



# ACADEMY OF WHOLE LEARNING

The Exceptional School for Exceptional Learners

## The BRIDGE

Thursday, February 4, 2016

*We provide a personalized learning path integrating academic, social and life skills for qualifying students with autism spectrum disorder or related learning differences.*

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### Snapshot from The Nest

Academy of Whole Learning invites you to enjoy a spontaneous view of school life.



Cedar Lake students have been working on their research project during writing. Each student chose an animal they didn't know a lot about. Students have been researching and writing down facts about their animal so they can write a final paper at the end.

### BULLETIN BOARD

### Quick Links

[2015-2016 School Calendar](#)

[I CAN! Tutoring Registration](#)

[Home Base Registration](#)

[Co-Curricular Winter  
II Registration](#)



### Upcoming Events & Reminders

#### Evening Conferences

Tuesday, February 9

Thursday, February 11

#### Conferences;

##### No School

Friday, February 12

#### Mid-Winter Break

##### No School

February 15 - 19

### Stay Connected

### *Teamwork*

Our students are unique individuals. Because students do not all learn at the same rate, team members with different areas of expertise are invaluable. Team Teaching involves two or more licensed teachers working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students learn. Teachers together set goals for a course, design a syllabus, prepare individual lesson plans, teach students, and evaluate the results. They share insights, collaborate, challenge one another, and perhaps even challenge students to decide which approach is better.

At AOWL we've always had low staff to student ratios. With class sizes no larger than nine, and a licensed teacher and at least one highly qualified education assistant professional in each classroom, our staff to student ratios average 1:4. In the Minnehaha Falls classroom, we've gone one step further; we've introduced Team Teaching. We are using this model to explore new ways to support our exceptional students.

The team-teaching approach allows for more interaction between teachers and students. Faculty evaluate students on their achievement of the learning goals; students evaluate faculty members on their teaching proficiency. Emphasis is on student and faculty growth, balancing initiative and shared responsibility, specialization and broadening horizons, the clear and interesting presentation of content and student development, democratic participation and common expectations, and cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes.

Working as a team, Ms. Rachel and Mr. Paul model respect for differences, interdependence, and conflict-resolution skills. Together they set the course goals and content, select common materials such as texts and films, and develop tests and final examinations for all students. They set the sequence of topics and supplemental materials. Ms. Rachel and Mr. Paul also give their own interpretations of the materials and use their own teaching styles.

Team teaching is not without its disadvantages. Finding time to plan together is probably the most difficult aspect of team teaching. Overall, both Ms. Rachel and Mr. Paul are enjoying the opportunity to team teach. Not all of the students are sold on the idea. As one student lamented recently, "With two teachers in the classroom we have to learn more". Thankfully, the majority of Minnehaha Falls' students enjoy the team teaching. When asked if they liked having two teachers, one student summed it up perfectly, "My favorite teacher is Mr. Paul, no, I mean Ms. Rachel, no, I mean I like them both".



### Teacher Blogs



Want to keep up with what your student is learning? Check out our teacher's blogs to see lessons and activities taking place inside the classroom.

[Lake Itasca](#)

[Minnehaha Falls](#)

[St. Croix River](#)

[Cedar Lake](#)

[Lake Nokomis](#)

### Accreditation & Memberships



**Minnesota Non-Public School  
Accrediting Association**

[www.mnsaa.org](http://www.mnsaa.org)

*We are proud to be an Accredited  
School through MNSAA.*

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## Parent Meeting Update

We had an excellent turnout at our parent meeting on January 20. The positive effects of parent involvement on children, families, and school has long been known. When schools and parents continuously support and encourage children's learning and development, great things can happen. According to Henderson and Berla, "the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning
2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers
3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

Clearly the parents at AOWL want to be involved in their children's education and in the school. Of the 30 survey forms that were returned, 22 parents encouraged us to move to a larger facility to grow the school, 7 parents would like for us to remain in our current building and 2 parents said they would support either decision.

I consider each ballot a positive vote for the school and the students. Many of the votes were accompanied by exclamation points. Several parents talked to me after the meeting to say that they would do whatever it takes to grow the school so that more students can receive the excellent programming we offer.

In addition to the above votes, parents offered to help grow our school in a variety of ways.

Join the marketing team: 12

Recruit Donors: 12

Sponsor (or obtain sponsorships) for the Breakfast: 11

Personal Donation: 16

Increased Tuition: 13\*

Clearly AOWL has the support of our families.

**An update on the facility search:** The landlord of the potential space in question has decided to lease to a smaller school. They said they thought our school was primed to increase enrollment too significantly to work in their space. The landlord



MINNESOTA  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL FORUM

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### Minnesota Independent School Forum

[www.misf.org](http://www.misf.org)

*We are grateful for MISF and their  
continued support.*

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### National Association of Special Education Teachers

[www.naset.org](http://www.naset.org)

*We are proud to be a  
2015-2016*

**School of Excellence**

*award recipient.*

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### Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

<http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org>

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### Council for Exceptional Children

[www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

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### Council for Advancement and Support of Education

<http://www.case.org>

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### Association of Fundraising Professionals

[www.aefnet.org](http://www.aefnet.org)

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was concerned we would have too many students for the space available. This is ironic because our hesitation was that we had too few students.

