

Open Classroom Community News



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Welcome to new school year at the Open Classroom!



Principal Chris Gesteland and Head Teacher Carolyn Turkanis

Greetings- I can't believe we are almost back – wow how time flies. Here are a couple of updates.

Building: The downstairs classrooms, bathrooms, and lunchroom are looking really nice – I think you will all be pleasantly surprised. The electricity is back on – but it is intermittent until all the new breaker boxes and security lines are set. There will be some aspects of the building that will not be finished by the time students are back – but classrooms, bathrooms, and the lunchroom will be ready.

Teachers will be back in the building on the 17th but there will still be quite a bit of construction going on – the contractor is planning on working right up to the 23rd.

Our hopes of having a grassy playground will have to wait until next year. The general consensus has been that trying to force the issue this fall (the containers and trucks won't be off the playground until the 23rd) would be unreasonable from a cost, construction, and maintenance point of view. The good news is, we will have a new automated irrigation system, grass, and planting beds by the end of next summer. There will also be some work on the playground and faculty parking area.

Staff: We are excited to welcome a new teacher to our faculty this year. Rachael Bibeault will be joining us as a half time math teacher / instructor. She will be teaching a math class in the upper grades, working with small groups, and providing instructional support for our teachers.

Jai Hogue will be back with us this fall in the library and Penny Davis will be teaching PE. Jazairra Mathis will be taking over as coordinator for the after care program.

I am looking forward to a great year - construction and all. I hope you have all had a wonderful summer.

Chris - Principal Open Classroom
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Scenes of school remodeling: the cafeteria and two classrooms

Where Did the Summer Go? - Carolyn Turkanis

It seems like just yesterday I walked out of the school building after the last day of school, with the lazy days of summer spreading endlessly ahead of me. Now, in a what seems to be the blink of an eye, I am walking right back into the building again. It is with enormous joy and excitement that I think about the new school year ahead.

I'll miss running around barefoot all day long, and when I need my shoes, having no idea where I've left them. I'll miss waking up when i've had a good night's sleep, without the urgency of my alarm clock. I'll miss reading my book in the backyard hammock, playing with the hose while pretending I am actually watering the garden, early morning walks around my neighborhood enjoying the sunrise and chatter of birds looking for bagel crumbs. I'll miss knitting anytime I want, eating anytime I am hungry, reading my book when the pages all wondering if I need to wear my watch, or not.

With all that missing aside, I so look forward to reconnecting with teachers and staff, and seeing children in the halls and classrooms once again. I am excited to meet families new to the Open Classroom community, and have engaging conversations about educating children as well as the philosophy of our school. I am filled with anticipation, hope, enthusiasm, and great energy to begin another school year. Where can you find me if you'd like to chat? I'll be in the front hall every morning greeting kids and co-ops. I'll be in and out of classrooms throughout the day, I'll be in the cafeteria every day throughout lunch hanging out with kids. Please pop into my office (the door is always open!) for a little chat, or leave me a note so we can connect. I am always available for conversations, discussions and problem solving.

Carolyn - Carolyn.Turkanis@slcschools.org

Counseling Corner

Another wonderful summer is almost done and another amazing school year is about to start. I'm really excited about this year because I will be at the OC four days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) AND we will have a Counseling Intern, Carissa Wainwright Davis, from the University of Utah School Counseling Graduate Program.

At the beginning of the year, Carissa and I will be going in to every class to introduce ourselves, meet all the new students, reconnect with all the returning students and teach what harassment is and what to do

if it happens the student or a friend. This is a School Board requirement that helps all of the students feel empowered to know what to do if they encounter unkind behavior. In early September, Prevent Child Abuse Utah will present Internet safety and cyber-bullying prevention to all sixth through eighth graders. I will also schedule similar classes for third through fifth graders later in the fall. My hope is to have a



Rose Evans
Counselor

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similar training for parent later in the fall as well.

Throughout the year I will be partnering with the Healthy Living Committee to teach Emotional Wellness. In September, I will be starting in the 1, 1/2, 2/3 grades to teach social skills and friendship-making skills every Friday through December. Then I will be with the 3/4 and 4/5 grades and we will be continuing the lessons on social skills and also learning how to avoid and prevent relational aggression. And finally for the last trimester starting in March, I will work with the 6-8 graders on Emotional Intelligence.

Seventh and eighth graders will also work on college and career readiness activities with me as they prepare for their SEOP (Student Education Occupation Planning) meetings with you, their parents. Eighth grade meetings will be scheduled in November and

December. Seventh grade meetings will be in January. Please keep an eye and ear out for more information.

I will be organizing small group counseling classes for students that focus on parents' separation/divorce, grief, girls group (relational aggression prevention), aggression replacement training and social skills. If you are interested in your student receiving support in any of these areas, please let me know.

Please feel free to come by and say hello, meet Carissa, and let me know how I can help your student have the best year he or she can have. My office is located inside the library on the south side.

May this year be the best one yet (even with all the construction!)

