

**Attachment 2:**  
**Odyssey Charter School Annual Report**

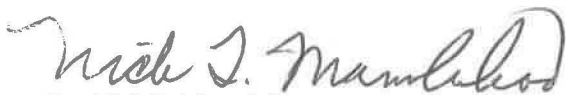
## DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

### CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

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Dr. Nick T. Manolakos  
Head of School

September 24, 2014  
Date

Head of School

Date



Mr. George Chambers  
Board President

September 24, 2014  
Date

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 1<sup>st</sup> (September 30<sup>th</sup> for renewing charter schools)**

**All schools submit one (1) signed copy (PDF via email preferred) to the DDOE Charter School Office**

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## ABSTRACT

**Our History:** In 2006, Odyssey Charter School (OCS) opened its doors as Delaware's first mathematics content focused, second language (Greek) elementary education charter school. OCS provides Delaware families with a classical approach to public education. A rigorous standards-based curriculum combined with instruction in the Greek language and mathematics is delivered in a challenging, yet nurturing, learning environment. OCS has strong academics, pioneered the development of the Foreign Language Elementary School program (FLES), and provides insight into the classical learning ideals of Hellenism in a small-school environment.

OCS employs Delaware certified teachers to instruct the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, a Greek language class and a second unit of math are taught each day. These added exclusive features of Odyssey Charter School are provided by credentialed instructors from Greece. Students also receive specialized instruction in art, physical education, computers and music, and are encouraged to maximize their second language and foreign culture experience.

Current enrollment at OCS is 938 students in grades K-7. The school enjoys an almost 30 percent ethnically diverse student body and includes students from five different public school districts. The student/teacher ratio is approximately 10:1 and the average class size is 20. Approximately 27% of the student body are classified in the low socio-economic-status sub-group. In 2009, Odyssey's charter was issued through the Delaware Department of Education. A 2011 Charter Modification allowed Odyssey to grow into a middle and senior high school, and also included a provision to provide instruction in Spanish. Odyssey Charter School was rated a Superior School by Delaware's Department of Education in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the 2013-14 Annual Delaware Charter School Academic Performance framework, Odyssey earned an Exceeds rating for the first time in its history.

**Mission:** The mission of Odyssey Charter School is to prepare students for a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, to develop a keen awareness of world citizenship and culture, and to establish critical thinking and problem-solving proficiency through the added learning of the Modern Greek language and mathematics focus.

The goals of Odyssey Charter School are to provide students with an enriched learning environment that will: 1.) Enable students to excel academically by providing a structured dual language program integrated with a rigorous core curriculum, 2.) Enhance each student's understanding of Mathematics, English, Science, and other Western languages by utilizing the Modern Greek language, with a Mathematics focus, 3.) Prepare students to demonstrate exceptional understanding and academic achievement through standardized testing and other credentialing methods, 4.) Assist students in the development of a broader world view through exposure to other World cultures, and 5.) Teach students the value of respectful and responsible citizenship as a critical component to the development of an appreciation for democracy and diversity.

**Targeted Population and Enrollment Demographics:** The school's targeted population is students residing throughout the greater New Castle County area. Enrollment projections and student demographic information are found in Appendix 1.

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:**

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE STUDENT GROWTH, PROFICIENCY, AND COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS LEVELS AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

**Academic Performance Review Ratings:**

2010 – 2011 Summary and Overall Rating: **Meets Standard**

2011 – 2012 Summary and Overall Rating: **Meets Standard**

2012 – 2013 Summary and Overall Rating: **Exceeds**

2013 – 2014 Summary and Overall Rating: **Meets Standard**

OCS students continue to make gains in reading and math. Data from the OCS DDOE school profile show that during the 2013-2014 school year, students in grades 3-6 increased reading and math proficiency with an average of 90.5% of students meeting standards in reading and 95.5% of students meeting standards in math.

This record of achievement places OCS in the top four schools in Delaware in math and the top 11 schools for reading. The longitudinal data in Table 1 show the growth and success of OCS's academic program over time.

