

Odyssey Charter School

Upper Campus NEWS

Sept. 2013

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

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

OPA / OCS Upper Campus: 1350 Wyoming Drive
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Visit our website at www.odysseycharterschool.com

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.

Welcome to Odyssey Charter School - Upper Campus

Message from Odyssey's new Upper Campus Director – Dan Kuhar

I am pleased to join Odyssey this year, and have traveled a long way to be a part of this great school. I've spent the last 11 years helping to build, and direct, a charter school in Maui, Hawaii. My time on Maui was wonderful, but Florida is my home as I was born and raised here. I am pleased to be back in Florida and I am excited to assist Odyssey Charter School in adding to its already excellent programs. I am a big proponent of innovative and safe learning environments, hands-on activities, outdoor learning, inquiry based curriculum, utilizing community resources, a student-centered approach, and working towards creating problem solvers. We will be looking to implement a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and 21st Century Skills focus in order to facilitate the problem solving approach and have our curriculum be more reflective of the world of work. We will also look to implement a more integrated, project-based curriculum that is more relevant and engaging for students. This will mean a decreased textbook and lecture emphasis, and more activities that promote active student engagement. I look forward to working closely with students, parents, staff, and our community to create a unique public school of choice.

Important Announcements

- Please note that Odyssey's Upper Campus school day now starts at 9am, and ends at 4:10pm
- Please note that Odyssey's Upper Campus Uniform requirements are:
 - Odyssey Logowear in the following colors - Ash Gray, Light Blue, Royal Blue, and White
 - Black or Khaki pants, shorts, or skirts that adhere to our dress code requirements.
 - Any Navy Blue or Black Sweatshirt with, or without, our Odyssey Logo is acceptable with or without hood, is acceptable. (Please note that headgear may not be worn on school property, including buses.)

CALENDAR - Sept. 2013

- Sept 9 – Student Holiday/ Professional Development Day
- Sept 13 – First Interim Ends
- Sept 16-27 – PasP Read-a-Thon Fundraiser
- Sept 19 – Interims Issued
- Sept 21 – Florida Coastal Clean-Up
- Sept 23 - Oct 4 – MAP testing
- Sept 25 – Early Release Day
- Sept 27 – Dress Down/Clean-Up Day
- Oct 4 – Student Holiday/Professional Development Day
- Oct 16 – End of Quarter 1

Florida Virtual School Changes

The state of Florida has passed new legislation that has changed the way in which we are able to utilize FLVS. We were notified this summer that the state will no longer be paying for FLVS classes, even if students are taking them during a 7th period, or on their own at home. Now, any FLVS that is taken will need to be paid for by the school or parent directly. This late notification, well after our SY13-14 school budget was set, means that we did not budget for this expense, forcing us to cancel our extensive use of FLVS as a supplemental. We are greatly saddened by this, as we value virtual learning and recognize its tremendous value for our students. We are hoping that this is not a permanent change, but it is out of our control at this point. Parents still wishing to have their students take a FLVS course, and have the means, can purchase them directly from FLVS for \$276, per course, per semester. Please contact Chellyn Rinehart, FLVS Contact at #772-480-1405 for details.

Friday Enrichment

On Fridays students are scheduled to have four 90 minutes enrichment classes that will be fun, engaging, and rigorous, but will not be the same courses they run through Monday through Friday. This allows us more flexibility in regards to responding to student needs. It enables us to perform more elaborate labs, perform field activities and service learning, make community trips, utilize community resources, provide additional small group math support, provide additional small group reading support, and allows students to explore a wide array of enrichment opportunities. These will be semester long enrichment classes, but students may be pulled from certain enrichment courses if necessary to provide additional academic supports. Example: A student may be pulled from Friday Team Sports, and placed into our Open Lab for 90 minutes, if they have school work that they need to compete. This will be coordinated by your students Advisor as needed.

What is a Charter School?

“Charter schools are innovative public schools providing choices for families and students.”

