of the board (minutes and their translations).

Bulletin Boards, Posters, & Signs – We modified the bulletin board at the Primary Campus to make it more attractive and useful, thanks to the creativity of parent & OCC Secretary Cristina Faz, but lost use of the board at the Intermediate Campus.

ConstantContact – Starting last year, the school began disseminating the Friday Bulletin through ConstantContact, with the help of parent Wendy Jacobson. This software program also allows for extra updates, when needed. One problem is getting new parents signed up. We need to figure out how, especially for students who enter after the beginning of the year, to connect them to this valuable resource.

Intercampus Communication – Parent & OCC board member Noemi Eversley served as our bi-campus courier to transmit reimbursement requests from the Intermediate Campus to the Primary Campus.

Logo – We, the school and the OCC, have been using a logo for many years designed by beloved teacher Eduardo Gamarra. In coordination with the Principal, we are looking to create a new look that embraces our newer identity. Parent & OCC board member Denise Senecal has obtained the services (for free) of a designer who will work on this over the summer in conjunction with Monica.

OCC Minutes – We posted the minutes of the monthly board meetings on the OCC section of the school's website, after they are approved and translated. Cristina Faz, our Spanish Co-Secretary (who handles all of our translations) gave birth to a beautiful baby boy in March. She has been understandably preoccupied. We have learned, again, that we need a full team of parents who can provide translation services in order for our entire community to be fully informed. Thanks are also due to OCC board members Bill Bass and Carole Whelan for serving as timekeepers during the OCC meetings. They helped keep our meetings on track, enabling us to get through all of our business and get home at a reasonable hour.

Robo-calls – There have been slight modifications to the robo-calls. First, for extra long messages, the calls are sent separately in English and Spanish with an explanation at the beginning so a parent could hang up, if desired. Second, Phoebe started uploading the text of the robo-calls to the Oyster-Adams website under the NEWS tab to allow parents to read the text if they missed some or all of the message.

Translations – We struggle to find parents to help with translations. We have heard complaints about the software so we rely entirely on human translations. We need more help!

Website – We have a school website that is currently moderated by two parents, Christina Mossi and Seth Green. We have a policy that everything posted to the website be available in both languages. In order to facilitate better OCC communication, Parent & OCC board member Phoebe Schlanger learned how to post OCC information to the website. Her dedication and commitment has been a benefit to the entire community and has helped increase the transparency of the OCC. Parent & OCC board member David Snead has headed up a group to create a new website. He hopes to have the project completed by this summer.

Where are we going?

New Educational Enhancement Grant Initiative for this year.

During the last board meeting, the Board adopted a new approach for end of year spending. Thanks to Parent & OCC Treasurer Deon Woods Bell and OCC Teacher Rep. Missy Alden, we learned about a program at Murch Elementary School that allows for teachers to apply for grant funds. Roughly based on their model, we want to ask teachers for their ideas for ways we could support education. We want to formalize and make transparent a process that has occurred for years where funds left at the end of the year were spent on items throughout the school. We will use this process to redistribute unspent funds and to take care of needs within our community. We also hope to reward teachers with innovative ideas. We will draft the details and distribute it to the teachers with their final classroom funds statements.

Leaders needed for next year.

- Parent campaign committee
- Grant-writing committee
- Athletic scholarship committee
- Raffle committee
- Advertising solicitations committee (for directory)
- Translations committee

Thoughts for next year.

One of our biggest challenges for next year is having enough parent volunteers on the board to have an actual functioning board. Requests for members have gone out but have gone unanswered. We are anticipating a board consisting of only 5 members for next SY2010-2011. We do not think that will be enough people to have everything function properly. We have to work together as a whole in order to be able to maintain the high quality of education that we desire for our children. Very few people cannot carry the burden for all. We have to all work together as a whole in order to make that happen.