<b>ODYSSEY CHARTER SCHOOL</b>			
<b><u>Longitudinal DCAS Statewide Rankings</u></b>			
	<b><u>2013-2014</u></b>	<b><u>2012-2013</u></b>	<b><u>2011-2012</u></b>
<b>Math</b>			
Gr 3	2/110	6/107	26/106
Gr 4	1/108	3/104	17/103
Gr 5	4/102	14/98	7/97
Gr 6	4/53		
<b>Reading</b>			
Gr 3	11/110	7/107	32/106
Gr 4	3/108	12/104	23/103
Gr 5	8/102	11/98	10/97
Gr 6	6/53		
<b>Social Studies</b>			
Gr 4	2/108	5/104	4/103
<b>Science</b>			
Gr 5	10/102	25/98	18/97

The 2013-14 Delaware Academic Performance Framework for Charter Schools used a new methodology in measuring student fall to spring growth measures. In the previous three years, students who earned a performance level 4 (four) were not assigned student growth goals and were counted in the statistic as having met student growth targets. In the 2013-14 reports, the PL 4 students were also assigned growth targets for the first time, and these progress goals proved to be quite challenging for Odyssey. These new growth targets for the PL4 students had a significant impact on the overall results reported by Odyssey and other charters compared to the prior year's reports.

While the framework measures are academically rigorous, it makes year to year comparisons with disaggregated groups of students such as Low-Socio Economic (SES) status, students with disabilities, English language learners and ethnicity very difficult longitudinally, because the measures for students meeting growth targets have changed. These changes have a significant impact on Odyssey because of the high levels of PL 4 students in both ELA and math.

These growth goals for the PL 4 students were very challenging and designed to have a representative distribution within this performance level. This means that a school should expect a normal bell shaped curve distribution for their PL 4 population, with equal numbers meeting and not-meeting fall to spring growth targets. With over 100 students per grade and with 83% of our students meeting fall to spring growth targets in math and 80.7% meeting growth targets in ELA in 2012-2013 year, the impact of this change at Odyssey is substantial.

In the prior year 83.3% and 80.7% met their math and reading growth targets respectively. You can see how these changes in growth targets affected our school as our percentages of students meeting their fall to spring growth targets declined to 73.6% and 61.9% in reading and ELA this year. However, even though the assigning of growth targets to the PL 4 students made meeting sub-group growth targets more challenging for Odyssey, the school continued to show increased percentages of students meeting academic proficiency targets in ELA and math.

Measure 1.b shows that among Odyssey students in the lowest quartile the school meets growth standards with percentages rising to 78.8% from 71.2% in math and declining slightly in ELA from 70.6% to 65.5%.

Measure 1c. lists percentages of students making sufficient growth rose in math from 92.8% to 96.4% and dipped slightly from 90.0% to 86.2% in ELA. The school rating in math was exceeds, while in ELA it was meets.

Measure 2a. examines our school's student achievement proficiency rating in mathematics held an exceeds rating for the second year with a school proficiency rating percentage of 96.1%, while the ELA overall proficiency rating in ELA dipped very slightly from 91.3% to 90.9% and was rated meets.

Among students of low socio economic status (SES) at Odyssey, our math scores in measure 2b. rose from 82.5% to 88.3% and were rated exceeds for the first time ever. Our low SES student ELA scores dipped slightly from 80.0% to 76.6% and were rated meets.

Measure 2c. lists the academic achievement of the students with disabilities sub-group, which did not include a sufficient number of students and while earning a meets rating, were not included in the school's overall rating. The number of ELL students tested was under 15 and results were not reported.

The results for African –American students at Odyssey were very strong with the proficiency levels rising from 79.1% in mathematics, earning an exceeds rating for the first time ever and

holding steady in ELA at 81.4%. This is almost 30% higher than the state average proficiency rate among African-Americans in math and more than 18% higher in reading. This supports the finding that Odyssey is succeeding in closing the achievement gap at a far greater rate than averages at other Delaware public schools.

Our Asian students achieved an exceeds rating for the first time ever with 100% proficiency in math and a 95% proficiency in ELA earning a meets rating. These numbers were not included in the school's overall rating because of the low number of Asian-American students at Odyssey.

Our Hispanic students earned an exceeds rating for the first time ever in math, up from meets. Our Hispanic students' school rate of proficiency in ELA dipped to 66.7% for a meets rating.

Among white students, the proficiency rates were up in both math and ELA, 98.7% and 96% respectively. These school proficiency rates earned an exceeds rating in both categories.

Our sub-group summary reveals that math scores earned exceeds levels in all four of the subgroups with sufficient numbers to be counted. These included: low SES, African-American, Caucasian, and overall ratings. In ELA we held a meets rating in low SES, African-American and overall rating. This is an exceptionally strong achievement performance by the students at Odyssey school. It shows that while the state continues to struggle with a minority achievement gap, Odyssey Charter School students have been able to achieve at usually high levels across all subgroups of disaggregated student population.