Nearly 3,000 new schools have been launched since state legislatures began passing charter legislation in the 1990s. Chartering is a radical educational innovation that is moving states beyond reforming existing schools to creating something entirely new. Chartering is at the center of a growing movement to challenge traditional notions of what public education means.

Chartering allows schools to run independently of the traditional public school system and to tailor their programs to community needs. While not every new school is extraordinarily innovative and some school operations may mirror that of traditional public schools, policymakers, parents, and educators are looking at chartering as a way to increase educational choice and innovation within the public school system. Over one million students are enrolled in more than 3,500 schools in 40 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.”

Source: www.uscharterschools.org

About Odyssey Charter School

We strive to create safe and caring learning environments where we teach students positive and appropriate ways to resolve conflicts. Our positive discipline approach allows classroom communities to grow together in the development of problem-solving skills and mutual respect. We are preparing our students with a strong foundation for future leadership in the larger world community. We know that kindness, courtesy and respect toward all will be at the core of what our staff, teachers, and students do.

Our program is designed to foster individual uniqueness and potential. We treat each student as an individual and know that no two students will learn at the same pace, nor will they learn best from the same teaching methods. Our students also learn not to be afraid of mistakes. Our students are encouraged to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions. In this way, we are helping students to become life-long independent learners.

Odyssey Charter School's Mission

Our mission is to help each student reach their full potential working in partnership with you, our families. Your child must have your full support at home and at school. To be admitted, each family commits to a minimum of 18 volunteer hours each school year (25 for 2 or more students attending). Our students count on your partnership and support.

On behalf of our staff and teachers, we welcome you to this cooperative school serving and educating future leaders. We only can achieve something great when students, parents, and schools are on the same team; moving in the same direction.

Vision

To inspire, create and support innovative, cooperative and productive learning environments.

Goals of Odyssey Charter School – Upper Campus

The goals of the school will be explicitly used as a template to help organize course and program development, this will steadily prompt the growth of administrative protocols and support mechanisms within the school for accomplishing them.

- Develop a highly innovative, valuable, and comfortable learning environment, unique in our community.
- Create a culture that actively engages students, and fosters a student as worker, teacher as coach dynamic.
- Prepare students for the “World of Work” they are entering by providing them with a strong grounding in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiatives and the arts.
- Create a project environment that simultaneously supports research and development, knowledge acquisition, and cultures self-expression, self-development, and self-esteem through all learning environments.
- Nurture and support the continuing education and creative project development of all school staff.
- Utilize our schoolyard and community as a valuable learning resource. Introduce our students to the real world, outside expertise, access additional resources, and foster a sense of community stewardship.
- Consider areas of community and world challenge in order to focus curriculum towards making valuable innovations and developing school-wide threads of enterprise in those areas. (Such as renewable energy courses, environmental studies, new media, modeling and simulation, special needs accommodation, agriculture, learning environments, and telecommunication.)
- Create and maintain a strong relationship with all segments of the community including, but not exclusively, local businesses, legislators, parents, community leaders, teachers, school support staff, state and county officials, qualified non-profit groups, and other educational and community-minded groups and individuals for the continuing goal of improving education and educational opportunities for our community.
- Emphasis on the 21st Century Skills

What are 21st Century Skills?

We believe in a holistic approach to education. Content is important, but balancing content with skill instruction is ideal. These are the skills that we value most highly and believe will enable our students to be successful:

- Thinking and Problem Solving - Being a creative knowledge builder
- Informational – Proficient user of technology and being able to find and applying a broad range of informational texts
- Communication – Can proficiently convey ideas through writing and speaking
- Interpersonal – Utilizes and displays collaboration, compromise, teamwork, empathy, and mutual respect
- Self-Directional Skills – Can organize, management time, meet deadlines, and prioritizing tasks
- Civic Literacy and Engagement – Being positive, active, contributors to their school, community, and the environment

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What are 21st Century Skills? (continued)

These skills will be pervasive throughout our curriculum and will be emphasized as much as the content. Middle school students need these skills to be directly taught and modeled. We then need to create learning opportunities where they can freely apply these skills in a diverse array of novel situations. The more the students practice, the better they get. If you have interest in reading more about the 21st Century Skills please visit the "Partnership for 21st Century Skills" website at: <http://www.p21.org/>

Please help us work toward our goals.

