



# Odyssey Charter School

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

## FALL 2023 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.

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**Founder -**  
Ms. Constance Ortiz

#### SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Principal -**  
Ms. Wendi Nolder

**Assistant Principal -**  
Ms. Deb Berg

**Discipline Dean -**  
Dr. Maxine Powell

**Social Worker -**  
Ms. Kayla Senick

**Social Worker -**  
Ms. Nicole Wonsey

**Instructional Coaches -**  
Mr. Michael Senick  
Ms. Christina Hutchinson  
Ms. Becky Kolesnik

**Office Manager/Registrar -**  
Ms. Nancy Herasme

**MVG Early Childhood & Before /  
After Care Director -**  
Ms. Alia Hartwick

### From the Desk of the Principal:

Titan families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We have had a great start to a new school year and we remain honored to serve your children. I would like to take a moment to congratulate our students, faculty, and staff for their hard work last school year. All evidence points to our elementary campus earning a school grade of A, with our ELA and Math proficiency scores at every grade level outperforming district and state averages! Our teachers and staff continue the work of closing the educational gaps due to the pandemic and appreciate your ongoing support. We are so happy to be back to our most important and sacred of work: educating students. We know that you are an important part of the equation and appreciate your support at home with homework, at-home reading, ensuring students get a solid night's sleep each evening, and getting your child to school on time each day. It is a partnership and we value your support!

Our Gifted and Talented Education (GATEway) program is excited to welcome Ms. Caisee Rogers as our GATEway teacher, who will continue to be supported by our GATEway assistant, Ms. Rachel Gallegos Wirkkala. This team will continue to provide experiences with William & Mary Gifted Curriculum, Junior Great Books, and additional Project Lead the Way (PLTW) modules. GATEway students will also have an 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 critical thinking skills, teamwork/collaboration, responsibility, leadership, self-advocacy, innovation, creativity and problem-solving.

This year, we are continuing our focus on the important partnership between the school and family and on effective communication. As we collaborate together to educate your child, please know we value and welcome your feedback. Your input helps us continue what is going well and improve in areas that need improvement. We ask that lines of communication between families and the school be open and frequent, and that we keep our interactions respectful, friendly and optimistic. Working collaboratively, we can offer your child an excellent educational experience and have a wonderful and memorable school year.



Please consider joining one of our family events we have planned this year. We had a wonderful turnout at our Open Houses and at our Dads Take Your Child to School Breakfasts! Please continue to support your child by joining in on activities planned this year. We love seeing our Titan family participation! As always, we thank you for the honor of serving your child. Please feel free to reach out to me any time at [NolderW@odysseycharter-school.com](mailto:NolderW@odysseycharter-school.com), 321-733-0442 ext. 110 (office), or 321-412-3141 (cell).

Wendi M. Nolder  
Principal



## CALENDAR

**Every Friday** – Early Release Days –  
K-5th dismiss at 1:30p.m.

**Casual Dress Days** – last Friday of each month  
(October 27, November 17, December 22, January 26, February 23, March 22, April 26, May 24)

### OCTOBER

10/12 – 6pm Parents as Partners (PasP) meeting –  
Cyber-Safety

10/12 – End of First Nine Weeks

10/16 – Teacher PD/Workday / Student HOLIDAY

10/18 – Harvest Luncheon – 1st & 4th grade

10/19 – Elementary Report Cards Issued

10/24 – 6pm GATEway Parent Information Night

10/25 – Harvest Luncheon – Kindergarten  
& 3rd grade

10/26 – Elementary Student-Parent-Teacher  
Conference Night (by appointment)

### NOVEMBER

11/1 – Harvest Luncheon – 2nd & 5th grade

11/9 – Veteran’s Day Event

11/9 – Fall Festival (evening event)

11/10 – Veterans’ Day HOLIDAY for All

11/15 – Second Interim Ends

11/15 – OCS Inc. Board of Directors Meeting

11/20-24 – Thanksgiving Holiday for all

11/29 – Second Quarter Interims issued

### DECEMBER

12/20-22 – Early Release / EXAM days  
(students release at 1:30pm)

12/22 – End of 2nd Quarter

12/23-31 Winter Break

### JANUARY

1/1-5 – Winter Break

1/8 – Students Return

## Read Aloud Program – for Volunteer Hours!



The Read Aloud program is a wonderful way for parents to fulfill their required annual volunteer hours while supporting their student’s academic growth. 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.”

We make it easy for parents to volunteer at our school by spending your time in the comfort of your own home with your child. To participate in the Read Aloud program, parents spend 15 minutes reading aloud quality literature to their child. Find a book that both you and your child will enjoy. Then log your time on the Read Aloud log which can be provided by your classroom teacher, or through the front office, or from the school’s website. 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/readaloud.html>.