While the subgroups are lower than the Caucasian student group scores, the differences are generally around a 10-15% point differential with the exception being low SES ELA which is almost double that number. These differences contrast to some state level achievement disparities that are near an almost 30% level for ethnicity and low SES. This supports the notion that with a student population of almost 700 students in the 2013-14 school year, an ethnic diversity of over 30% and a low SES population of almost 27%, Odyssey has been successful in narrowing the achievement gap among African-Americans and low SES students while generating exceptionally high levels of academic achievement among Caucasian students.

**Strengths:** Over the past three years, there has been much to celebrate with our school's pupil expansion, new facilities and continued upward trends in academic performance by the school as a whole and many of sub-group populations. The school has long sought to become one of the premiere academic institutions in Delaware. Our school locations are both in the city and also in a nearby county location. The locations, coupled with an open lottery system, provide the opportunity for a diverse population to demonstrate what a quality administration and teacher corps can produce in terms of academic achievement.

The instructional staff at Odyssey continue to make exemplary use of the most innovative instructional methods and in maximizing instructional time. In addition, as described in our abstract, students receive an additional block of Greek mathematics and Greek language to support regular instruction and introduce new research based strategies and concepts. This innovative approach to elementary education (FLES) and the continued transition to a foreign language middle school (FLMS), combined with student effort and supportive families, continues to yield tremendously positive results in our classrooms. This is truly a testament to the outstanding work our administration and instructional staff have given for the good of the school.

**Challenges:** Reflection on our successes also reveals that there is still more work to be done across our school population.

### ELA and Reading

Our reading and ELA scores continue to lag the superior results we are achieving in mathematics. It is interesting to note that ELA at Odyssey has a double block (84 minutes) and a single block Greek language class (42 minutes), while math has a single block (42 minutes) and a single block Greek mathematics class (42 minutes). This translates into a 42 minutes more per day amount of time in ELA/reading content specific classes and yet our results as measured by standardized state testing reveals a sizable differential in scores across all populations.

The school has identified this differential as one of its key goals for improvement this year in the School Improvement Plan. It will be interesting to see what instituting multiple strategies to help reduce this achievement differential accomplishes:

1. The Accelerated Reading (AR) Program will be expanded across all grades. This year we will expand our introduction of Accelerated Reader to grades K-7 and is included in our newly designed enrichment block schedule.
2. The enrichment block will be instituted into our schedule with daily 25 minutes enrichment opportunities across a range of needs and related arts opportunities will be instituted. This will include a focus on Response to Intervention (RTI) reading. The (RTI) programs will focus on individualized academic enrichment and designed to reduce this differential among our overall reading and math achievement levels.
3. OCS teachers are making steady progress transitioning to the new Common Core State Standards. Through a school-wide process, grade level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are compiling monthly scope and sequences summaries and continually receiving high quality professional development to support best instructional practices. OCS's teachers have consistently shown that providing instruction that challenges and engages our students, while enlisting parental support, can yield extremely positive academic achievement results. We will employ a train the trainer model to initiate the Common Ground 2 Professional development program with our staff.
4. In addition we have transitioned to the STAR Ensemble for testing and diagnostic testing across the school.
5. The school's textbook adoption committee has recommended and the administration has adopted a new textbook Benchmark Literacy for our ELA instruction. Summer Professional Development was initiated for our staff in this series.
6. The introduction of a new library special to teach research skills and use of the school's media center.

This is a very significant allocation of the school's resources directed at an important identified school needs. We are excited to see if this year's instructional efforts can reverse this long term differential in reading at Odyssey and the state and at the same time yield excellent overall student achievement growth at our school.

### Mathematics

It is possible that OCS's proficiency level percentages in mathematics for some of the school's disaggregated groups may be peaking. Another example of this phenomena is the fact that the rate of improvement in proficiency levels for the low socioeconomic status group in



mathematics stalled near the 87.5% in the 2011–12 school year. Interestingly, the proficiency levels for the same group, but in the reading, continued to show an increase of 3% during the 2012 – 13 school year reaching the 80% proficiency level. However, they dipped this year and it could be that they are leveling off. We will need to watch for this in the coming year and again examine our results with the new strategies we are initiating in our instruction this year.

Another area where our scores show some signs of possibly peaking, or of slowing growth in improvement, are among the Caucasian students in the area of mathematics. During the 2011 – 12, the white student group mathematics proficiency rate was 96.7%. It declined during this testing cycle by 1.5%. This year it increase from 95.1 to 98. 7% proficiency. This is an historic high for the Caucasian sub group in mathematics.

There was also a 1.5% increase for the same group during the same time frame for ELA. This increase still represents extremely high proficiency levels of academic achievement. While considered a challenge, they merit examination, but not concern at this time. To help frame the conversation, it is important to remember that with approximately 100 -132 students per grade level, each student is accounting for an approximately .8 to 1% unit movement-up or down- of the grade's group proficiency scores.