A right-sized, well-located facility that can be customized to the needs of our students is at the top of our strategic plan. Our Finance Committee and Board of Directors understand the implications of staying in our current building and the risks of leaving. They understand the importance of finding the right balance for the long-term sustainability of AOWL. In the meantime, we are very fortunate to be in a well-cared for building with exclusive use classrooms in an accessible location, while we look for a permanent home.

The enthusiasm during the discussions at the parent meeting was one of the highlights of my tenure at AOWL. The energy was palpable. We will grow our school on the vitality and passion displayed in that room.

I will keep you updated as we move forward.

Wyayn

*\* Thanks to Cheryl Smith for tallying the votes.*

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## February Break Adventure Camp

Are you wondering what to do when school is out? Send your student(s) to Academy of Whole Learning **Adventure**



**Camp!** Siblings are welcome too! Each day your student(s) will have a different adventure. Please see the attached [brochure and registration form](#). If you have any questions contact Sarah Fitzgerald, [Sarah.Fitzgeraldsad@aowl.org](mailto:Sarah.Fitzgeraldsad@aowl.org).

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## Summer Academy Registration Now Open!



**Minnesota School Counselors  
Association**

[www.mnschoolcounselors.org](http://www.mnschoolcounselors.org)

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**American Counseling  
Association**

<http://www.counseling.org>

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**Nonprofit Financial Group**

<http://www.nfgmn.org>

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# Summer Academy @ AOWL

*Registration is*

***Now Open!***

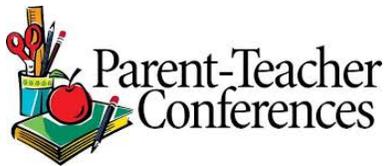
## **Summer Academy Offerings Include:**

- Learning2Learn(Grades K-3)
- The Parliament (Grades 4-12)
- Sociable Skills(Grades 4-12)
- Sports Camp (Grades 4-12)
- Theater Camp (Grades 3-12)

For more information about our Summer Academy offerings and registration information please visit our [Summer Academy page](#) on our website.

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## **Winter Conferences**



Conferences will take place on the evenings of Tuesday, February 9 and Thursday, February 11 as well as during the day on Friday, February 12.

If your student is in grades 4-12, please plan on your student's attendance, as students will lead the conference.

If you haven't signed up for conferences, please complete the [conference sign up form](#) and return it to your student's homeroom teacher ASAP.

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## **Polar Plunge for Special Olympics**

Special Olympics of Minnesota is a highly cherished partner of Academy of Whole Learning. Through this partnership, our students have the opportunity to compete in tournaments, develop sports skills, and participate in unified teams with youth from all over the metro. It is for this reason and more that we ask you to join us in giving back to Special Olympics of Minnesota this year at the Eden Prairie Polar Plunge on.

**There are a few ways you support team Academy of Whole Learning:**

- [Register](#) and take the plunge with team AOWL - select and join Academy of Whole Learning team.
- Support team AOWL with pledges - Here is the [link](#).
- Come out to the event in your AOWL spirit wear and cheer us on - no registration necessary.

On the day of the event, plungers (and supporters) will be meeting at the home of Jeff and Liz Sloan and then walking to the plunge site, Lake Riley. All families and friends are welcome

to join our team. You will be jumping with AOWL Staff, their families and some of our amazing students!

What happens to the pledge money? That's the best part - 50% of the money raised through the Polar Plunge pledges goes to support Special Olympics, the other 50% comes back to AOWL! As you can see in the photo below, this event was a blast (of freezing water) last year and this year promises to be even better!

Please contact [Rosey Glynn](#) if you have any questions about pledging, registering, or jumping!



## Amazon School Supplies



Academy of Whole Learning now has a published school [supply list on Amazon](#). Throughout the school year teachers are in need of more classroom supplies. This is an easy way to know of teachers needs and requests with a simple click. Don't forget to select Academy of Whole Learning as your preferred Charitable Organization.

Amazon.com will donate a percentage of your purchase to AOWL. Thank you for your support!

**Our job is to serve you! Please let us know how we can help make your AOWL experience**

an even better one!

AOWL Leadership	Board of Directors Officers
<a href="#">Lindsey Brandt</a> - Director of Advancement	<a href="#">Janel Dressen</a> - Board Chair
<a href="#">Sarah Fitzgerald</a> - Dean of Students	<a href="#">Dan Martin</a> - Board Vice-Chair
<a href="#">Rosey Glynn</a> - Director of Outreach	<a href="#">Mark Basco</a> - Board Treasurer
<a href="#">Rachel Houle</a> - Lead Teacher	<a href="#">Chris Elliott</a> - Board Secretary
<a href="#">Carly Rasmussen</a> - Business Manager	
<a href="#">Wyayn Rasmussen</a> - Head of School	

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Academy of Whole Learning | | [lindsey.brandt@aowl.org](mailto:lindsey.brandt@aowl.org) | <http://www.academyofwholelearning.org>

9400 Cedar Lake Road, Ste 7

St. Louis Park, MN 55432

952-737-6900

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*Academy of Whole Learning values each student's gifts as an individual, regardless of age, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or genetic information. Academy of Whole Learning is unable to meet the needs of students with emotional or behavioral issues that may negatively impact the learning environment. This policy applies to all areas of student concerns; including admissions, athletics, educational policies, tuition assistance, and other school-administered programs.*

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