Our media center has many books recommended by Jim Trelease. 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](mailto:procterm@odysseycharterschool.com) if you would like to come a check out a book or have any additional questions.

## Parents as Partners



We welcome all parents to join our Parents as Partners (PasP) organization. We need your support to be the best we can be. The PasP organization supports the school by working on annual goals that will directly impact your student and their success. This year we are eager to provide enriching field trip experiences for all our students to help round out their education. Our fundraising committees this year will be raising funds to prepare for our Students Award Ceremonies, Annual 5k, Field Trips, and Teacher Appreciation. We are excited to celebrate Odyssey’s 25th year and one of our PasP goals will be supporting our Annual 5K and 25th Anniversary Community Picnic - please join us!

**Note that ALL Parents are our Partners.** However, in order to become an active member, please join us at the meetings held in person. Mark your calendar for our upcoming PasP meetings:

- October 12- PasP Meeting – Internet Safety
- November 9 – Fall Festival (we welcome our PasP participation)
- January 25 – PasP Meeting – Science Star Party (1st, 3rd, 5th)
- February 22 – PasP Meeting – Math Night at Publix
- May 9 - Parents as Partners Survey + Data Review and Family input + At-Home Summer Reading

Please contact Ms. Wendi Nolder for more information at [nolderw@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:nolderw@odysseycharterschool.com).

## Student ID Badges

Odyssey student ID Badges are considered a part of the daily school uniform. Please ensure your child has their ID badge every day. Badges have a variety of uses at our school. Students wear their badges for safety purposes, as well as for entry on our school buses, purchase of school breakfast/lunch, and book checkout in our media center. We are happy to report we have about 95% of our students following our school uniform policy and wearing their Student ID Badge daily.

If your child loses their ID, replacements are \$5. Please send ID replacement money with your child’s name and the name of their homeroom teacher. Please send a check or money order made out to Odyssey Charter School with your child’s name, grade, and ‘school badge’ in your check’s tagline. Families, we ask that you help your child develop a system where they remember to wear their ID badge every day. We appreciate your support!

## School Events - OCTOBER

### Oct. 12 –Parents as Partners (PasP) Meeting –

Internet Safety (with BBPD) – We welcome our families to join our Parents as Partners meeting at 6pm to talk about how you can support your child/the school this year and learn about Internet Safety from our Community Resource Officer from the Palm Bay Police Department. Please join us!

### Oct. 18 and 25 – Harvest Lunches –

We welcome you to come join your child for our annual Harvest Celebration Lunch and Wellness Expo at our Odyssey Charter School Healthy Café. Our menu includes roasted chicken thigh (or tofu), roasted potato medley, fresh baked whole grain roll, garden fresh salad bar, fresh fruit choice, and fall dessert.

- October 18 – 1st grade and 4th grade
- October 25 – Kindergarten and 3rd grade

### Oct. 26 – Student-Parent-Teacher Conference Night –

Teachers will be sharing information on how to sign up for a conference appointment to talk with you and your child about their progress thus far. Students will share their successes as well as goals they have set for the year and their plans to meet their goals.

## School Events - NOVEMBER

### Nov. 1 – Harvest Lunch –

We welcome you to come join your child for our annual Harvest Celebration Lunch and Wellness Expo at our Odyssey Charter School Healthy Café. Our menu includes roasted chicken thigh (or tofu), roasted potato medley, fresh baked whole grain roll, garden fresh salad bar, fresh fruit choice, and fall dessert.

- Nov. 1 – 2nd grade and 5th grade

### Nov. 1, 2, 3 – Spirit Days

We will be celebrating Homecoming with our Jr/Sr High through our Spirit Days at OCS Elementary. Elementary students will show their Titan pride on the below School Spirit Days:

- Wed 11/1 - Crazy Sock Day (in uniform)
- Thurs 11/2 - Favorite Sports Team Jersey/T-Shirt (in uniform)
- Fri 11/3 - Grade Level Color Day
  - K – pink
  - 1st – blue
  - 2nd – yellow
  - 3rd – red
  - 4th – green
  - 5th – students will wear their House Colors

### Go Titans!

### Nov. 9 – Veteran's Day Ceremony and Breakfast - 8:30am.

Ms. Constance Ortiz, School Founder, and our Leadership team welcome all veterans to be honored and celebrated! Our students may bring their Veteran Father, Mother, Uncle, Aunt, Grandfather or Grandmother to school to enjoy breakfast. This important event acknowledges the bravery and courage of our military men and women and increases respect for their service and sacrifice.

### Nov. 15 – Odyssey Charter School, Inc., Board of Directors Meeting -

You are welcome to attend. Our board meetings are held several times annually at the historic 1900 Building, Suite 120, 1900 S. Harbor City Boulevard, Melbourne, FL 32901 or you are welcome to attend via call in number 1-301-715-8592, Passcode 81749678859#.

