



# Odyssey Charter School

OCS Elementary Campus  
1755 Eldron Blvd. S.E. • Palm Bay, Florida 32909 • 321-733-0442

**NOV - DEC 2018**  
**NEWSLETTER**

*"Committed to academic excellence and the education of the whole child"*

## OUR MISSION FOR EVERY CHILD

The mission of Odyssey Charter School is to work in partnership with the family and community, with the aim of helping each child reach their full potential in all areas of life. We seek to educate the whole child with the understanding that each person must achieve a balance of intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and social skills as a foundation for life.

## SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms. Constance Ortiz,  
**Founder**

Ms. Wendi Nolder,  
**Site Administrator**

Ms. Deb Berg,  
**Assistant Principal**

Mr. Edward Haber,  
**Dean of Students**

Ms. DeAnna Bernardo,  
**Instructional Coach**

Ms. Suzette Jewell,  
**Instructional Coach**

Ms. Deb Munoz,  
**Teacher Representative**

Ms. Kavel Green,  
**Family Engagement**

Ms. Kara Lujan,  
**Guidance Counselor**

Ms. Kristina Fitzpatrick,  
**Office Manager/Registrar, Elementary**

Ms. Amy White,  
**Director, Preschool/VPK and Before & After School Care**

## Important Weblinks

**SPAR** - The annual Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) School Public Accountability Reports (SPARs) will be available for Odyssey Charter School in the near future. The SPARs meet ESEA's requirement for school to provide parents with an annual school status report at the beginning of each school year. The Odyssey SPAR will be posted on the school's website at <http://www.odysseycharterschool.com/reports.html>.

(The following reports are also on the link above: **Parent/Student Handbook**, **School Improvement Plan**, and **Parent and Family Engagement Plan**)

## How Important is School Attendance Anyway?

How important is it for a child to attend school each day? According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, school attendance may have far reaching effects for students. Students who regularly attend school have a better chance at achieving academic success than those who are absent for learning. Research shows that "chronically absent Kindergarten-ers gained 14 percent fewer literacy skills. First grade chronically absent students gained 15 percent fewer literacy skills and 12 percent fewer math skills" (Innis, 2018).

### ATTENDANCE MATTERS



Students are considered chronically absent if they are absent for 10% of active school days. It is important to note that tardiness also counts for being absent for learning. In addition, checking a student out of school one hour early also reduces learning time. If a student is one hour late or leaves one hour early each day for one school week, he/she has missed 4-5 hours of learning, which is almost one full day of learning opportunities. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), "Chronic student absence reduces even the best teacher's ability to provide learning opportunities."

Keep in mind that if students understand that education is valued within their families, they will also see the value in it. If students perceive that school attendance is a top priority in their families, they will also see it as a top priority, all the way through to college. However, note that the opposite is also true. If parents promote inconsistent attendance for their students, they will view education as low priority and may end up struggling with attendance all the way through to high school. Students who end up dropping out of high school were found to have a higher rate of absenteeism throughout their childhood years than those who graduated from high school (NCES).

## NOVEMBER

- 11/2  
Early Release & Jump Rope for Heart Ends
- 11/4  
Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 11/5  
2nd & 5th Grade Harvest Luncheon
- 11/8  
4th Grade Wax Museum  
(Evening Performance)
- 11/9  
Early Release
- 11/12  
Veterans Day Holiday
- 11/13  
Veterans Day Breakfast
- 11/13  
Math Night sponsored by Title 1
- 11/16  
Early Release
- 11/21 – 11/23  
Thanksgiving Holiday
- 11/27  
Picture Retake Day (Uniforms)
- 11/27  
Interims Issued
- 11/29  
Parents as Partners Meeting

## DECEMBER

- 12/1  
Palm Day Parade
- 12/4  
Glee Holiday Performance (Evening)
- 12/7  
Early Release
- 12/11  
Class & Club Pictures
- 12/14  
Early Release
- 12/17  
School Spelling Bee
- 12/19 – 12/21  
Early Release & Exam Days
- 12/21  
Dress out of Uniform & Early Release
- 12/22 – 1/8  
Winter Break for Students

## JANUARY

- 1/9  
Students Return

## School Attendance (continued)

What can you do to improve school attendance and consequently, academic success for your child?

