

Odyssey Charter School

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

FALL 2019 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

Ms. Carrie Young
Dean of Students

Mr. Michael Senick
Ms. DeAnna Bernardo
Instructional Coaches

Ms. Deb Munoz
Teacher Representative

Ms. Kavel Green
Family Engagement

Ms. Licelia Sears (formerly Moo)
Guidance Counselor

Ms. Kristina Snelling
Office Manager/Registrar, Elementary

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

From the Desk of the Principal:

Happy fall, everyone! We had a strong start to our school year and now serve over 740 Titans in Kindergarten through 5th grade, as well as over 50 preschool/VPK students. With the support of our Founder, Ms. Constance, and our OCS, Inc. Board of Directors, we are excited about our upcoming construction projects – including the new classroom addition, car loop extension, additional parking and staff parking lot (adding over 110 parking spaces to our campus), and a regulation under-12 soccer field.

Our holistic mission to support students academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually remain central to our efforts. This year, we are focusing on the needs of our Gifted and Talented Education (GATEway) students and programs with Ms. Suzette Jewell Ventura supporting these students in our pull out and Acceleration programs. Students are having experiences with Project Lead the Way, William & Mary Gifted Curriculum, and Junior Great Books, to name a few. Our students also have the opportunity to experience Renzulli, an interactive online system providing a personalized learning environment for students, identifying strengths, interests, learning and expression styles. Our GATEway curricula and programs provide our GATEway students with the opportunity to learn and develop the following skills:

- Critical Thinking
- Innovation
- Creativity
- Problem-Solving
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Responsibility
- Leadership
- Self-Advocacy

We welcome your feedback always. Please share your ideas with us. As partners in your child's education, we count on your feedback. Together we can offer your child an exceptional educational experience. Please feel free to reach out to me any time at nolderw@odysseycharterschool.com or 321-412-3141.

Wendi Nolder, M.Ed.
Principal

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!

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

11/20	Ground Breaking for new Gymnasium. 4:30 pm, Wyoming Campus
11/20	Board Meeting, 5:15 PM. Wyoming Campus
11/22	Early Release – Dress for Success
11/25	Interims Issued
11/27–11/29	Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

12/4	Picture Day Retakes (Uniforms)
12/5	Barnes & Noble Night
12/6	Early Release Day
12/7	Palm Bay Holiday Parade
12/10	Class and Club Pictures
12/13	Early Release Day
12/18-12/20	EXAMS Early Dismissal Days
12/20	Dress for Success Day
12/23-1/7	Holiday/Winter Break

Important Weblinks

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires for schools to provide parents with an annual school status report at the beginning of each school year. The Odyssey Charter School 2018-2019 Report Card can be accessed via the link below
<https://edudata.fldoe.org/ReportCards/Schools.html?school=6507&district=05>

The Odyssey Parent/Student Handbook, School Improvement Plan, and Parent and Family Engagement Plan can be found on the school's website at
<http://www.odysseycharterschool.com/reports>

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 (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.

Online Instructional Support

Elementary students will have access to iReady, myOn, Reflex Math and Study Island/Discovery Science online programs to support instruction in the Florida State Standards. iReady provides individualized online instruction that targets each student's individual needs in reading and math. Students take a diagnostic 3 times per year to set their learning path and work their path in between. Students are encouraged to utilize iReady for 45 minutes per week on both reading and math to progress toward their expected annual growth. MyOn is an online program that allows students to read (or listen and follow along) books in their areas of interest and at their reading level. Students are encouraged to use myOn daily to help with reading fluency and comprehension (don't forget to answer the quiz questions at the end of the book). Reflex Math is an online program that provides students with practice with math fluency in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Study Island (5th grade) and Discovery Science (all grades) provide practice for students in science concepts and supports science instruction taking place in the classroom. We encourage parents to take an active role monitoring students progress on these programs, and to remind students to utilize these programs weekly. If you need support with any of the programs, contact your child's teachers or our instructional coaches, Ms. Bernardo bernardod@odysseycharterschool.com or Mr. Senick senickm@odysseycharterschool.com.

FOCUS

FOCUS for Parents – if you have not received your FOCUS log in (new students/parents) please email Ms. Berg at bergd@odysseycharterschool.com. FOCUS for students who returned to OCS Elementary is the same for both students and parents from last year. If you have questions, please email Ms. Berg. FOCUS App – there is a new FOCUS app. You can download it to your smartphone and get easy access to grades and communication with your child's teachers.

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!

Read Aloud Program Updates – 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/>

or you can visit our website at

<http://odysseycharterschool.com/read-aloud.html>.

Parents are invited to check out books from our Media Center for their Read Alouds. Please feel free to contact Ms. Melissa Procter at procterm@odysseycharterschool.com if you have any questions or concerns.



The Mental Health & Wellbeing of Our Students

One of the main goals of our school is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students at all times. As such, we wanted to make you aware of a few safety policies that are in place in all Brevard County schools.