## Early Check-Outs

Parents, we would like to encourage you to make appointments for your child outside of our school hours as much as possible in order to maximize your child's learning time and minimize classroom disruptions for all students. When that is not possible, we ask that you do so by 2:00 p.m. on a regular dismissal day and by 12:45 on an early release day. It can become a safety concern when students are checked out too close to the dismissal time. 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 thank you for your partnership!

## Tardy Policy

Students are expected to be in their seats and ready to learn by 8:00 AM. Students miss important beginning of the day instruction and cause a disruption to the classroom when arriving to class after 8AM. If students arrive at 8:00 AM or later, parents must park and walk their child into the office, sign them in, and receive a tardy slip 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.

## The Importance of Hydration

Our bodies are over 60% water and our brains are over 75% water – hydration is important! Proper hydration helps carry nutrients and oxygen to all cells in our bodies and helps convert food into energy. Please make sure you are sending your child with a refillable water bottle each day in order to stay well-hydrated throughout the school day. We have water bottle refilling stations throughout our building and ample time for refilling of water bottles. IMPORTANT - Water bottles should be labeled with your child's name.

## Transportation

We would like to thank all the Odyssey families that have signed up for transportation.

Just a reminder few reminders:

- 1) If you would like to sign up for one of our bus routes, and live 2 miles or more away from your child's campus, please contact our transportation department and they will be happy to assist you.
- 2) We would like to kindly remind all parents that Transportation changes may not be made over the phone. You may, however, submit these requests in writing to your child's teacher or to the front office.
- 3) If your child loses their ID, replacements are \$5. Please send ID replacement money with your child's name and the name of their home-room teacher. Please cash or a check or money order made out to Odyssey Charter School. Families, we ask that you help your child develop a system where they remember to wear their ID badge every day. We appreciate your support!

To request bus transportation, visit [www.EZrouting.com/Odysseyfl](http://www.EZrouting.com/Odysseyfl). Please feel free to contact our transportation department with any questions at: Transportation office 321-345-4117 Opt. 3 or Email [greerr@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:greerr@odysseycharterschool.com).





## GATEway Gifted and Talented Program

Some exciting things we have been going on in the Gateway room with our Gifted and Talented students. Each group of students are pulled weekly, and participate in hands-on, project based learning activities, while working collaboratively with one another. Below is what each grade level is currently working on:

### 1st- 3rd- Project Lead the Way

First through Third grades are working their way through a Project Lead the Way Unit. Each grade level has a unique topic that they get to explore, while also solving a problem, through utilizing the engineering process. First grade is learning about Animal Adaptations. Second grade is exploring Properties of Matter. And Third grade is diving into all things Forces and Motion! As we wrap up our project lead the way units, each grade level will be working in teams to accomplish a task that directly relates to the topics that they are learning about.

### 4th-5th- Shark Tank

4th and 5th grade students have been working really hard on their Shark Tank innovation projects. Students were tasked with coming up with a unique innovation that they can present to our "shark" judges in a couple of weeks. There, they will have the opportunity to earn a spot at our district level competition, at the Innovation Games. During this project, students are working in groups on their innovation ideas, coming up with a marketing plan for their product, and creating an eye-catching presentation to showcase their project! I am super impressed with all they have come up with and can't wait to see their presentations come to life.

### Looking Ahead...

As we wrap up on these projects, and we move into a new quarter, First through Third grade will start fresh with some new Science based activities. In addition, Fourth and Fifth graders will start their Project Lead the Way units. Fourth will move into Energy and Collisions and Fifth will start working on Robotics and Automation.

## FortifyFL

FortifyFL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows you to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials. FortifyFL was created and funded by the 2018 Florida Legislature as part of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. The application was named by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The Office of Attorney General, Department of Education and Florida Department of Law Enforcement coordinated its development and roll-out. You can download the app and get more info at <https://getfortifyfl.com/>.

## Grading Policy

Did you know that Odyssey has a Grading Policy? It was adopted by our OCS Board to establish uniform procedures for marking and reporting student progress to their families. We have a focus on mastery grading, ensuring that grades assigned are a reflection of the child's progress/achievement in mastering the specific subject matter. You can read about this and much more at <https://odysseycharterschool.com/7013-Grading-Policy.pdf>.

## Weather/Lightning

During this rainy season, when we are likely to have severe weather during dismissal, we want to make sure our families are aware of our rainy day dismissal plan. If there is lightning within 3-5 miles, we will keep students inside the building and dismissal will be on hold until the weather clears a bit and it is safe to have staff and students outside. Once staff deem it is safe to resume dismissal, we will continue. We thank our families in advance for your understanding and support to ensure the safety of both students and staff!