Rose Evans - OC Counselor
801-578-8144 - rose.evans@slcschools.org

The Healthy Living Committee Introduces... Healthy Living Fridays

As you know, we at the OC, strive to educate the whole child. The new Healthy Living Committee will focus on the physical, nutritional, social, and emotional development of our children through Physical Activities, Sports, Health/Nutrition & Self Awareness, and Emotional Wellness. We are taking some already great programs that the OC was offering and connecting them in a complimentary way to help kids learn about the many aspects of a healthy lifestyle.

Penny Davis, our amazing Physical Education teacher, is making sure all our students have developmentally appropriate physical activity to develop and maintain appropriate levels of skill and fitness. This will compliment our fun sports program that Jason Ball is organizing. The sports program will expose students to various sports and activities that will encourage them to be active and help develop their bodies and minds. Tricia Davis is coordinating the Health, Nutrition and Self Awareness component of Healthy Living by facilitating

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Before and After School Care at the O.C.

Hello Open Classroom Community, I am very excited to start the 2011-2012 school year with you. As the new Director of the Before and After Care Program, I would like to invite all of our families with students K-8 to utilize our services this coming year.

Our After Care program, now located in the library, begins August 24th and will run until the end of the school year, excluding non-student days. Our program begins right at the 2:50 PM dismissal bell and runs until 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Our program will begin at 1:15 PM on half days, including August 24th, 25th, and 26th. Our Before Care program will begin



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August 29th at 7:30 AM.

The fees for the program have not changed, and we offer very competitive rates for our program. It is \$5.00 per hour, per child for registered students in the After Care Program. There will be a \$5.50 fee per hour for "drop-in" students who have not registered. A drop in slip is required before the program begins. The Before Care Program is on a "drop-in basis" and is only \$5.00 per hour, or \$1.25 per 15 minutes of use. All registration materials are available in the main office and in the library. Please fill out a separate registration form for each child.

If you qualify for free or reduced lunch, you may qualify for reduced or waived fees in our program. Fee waiver forms are available in the main office and the library.

We have a great new staff that is excited to spend time with your children. We offer entertaining, enriching activities to keep your children happy and stimulated. In our After Care Program we regularly offer activities such as board games, building activities, sports, cooking, art projects and outdoor playtime, periodic field trips and more. We really encourage the students to try new things and work with children in different age groups to help foster their sense of community, fair play and problem solving skills.

We are also offering our popular Enrichment Classes again this year, beginning September 12th. We offer a variety of classes for different age groups and skills. If you would like your student to attend an enrichment class and not be part of our regular After Care program, we have some amazing choices including tap and jazz/hip hop with returning instructor and OC parent Dawn Levingston, a learning to draw and paint animals art class with previous staff member and OC parent Laura Sharp-Wilson, Mad Science of Greater Salt Lake introducing Secret Agent Lab, Chess with returning instructor

Marti Olson, and a brand new program called Blocks-4-Kidz. This program emphasizes following step-by-step instructions, fine motor skills, spatial/relational thinking, organization and social/emotional skills through building and completing projects in a team environment using Legos and other building blocks. We have Darrell McDonlad returning to teach drums. He has years of experience teaching and playing. Also returning is guitar instructor Eric Spreng who had a wonderful program last year. Registration and costs for these classes will begin August 24th. Forms will be available in the main office and in the library.



Daniel Lara will be back this year to teach an AM Spanish immersion class. This class will begin September 6th and end December 16th. The class runs Monday through Friday, 7:40 AM-8:30 AM. The

cost is \$300.00 per student.

Daniel will also be teaching a PM Spanish immersion class. Class begins September 7th and will end December 16th. This class is Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3:00 PM-5:30 PM. The cost of this class is \$350.00 per student. Pre-registration for these two classes are available now by contacting the After Care Director at jazairramathis@gmail.com or calling Jazairra at 801-604-3483.

This is going to be an exciting year and we are so pleased to offer this program to our families. It has been a great asset to our school and we hope to keep growing as a community and program. If you have any questions regarding our program please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope everyone enjoys the rest of their summer and I will see you and your kids soon!

Jazairra Mathis - Open Classroom After Care Director
jazairramathis@gmail.com 801-604-3483



Co-oper's Corner

Top 10 Reasons to be a Co-op

10. You are part of a long and rich tradition. We are beginning the 35th year of the Open Classroom, which began its public school life in 1977. Before the Open Classroom became an optional program of the Salt Lake City School District, though, it existed as a small private school called the Thoreau School. The Thoreau School was founded in 1971 and was created by a group of parents who wanted to actively collaborate with teachers and children in creating the curriculum and program. Most of these founding parents knew that what they didn't want for their children – the type of rigid, factory modeled education they grew up with themselves, but learning what they did want for their children took a lot of time, work, and patience for the community. The OC has been evolving ever since, and continues to evolve – and we are all a part of that evolution.