**Here are a few suggestions from the Michigan State University Extension:**

- 1) Set a good example for your student “in your daily work habits.
- 2) Follow through with commitments
- 3) Talk about the importance of a good education for life success
- 4) Pay attention to attendance data for your child”

**Here are some additional tips:**

- 1) Plan your family vacation outside of active school days
- 2) Bring your child to school each active school day on time and avoid checking him/her out early

**“A missed school day is a lost opportunity for students to learn” (National Center for Educational Statistics).**



*Innis, G., & Michigan State University. (2018, October 02). School attendance is tied to academic achievement. Retrieved from [http://www.canr.msu.edu/news/school\\_attendance\\_is\\_tied\\_to\\_academic\\_achievement](http://www.canr.msu.edu/news/school_attendance_is_tied_to_academic_achievement)*

*Every School Day Counts: The Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/attendancedata/chapter1a.asp>*

## Tardy Policy

Elementary students are expected to be in their seats and ready to learn by 8:00 AM. If you arrive at 8:00 or later, parents must park and walk their child into the office, sign them in, and have a tardy slip issued for admittance to class. Parents, please do not park in the fire lane – this is a safety concern. We thank you for making the effort to have your students to class on time each and every day.



## Early Check-out for Students

Parents, we are asking that if you need to check out your elementary student early, that you do so by 2:00 PM on a regular dismissal day and by 12:45 PM on an early release day. It can become a dismissal safety concern when students are

checked out too close to the dismissal time. Students may be checked out of school by their parent or legal guardian. If you are checking your student out, please present your valid state-issued photo identification at our front office. Please remember that we do not take dismissal changes over the phone. All changes made to your child’s normal means of transportation home are required in writing. We would also like to encourage you to make appointments for your child outside of our school hours in order to maximize your child’s learning time and minimize classroom disruptions for all students. We thank you for your partnership!

## Volunteering at OCS!

We're using SignUp.com (the leading online SignUp and reminder tool) to organize our upcoming SignUps for volunteer opportunities. Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:



- 1) Go to this link to see our SignUps on SignUp.com: <http://signup.com/go/dvqxMvv>
- 2) Review the SignUps listed and choose the one(s) you like. (Please keep in mind that for some of our volunteer opportunities, only Registered Volunteers are allowed to participate. If you are not yet a Registered Volunteer, please contact Kavel Green at [GreenK@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:GreenK@odysseycharterschool.com) for information on how to become one.)
- 3) Sign up! It's Easy - you will NOT need to register an account or keep a password on SignUp.com.
- 4) If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kavel Green at [GreenK@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:GreenK@odysseycharterschool.com)

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## Eating Lunch with your Scholar

We are happy to have families eat lunch with their scholars at their leisure. However, when other students are invited to eat with adults that have no relation or are not on the authorized contact list of that student, it becomes a safety concern. As such, students will only be allowed to eat with adults that are on their authorized contacts list. In addition, please keep in mind that we are a healthy school and welcome healthy food options when food is brought in for lunch. We appreciate the support of our families as we continue to build our health and safety procedures and look forward to seeing families continue to enjoy shared lunch experiences. Bon a petit!



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## Spotlight on two of our Current Events

### Harvest Luncheons

Thank you to all the families who have participated in our Harvest Luncheons. Families were invited to join their students during their lunch hour for our Annual Harvest Luncheons. Families enjoyed spending quality time with their child(ren), while promoting healthy eating habits. Our Harvest Luncheons were scheduled for:

- Monday, 10/22: KG & 3rd
- Monday, 10/29: 1st & 4th
- Monday, 11/5: 2nd & 5th

### Veteran's Day

We are creating a "Wall of Honor" for Veterans Day at Odyssey Charter School. We invited our Odyssey families to honor a family member or friend by sending in a photo with their service information. We would like to cordially invite those of our Odyssey family who are current or former members of the military to attend our Veteran Appreciation Breakfast. Our event will be held on Tuesday, November 13th, at 9:00 a.m. in the café on our Eldron campus. Any family member (parent, guardian, grandparent, etc.) who has served is welcome to attend. Students will have the opportunity to join their loved ones for this special event.



Please RSVP by Monday, November 5th. For more information, please contact the front office at 321-733-0442 or email [nelsonf@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:nelsonf@odysseycharterschool.com).