## Substitutes Needed

We are always looking for parents or community members to join our OCS family. We need great, positive, and driven individuals looking to make an impact in our Titan's daily scholastic goals. If you are interested in joining our team as a substitute, please contact Barbara Marcus at [MarcusB@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:MarcusB@odysseycharterschool.com). Training is provided.

## Homework Policy

Our Odyssey Charter School Inc. Board of Directors adopted a homework policy for classrooms to provide meaningful and quality work to students to practice during non-school hours. Some of the purposes of assigning homework is to reinforce skills and concepts learned in the classroom and to foster self-discipline and to help students manage this learning time wisely. Per the policy, there are administrator, teacher, student, and parent responsibilities related to homework. You can find out more at <https://odysseycharterschool.com/policies/7010-Homework%20Policy.pdf>.

## Positive Discipline



We have really focused on the implementation of our Positive Discipline in the Classroom program, sharing compliments and appreciations, building community within the classroom and beginning to

develop the problem-solving process within our class meetings. We know that making students feel valued and capable within the classroom goes a long way toward their academic success. An important aspect of Positive Discipline is the importance of encouragement, rather than praise. Check out the link below for some ways to use encouragement with your child at home.

<https://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/encouragement-what-does-it-mean-and-how-it-done>

## ClassLink

### Odyssey Launchpad - Online Instructional Support

Family support of each child's education is critical to student success. Research shows that when parents are more involved, students do better! We are happy to share that elementary students (and parents) will have digital access to Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), Savvas EasyBridge (enVision®), i-Ready, Studies Weekly, Study Island, Discovery Science, and Renzulli online programs to support instruction in the Florida Benchmarks through their single sign on through the Odyssey ClassLink Launchpad at <https://launchpad.classlink.com/odysseyfl>. Their username is their 7-digit student ID number (i.e. 1234567) and their password includes their birth date (i.e. OdyMMDDYY).

- CKLA is our Language Arts program that is rich in literature, history, geography and science. Your child has access to the CKLA content via the Launchpad and can read (or re-read) stories at home that they have learned at school.

- Our enVision® Florida B.E.S.T. Mathematics curriculum is designed to help children gain a deeper understanding of mathematics through problem-based teaching and learning. Lessons are designed for students to explore each topic with hands-on materials, then two-dimensional pictures, and finish by connecting their thinking to symbols, numbers, and procedures.

- Studies Weekly is a newspaper-based and online program supporting Social Studies instruction.

- Savvas Science provides science videos, articles and activities for students in science concepts and supports science instruction taking place in the classroom.

- i-Ready provides individualized online instruction that targets each student's specific needs in both reading and math. Each student's instruction is tailored to meet their individual needs based on their own personal diagnostic data. Students are encouraged to utilize i-Ready for 45 minutes per week in each subject to progress toward their expected annual growth.

- Renzulli is an online program that all students have access to. Students take an interest inventory upon first using Renzulli, then engage in self-directed learning specifically matched to their individual profile. Renzulli places a strong emphasis on problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking skills to help ensure learners are developing thinking and reasoning skills that will prepare them for college and careers.

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.

Mr. Senick [senickm@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:senickm@odysseycharterschool.com),

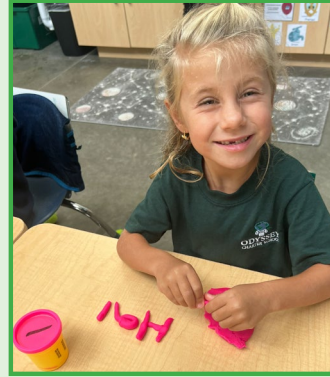
Ms. Hutchinson [hutchinsonc@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:hutchinsonc@odysseycharterschool.com)

Ms. Kolesnik [kolesnikb@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:kolesnikb@odysseycharterschool.com)

## FOCUS

FOCUS for Parents – if you have not received your FOCUS log in (new students/parents) please email Ms. Berg at [BergD@odysseycharter-school.com](mailto:BergD@odysseycharter-school.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.

## A Look Back on the Year So Far...



8/26 Kindergarten started their station rotations so students can work on skills



9/15 and 9/22 we welcomed our Dads to our annual Dad's Take Your Child to School Breakfasts



9/27 – 10/6 our fall Scholastic Book Fair "Odyssey Loves to Read a Latte" was a huge success



Odyssey's Instructional Coaches



10/4 we enjoyed some fresh air and got our steps in during our annual walk to school day event, welcoming students, families, and staff to walk to school



9/20 students are preparing the gardens, planting seeds, weeding, and tending the garden

### 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

\*\*Mrs. Amber Miller 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. Miller can be reached at [millera@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:millera@odysseycharterschool.com) or 321-442-2742.