- We have begun the process to have the OCC's finances audited. We have started with the reconciliation of the accounts for this year. By the end of the fiscal year, all the books will have been reviewed and reconciled. We have paid a CPA to handle this.
- The way the co-treasurers' workload is distributed needs attention – this year, we did not satisfactorily address how best to administer such a large financial operation in a working parents' "spare time." We proposed hiring outside paid administrative support (the proposed Business Manager). Once this person is in place, it will help to ease some of the burdens. The treasury also needs active, committed, budget line coordinators – parent volunteers who will help administrate OCC funds in specific areas and get the money that has been budgeted by the parent community, working for the school community. We will assign those at the beginning of the school year.
- The OCC bylaws need to be updated with the help of corporate counsel (already retained, *pro bono*, by the current board).

Final Plea: We hope that, if you have managed to read through to the end, you will consider making a donation to the school. All of our children have had the benefit of the generosity of our parents. We would like all of our parents to help. We need *everyone's* help if we are to continue. One thing is certain: every family should contribute some amount for the benefit of our students. Every little bit helps.

Index

2009-2010 Board Members.....	2	Leaders Needed.....	15
5th Grade Field Trip.....	6	Leveled Readers, Spanish.....	4
6th Grade Field Trip (Echo Hill).....	6	Libraries.....	4
7th & 8th Field Grade Trips.....	7	Logo, new in development.....	14
Acoustics At Intermediate Campus.....	7	Merchandise.....	10
Annual Family Giving Campaign.....	8	Middle School Social Activities.....	5
Art Supplies.....	3	Middle School Sports.....	7
Asian Heritage Committee – See Heritage Committee Activities		“Money In”.....	8
Assemblies.....	6	“Money Out”.....	3
Auction.....	9	Music Teacher.....	4
Book Fair.....	9	Musical Instruments.....	4
Books – See Libraries		New Educational Enhancement Grant Initiative.....	15
Box Tops.....	10	OCA Scholarship.....	5
Budget, Current & Proposed.....	11	OCC Administrative Costs.....	7
Buildings & Grounds – See Campus Enhancement		OCC Board Members 2009-2010.....	2
Bulletin Boards.....	14	OCC Minutes.....	14
Campus Enhancement.....	7	Pan African Committee – See Heritage Committee Activities	
Canta Conmigo – See Unscheduled Costs and Corrections		Parent Campaign – See Annual Family Giving Campaign	
Chess.....	3	Parent Email Software.....	5
Childcare At Meetings.....	5	Parent Handbook.....	6
Christmas Trees.....	9	Parent Orientation.....	6
Classroom Funds.....	3	Photos.....	10
Communication.....	14	Poetry Contest.....	7
Community Enrichment.....	5	Posters, & Signs, need for.....	14
ConstantContact.....	14	Principal’s Coffees.....	6
Corporate Partners.....	13	Principal’s Emergency Fund.....	6
Cultural Enrichment.....	6	Raffle.....	10
Directory.....	5	Restricted Funds.....	13
Echo Hill – See 6 th Grade Field Trip		Robo-Calls.....	14
Educational Enhancement.....	3	Safe Routes To School.....	6
Email System – See ConstantContact		Science Fairs.....	7
End of Year Spending – See New Educational Enhancement Grant Initiative		Science Labs.....	4
Family Education.....	5	Spanish Leveled Readers.....	4
Field Day.....	5	Spelling Bee.....	7
Field Trips – See Student Activities		Student Activities & Field Trips.....	6
Fiesta.....	10	Student Council.....	7
General Field Trips.....	6	Tax Penalty – See Unscheduled Costs and Corrections	
Grants (Received).....	10	Teacher Funds – See Classroom Funds	
Heritage Committee Activities.....	6	Teacher Recruitment & Retention.....	5
Hispanic Heritage Committee – See Heritage Committee Activities		Technology.....	7
Hospitality.....	5	Thoughts For Next Year.....	15
Intercampus Communication.....	14	Translations.....	14
Interpretation Services.....	5	Tutoring.....	4
Jewish Heritage Committee – See Heritage Committee Activities		Unscheduled Costs and Corrections.....	8
Laura Dueñes Memorial Fund – See Unscheduled Costs and Corrections		Unsung Hero Grant – See Unscheduled Costs and Corrections	
		¡Vamos!.....	8
		Website.....	14
		Year In Review.....	3