## Read Aloud Program – for Volunteer Hours

The Read Aloud program is a wonderful way for parents to fulfill their volunteer hours while supporting their students academically, socially, and emotionally. In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education report "Becoming a Nation of Readers" found that, "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."

To participate in the Read Aloud program, parents should spend at least 15 minutes reading aloud literature to their child that is about two grades above their independent reading level. Then complete the Read Aloud log which can be provided by your classroom teacher or through the front office. Next turn in your log at the end of each month to your classroom teacher or to the front office and you will receive volunteer hours for the time spent reading aloud to your child.

For more information about the importance of reading aloud to your child, please visit Jim Trelease's web site at: <http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/>

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## Parents as Partners

Parents as Partners (PasP) is a collaborative effort between parents, teachers, and administrators. The committee develops ideas and plans programs to support student success. This year, we are focusing most of our fundraising efforts on building our athletic program. Here are some of the fundraising ideas that we are currently working on:

- 1) **Coordinate fundraiser** for one of our Kindergarten students (Raelynn Rivers) in her fight against leukemia.  
-Student coin jar collection (Students will be bringing loose change to school from October 29th to November 2nd). Monies will be given to family via their Go-Fund-Me page. If you would like to contribute directly to the family, the Go-Fund-Me link is <https://www.gofundme.com/we-love-you-raelynn>
- 2) **Yard Sale**
- 3) **School Calendar** (July 2019 to June 2020) – featuring healthy recipes (could also feature kids art – art contest for each month?)
- 4) **Spirit Night** – at Beef O'Brady's (with a 'Featured Healthy Odyssey Meal') – most in alignment with our Wellness Policy
- 5) **Possibly a car wash**

Note that ALL Parents are partners. However, in order to become an active member, please join us at the meetings held at our Elementary Campus on Eldron Blvd. The following are ALL the dates for the meetings for this academic year:

Thursday	November 29, 2018
Thursday	January 17, 2019
Thursday	February 21, 2019
Thursday	March 28, 2019
Thursday	April 18, 2019

**Meetings start at 6:30pm.**

## 4th Grade Wax Museum

On Tuesday, October 30th, the Fourth Grade had their annual in-house Wax Museum from 8:45 to 10:15 am in the main hallway for students. On Thursday, November 8th at 6:30pm, our evening performances will be held for families.

### What is the Wax Museum?

Our fourth grade students research, learn, and write about a famous Floridian and finally “become them” for part of the day. On event days, students will have a “button” on their hand. In order for them to come alive and say who they are, spectators are expected to “press their button” and listen to the information about the Floridian who greatly impacted our state. The 4th graders are excited and a bit nervous so we ask that attendees be kind and supportive.

## Fundraising support

During both our day and evening performances, students will have a collection bucket of some sort. They will be collecting donations to go towards our St. Augustine field trip in the Spring. Please feel free to send in spare change with your students for the day performances and/or bring in monetary donations for the evening performances.



## Here are some highlights showcasing what's been happening at OCS Elementary!

### Glow the Night 4th Grade Dance

Thank you to everyone who came out to our Glow the Night dance to help raise money for the 4th grade St. Augustine trip! We had such a blast watching students dance and loved seeing our cafeteria brightly covered in glow! A special thanks to our 4th grade parents, and to Mrs. Clark, for volunteering your time and services to make our night successful. We are on our way to an amazing trip to St. Augustine this year, and we couldn't be more excited! - **Contributed by Ms. Courtney Burkhart (4th Grade Teacher)**



### Hispanic Heritage Month

Spanish class was thrilled to lead Heritage month, recognizing the contributions of our Hispanic brothers and sisters to global economy and culture. Our Odyssey Elementary School celebrated the long-important presence of Hispanic Americans in the United States during Spanish class. Our celebration started in Sept 15 is as it marks the anniversary of the independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.



### Enchanted Forest Scholastic Book Fair



Thank you for everyone coming out to Enchanted Forest Scholastic Book Fair and a special thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers, junior crew, and staff members that helped to make it such a success. Our students had a lot of fun with independent shopping, building their money/counting skills, and helping out a friend in need. For our Royal Book Fair night, we were thrilled about the visits from Prince Charming, Cinderella, and a delightful unicorn.