If a student reports or is suspected of being abused or neglected, all school personnel are required by law to report those suspicions to the Department of Children and Families. This requirement is in place to ensure the physical health and wellbeing of every one of our students. It is not the schools place to investigate, just to report. An investigation, if the report is accepted, will be conducted by the Department of Children and Families.

If a student reports or is suspected of possible suicide or harm to self, the school is required to complete a Suicide Risk Inquiry, or SRI. It is imperative to safeguard our students who are in crisis or possibly at risk for suicide. As a school, we will take immediate action and use screening tools to determine if your student is at risk. After a determination is made by a Certified School Counselor or School Social Worker, the parents will be immediately notified with further instruction and information to ensure the student gets the help they need.



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 Kindergarteners 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).

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).

What can you do to improve school attendance and 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:
5. Plan your family vacation outside of active school days
 6. 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

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>

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

Fall Family Fun Night

We had a wonderful turnout for our first Family Fun Night, sponsored by our Parents as Partners (PasP)! Families enjoyed a seasonal movie and craft, as well as some healthy snacks. Proceeds for the event go toward our PasP field trip funds and teacher appreciation. Look for more information coming up on a Winter Family Fun Night!



4th Grade Wax Museum

On Thursday, November 7th, the Fourth Grade held their annual in-house Wax Museum. Our fourth grade students researched, wrote, and presented about a famous Floridian and then "become them" for part of the day. During the event, students had a "button" on their hand, spectators "pressed their button" and listened to the information about the Floridian who greatly impacted our state. The students did a magnificent job with their research and presentations.



Harvest Luncheons

Our Harvest Luncheons were wonderfully attended! Thank you to all families who were able to join their students during their lunch hour for our Annual Harvest Luncheons. Families who were not able to attend are welcome to join their child during their lunch period – please sign into the front office with your state-issued identification. You can find out your child's lunch time from the front office or your child's teacher.



Glow the Night 4th Grade Dance

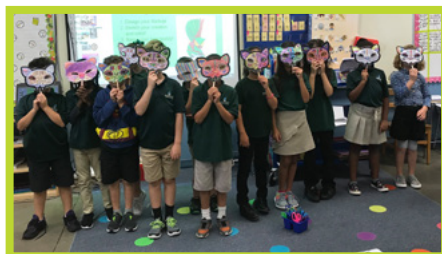
Thank you to everyone who came out to our Glow the Night dance to help raise money for the 4th grade St. Augustine trip! We had such a blast watching students dance and loved seeing our cafeteria brightly covered in glow! A special thanks to our 4th grade parents and other volunteers who donated time and resources to make our night successful. We are on our way to an amazing trip to St. Augustine again this year, and we couldn't be more excited!

Heritage Month Contributed by Ms. Munoz (Spanish Teacher)

At Odyssey Charter Elementary, our students have celebrated Heritage Month from September 15th to October 15th. Each year we take the time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories of the American community. Students enjoy learning different ways children play around the world and facts from other cultures as part of our CKLA curriculum.

Please visit Our Odyssey Spanish website for more information of things we do in Spanish class.

https://www.amazingclassroom.com/templates/animal_fun/default.asp?cag=spanishrocksatOCS



National Walk to School Day

National Walk to School Day was Wednesday, October 2nd! 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. Our Palm Bay Police Department was also there to help keep us safe. We enjoyed our walk to the campus 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!



Arctic Adventure Scholastic Book Fair

Thank you for everyone coming out to Arctic Adventure Scholastic Book Fair and a special thank you to all 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 a friend in need. For our Arctic Adventure Family Fun night, we were thrilled about our special visit from Kingdom of Comics and a big thank you to Mr. Roney for creating our fun snow station! Thank you to everyone that donated to All for Books. We were able to choose over twenty students from our wishing well bucket to win a free book!



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)

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: <https://signup.com/go/QqBzqBk>
- 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 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



Literacy Night

Odyssey Charter School hosted our annual Title 1 Literacy Night on October 8th, 2019. During our event, families joined together to learn about literatures genres and how families can support their children at home. We included important notes that were discussed during the event in the first marking period's report card envelopes. Please continue to promote literacy and love for reading at home.

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. We have four committees being run by our Parents as Partners this year. They are:

1. Decorating Committee
2. 5 K Committee
3. Teacher Appreciation
4. Fundraising Committee



Our Fundraising committee will be raising funds for the Parents as Partners account which provides funds for students who are not able to afford to pay for field trips and Teacher Appreciation.

Note that ALL Parents are our Partners. However, in order to become an active member, please join us at the meetings held at our Elementary Campus on Eldron Blvd in our cafe. The following are ALL the dates for the meetings for this academic year (Meetings start at 6:30pm.) Thurs. January 16, 2020, Tues. March 3, 2020, Thurs. April 16, 2020

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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 or 321-676-8737.