We are always looking for great community partners to increase our students' learning opportunities. If you know of, have at your place of work, or have interest in, any of the following please communicate them to Mr. Kuhar at kuhard@odysseycharterschool.com:

- Student Outreach Opportunities
- Potential Service Learning Projects that would be appropriate for 11-14 year olds
- Great Events, or Field Sites that would have value for our students to attend / visit
- Odyssey Substitute Teacher List (Want to be an Odyssey Charter School Substitute Teacher?)
 - If you have interest in being on our substitute teacher list, please send Mr. Kuhar your resume

Thank you for your continued support of Odyssey Charter School. We can only maximize student learning and opportunity, with the support of our parents and community.

Give Back to OCS With Target

Simply go to <http://givewith.target.com/> and select Odyssey Charter School in Palm Bay, FL and vote for it weekly until September 21 or until \$5 million has been awarded, whichever occurs first. It takes just 25 votes to start. After that, Target will donate \$25 to your selected school. Upon receiving 25 votes, each additional vote equals \$1 more for up to \$10,000 per school.



Grievance Procedures

- Step 1: Request Teacher conference to clarify issue
- Step 2: Contact Principal if unresolved with the teacher
- Step 3: **Contact Constance Ortiz at Green Apple School Management Company
- Step 4: Contact the President of the Governing Board
- Step 5: Present issue at the next monthly Board of Directors Meeting if unresolved
- Step 6: Seek mediation with the Sponsor

**Constance Ortiz, Odyssey Founder and Green Apple School Management Central Florida Director, 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. Ortiz can be reached at cortiz@greenapplesm.org, or 321-216-7525.

PowerSchool – Student Information System:

PowerSchool, our new online grading and attendance system is fully online. Students and parents will have access to the system using the following URL: <http://ocs.sjtpnoc.net:8081/public/>

Your student will need their Username, and Password, to log into the system. This will be the same Username and Password that you will use to access this system as a parent. Students will be trained on how to best use this support by next week. Trainings will take place shortly thereafter for parents that would like some PowerSchool support as well. This is a new system for teachers, students and parents here at Odyssey, so please be patient as we establish our routine and work out some of the early implementation challenges.

Please use this tremendous communication tool, as it functions as a real time, 24 hour a day, grade report for your student. It shows your student's performance in every class, their attendance, their schedule, their teachers, and teacher comments. If you have a question about a grade, assignment, or attendance, please contact the school, so we can direct your question the appropriate staff member. Usually contacting the teacher directly, or your student's Advisory teacher, is a great place to start. If your address, contact numbers, or guardianship status changes please notify the school immediately so we can update our demographics in PowerSchool. Thank you.

Student Medication

Any students requiring medication during the school day must have a parent check the medication into the front office and fill out the appropriate medication form. Students may not bring medication to school at any time. If a student requires an asthma inhaler on his/her person, the inhaler must be checked in through the office and must be accompanied by a doctor prescription stating that the child must carry the inhaler with them at all times.

Student Insurance

Brevard County Schools are not responsible for paying medical expenses due to accidents or injuries that occur during school, sports, or other activities. If your child is not covered under a healthcare policy, you may be interested in the low cost Student Accident Insurance Plan. The plan can provide supplemental coverage if you already have a plan, or provide basic coverage if you have no insurance. Plan options are also available if you choose to add other benefits such as extended 24 hour coverage and dental coverage. Rates are designed to be affordable and start at \$10 for elementary students for coverage at school for a 9 month term. Forms are available in the front office and should be returned to the insurance agency office. You can also enroll or find out more at www.schoolinsuranceofflora.com.

OCS Board of Directors Meetings

Parents and staff are encouraged to attend Board of Directors meetings. Board meetings begin at 5:15 p.m. The Odyssey Board of Directors meetings for the 2013-2014 school year are as follows:

August 29, 2013, October 15, 2013, January 14, 2014, April 15, 2014 and June 17, 2014