We will be having another Scholastic Book Fair in the Spring with a new theme, more books, and new featured titles. Be sure to look out for those dates! Some new books and titles are starting to be shelved so have your student stop by to check out all our new books in the Media Center!

-**Contributed by Ms. Procter (Media Specialist)**

Each day, students entering the school sees our Spanish words of the week, cultural facts, and customs all over the world. During announcements, we also had one student read interesting facts about famous Hispanic Americans.

We are so proud of our Titans!

- **Contributed by Ms. Munoz (Spanish Teacher)**

### Amazon Smile

Did you know that you can help raise money for OCS when you make purchases? Do you shop at Amazon?



AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your purchases to Odyssey Charter School.

Go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) (use the same log in that you use for Amazon.com)

Search Odyssey Charter School Palm Bay, FL

Select our school and that's it!

**Now 0.5% of your purchase will go to our school.**

### National Walk to School Day

National Walk to School Day was Wednesday, October 10th! It was an amazing turn out of volunteers, parents, and even some family pets. We met in the Beef O'Brady's parking lot at 7:15am and welcomed the students off the buses. We handed out Walk To School posters, made by the Honor Society, and enjoyed the walk to Odyssey to begin our day. Keeping our hearts healthy is so important and starting our day off with a morning walk to Odyssey was a step in the right direction!

-**Contributed by Coach Delaune (Athletic Director)**



## Literacy Night

- Contributed by Ms. Bernardo & Ms. Ventura (Instructional Coaches)

Odyssey Charter School hosted our annual Title 1 Literacy Night on October 8th, 2018. During our event, families joined together to learn about why vocabulary is important and how families can support their children at home. We have included some important notes that were discussed during this event.

### Why is vocabulary so important?

1. A child's comprehension and understanding improves when they know what the words mean. Since comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, we cannot overestimate the importance of vocabulary development.
2. Words are the currency of communication. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication — listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
3. When children and adolescents improve their vocabulary, their academic and social confidence and competence improve too.



### What words should I teach my child?

**-Type A Words:** They work hard in order to convey the meaning of the text being read. There are two sources for these words: Academic Language and the Content Areas. Academic Language describes the language of schooling — words used across disciplines like genre and glossary. Content Area words are specific to the discipline — words like government in social studies and organism in science.

**-Type B words:** These words are the Basics. There are hundreds of high-frequency words. The basics make up a large percentage of student reading and writing. Students must be able to read words like the, is, and, are, been and because.

**-Type C Words:** The Connectors act as signal words. Students need to understand the signals for cause and effect relationships, sequence and other important indicators of how text is organized. For example, first, lastly, due to, in effect.

**-Type D Words:** D is for Difficult — words with multiple meanings are challenging for all students and may be especially so for English-Language Learners. For example, jam, bat, and factor. These words have more than one meaning.

**-Type X Words:** X is for the eXtras. These are the words that will not be encountered frequently but in a certain story or context are important to meaning. A good example of this type of word is spindle in "Sleeping Beauty." It is important to the fairy tale, but it is not a commonly used word in everyday language.



### GATEway/ Project Lead the Way

October was a wonderful month for our programs. 3rd-5th Grade Enrichment is happening daily during their grade level's intervention time. We are working on improving ELA skills and digging deeper into novels, articles and essays. 1st and 2nd Grade students began their Enrichment program on October 29. All students in the enrichment programs are now also working with Project Lead the Way lessons and activities. These include hands on science and programming/coding-based activities that include ELA, writing and math. In addition, on Thursday, October 25, 2018 the Florida Tech Basketball Coach and Players presented their "Read to Succeed" program for the 2nd grade classes.

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#### Grievance Procedures

- Step 1: Request Teacher conference to clarify issue
- Step 2: Contact Principal if unresolved with the teacher
- Step 3: \*\*Contact Board Designated Parent Representative
- Step 4: Contact the President of the Governing Board
- Step 5: Present issue at the next monthly Board Meeting if unresolved
- Step 6: Seek mediation with the Sponsor

\*\*Ms. Cindy Gilmore has been designated by the OCS Board of Directors as the Representative to Facilitate Parental Involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes according to charter requirements. Ms. Gilmore can be reached at [cgilmore@greenappleschools.com](mailto:cgilmore@greenappleschools.com) or 321-676-8737.