9. Our kids do better with more adult involvement. This kind of reminds me of that saying, "It takes a village to raise a child" - we have that village at the OC. Sometimes when I'm working with a small group of maybe 5 or 6 kids, I'm amazed how hard it is to make sure all the kids are "getting it" or getting help from me if they need it. If it's that hard for me with 5 or 6 kids, think how hard it is for a teacher in a traditional school with a lot more children to keep track of.

8. You get to learn, too! I've learned a lot of things I wouldn't have learned if I hadn't co-oped: from new songs during music in Ruth's or Amanda's class to all kinds of fascinating U.S. history while preparing for small group learning in Gaby's class to a lot about the political process while creating a "Political Action" explore class for the older grades.

7. You know your child's friends and their classmates. I didn't realize just how important this one was until my oldest graduated from the OC and moved on to high school. Suddenly she had friends and problems with kids that I didn't know and this has been a huge cause of anxiety for me. The OC feels like a much safer place to make friends, and I appreciated knowing the families these friends belong to.

6. You get a really good idea about your child's academic strengths and weaknesses. No need to wait for the twice a year Parent-Teacher-Kid conferences – you can get a good sense of where your child is at each time you co-op. Even if you don't co-op for certain subjects, it's easy to get quick feedback from the teacher during the day. Seeing where my daughter has trouble gives me a good idea what I can work with her on at home, and seeing her strengths gives me ideas on how to capitalize on those.

5. Adult friendships. There's no doubt that co-oping is a great way to make friends. I've seen all kinds of friendships blossom at the OC, leading to relationships that outlast the time the kids are enrolled at the OC.

4. The whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. When I first decided that my children were going to go to the Open Classroom, I was mainly thinking about how I wanted a quality education for my children and how I felt the OC was the best way to make sure that they enjoyed learning and the school experience. As time went on and I became more involved in the community here, I found that I was part of something much bigger than all of us. The OC is at the forefront of changing what education could look like for everyone. Many public schools have started using ideas and techniques that the OC and similar schools have been doing for years.

3. Learning new parenting skills. Since I began my co-oping career way back in the fall of 2000, I've noticed a marked improvement in my parenting skills.

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And why wouldn't my skills improve? I get to see up close and in person how other parents handle different situations and see how teachers manage 25+ kids all at once! I've learned better listening skills, learned how to make a request, learned how to negotiate in a way that's fair for kids and parents alike, and how to make learning more fun. Working with kids from various backgrounds in the classroom also strengthens my skills and keeps me on my parenting toes!

2. Making Memories. Kids grow up fast. One place that parents don't usually spend a lot of time with their kids is at school. At the OC you make some memories you don't usually make anywhere else – in the context of their learning, with friends and community: The traditional Antelope Island field trip, class camping trips, watching your child teach other

kids during kid co-oping, sharing about their weekend to other children in morning circle ...

1. You are the glue that holds this community together. The teachers need you, the other co-ops need you, and the kids especially need you. We all depend upon each other to make the vision of the Open Classroom work. Your time, effort and caring are all essential to our program.

I'd like to end with something a former OC parent – Bonnie Weiss - once wrote in her goodbye for the last OCCN of the year that her daughter was graduating: "I encourage you all to participate as fully as you can to create and support this learning environment. Because that's what I have learned here: you get what you give."

Jennifer Killpack-Knutsen
Co-op Support Committee

Resources for to help you learn how to be an effective co-oper in the classroom can be found on the O.C. website www.ocslc.org

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them to be active and help develop their bodies and minds. Tricia Davis is coordinating the Health, Nutrition and Self Awareness component of Healthy Living by facilitating

student's learning and participation in creating a healthy, sustainable lifestyle that will promote self, community and global awareness. Rose Evans, our School Counselor, will be teaching Emotional Wellness to our students through lessons on social skills, friendship skills, relational aggression prevention and emotional intelligence. We are all excited and committed to share lots of opportunities for our students to learn about and engage in healthy living.

Each student will have two trimesters (2/3 of the year) of Physical Activities, one trimester of Sports, one trimester of Health, Nutrition and Self Awareness, and one trimester of

Emotional Wellness. We will update you on our activities during each trimester. The first trimester will be August 29-December 2 and the rotation will be: 1, 1/2, 2/3 classes: Physical Activities, Health/Nutrition & Self Awareness, and Emotional Wellness. 3/4 & 4/5 classes: Sports 6/7 & 8 classes: Physical Activities

We will be looking for lots of support from co-ops as we begin this Healthy Living adventure. So don't be shy if you feel passionate or have experience in any of these areas. Please contact any one of us!

Many thanks,

Rose Evans - rose.evans@slcschools.org, Penny Davis - pennyd3955@gmail.com, Tricia Davis - tricann11@gmail.com

OC Community News

The OCCN is published approx. every two weeks during the school year. Please feel free to submit announcements, articles, photos and important dates for the Open Classroom. Past OCCN issues are available at <http://ocslc.org/community-news/> Please send submissions to oc.communitynews@gmail.com -Thanks. Upcoming deadlines are Mondays, August 29, September 12, and September 12.