### Subgroups

While OCS strives to reach 100% proficiency in every sub-group and across every subject, the school employs a true and open lottery where every student, except siblings of current students, has an equal chance of acceptance. OCS also has a special education population of approximately 21 Students with Academic IEPs and 38 Students with Speech Only IEPs at the Lower Campus. At our Upper School Campus there are 13 Students with Academic IEPs and 11 Students with Speech Only IEPs. This is a total 34 academic IEPs and 49 with speech Only IEPs. While many of the students with Academic IEPs are typically two years behind academically, most generally show significant growth annually.

Finally, in examining Odyssey's proficiency levels across sub-groups and content areas, it may be possible that the school's proficiency levels are starting to level off. While not every student who does not achieve proficiency receives special education services, the leveling off of proficiency rates could be partially explained by taking into account the number of special education students at each grade level who are typically two year's behind academically. This leveling-off with room for improvement process for the low socio-economic status and the near maximizing of proficiency for the Caucasian subgroup also merits closer examination.

**Opportunity:** Looking ahead for the 2014-2015 school year, OCS has outlined the following goals and performance outcomes after careful consideration of the Charter School Performance Framework benchmarks, the success the school has experienced with the current academic program, and the anticipated growth of the school in the immediate future. During the current school year, OCS has accepted approximately 300 new students into the school; students who are new to OCS may need additional time and services to acclimate to the rigor and expectations set forth in OCS curriculum and classrooms. These students' growth goals and achievement targets may not be met at the same levels as their grade-level peers who are veteran OCS students, and therefore will affect OCS's overall performance outcomes.

In addition, the administration hired 25 teachers who are either new to the teaching profession or new to OCS, adopted a new ELA program (Benchmark Literacy Common Core) in grades K-5,

and is preparing for a new, next generation assessment (Smarter Balanced) in Reading and Math. As such, OCS teachers may require a period to fully implement their curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies to effectuate change in student performance. It is also relevant to note that OCS is transitioning to new facilities, and this transition has brought about many changes for both faculty and students. These changes have required teachers to dedicate instructional time to new routines and procedures. As OCS grows into new facilities and adds grades in the coming years, these conditions will persist.

Several other initiatives will provide opportunity for growth within targeted student populations. Specifically, the implementation of a K-7 Response to Intervention (RTI) program for Mathematics, as well as the school-wide scheduling change inserting an “Enrichment Block” of approximately 25 minutes each day for remediation, enrichment and targeted skill intervention in reading. This block of time may have a significant impact on the proficiency levels of our neediest students. These opportunities will be closely examined during this year with progress monitoring tools and at the end of this year using the SBAC standardized testing data.

## **Financial performance:**

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

### **Financial Performance Framework: 2013-2014**

#### **Overall Rating: MEETS STANDARDS**

Odyssey Charter School's overall financial rating is Meets Standards. By 2013-2014, our expectation is to continue to achieve the overall rating of "Meets" standard as measured by the Financial Performance Framework. Each year, we will be on track to demonstrate economic viability and achieve our financial performance expectation. This progress will be monitored through our Annual Performance Review.

Odyssey Charter School has received external audits for the past 6 years with no findings. Each year, the school has operated with a financial surplus at June 30th. This will also be the case for 2013-2014 at year end. However, due to the costs associated with renovating the barley Mill #20 building, we will not be carrying that surplus into the 2014-15 school year.

With a current enrollment of 934 students in grades K-7, the school is well diversified with students from five different public school districts. Every year, our school has an enormous wait list which is a favorable indicator of our future financial stability.

In addition to our current State and Federal funding, and local school district funding, the school is involved in fundraising efforts through the PTO to help support and supplement immediate needs such as computers, smart boards, and athletic equipment.

#### **Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities for Growth**

The financial posture of the school continues to remain stable based, mainly, on enrollment numbers. One challenge ahead is our future plan to expand one grade per year. For the 2013-2014 school year, we added 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the upper school. For the 2014-15 school year, we maximized our enrollment in grades K-5 and are building out our middle school grades six and seven. Logistically, this was a challenge for space for classrooms, however, with DOE approval and expedient efforts on many parts, six classrooms at St. Thomas were divided and the new building at Barley Mill #20 was operational for the start of school. As Odyssey Charter School continues to grow, our financial posture will remain stable in order to support this growth.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS IN MEETING ITS ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS, REPORTING, AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

Odyssey Charter School administration and staff spent considerable time during the 2013-14 school year gathering and monitoring data to use to benchmark our progress in meeting and refining our School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP for 2014-15 school year was introduced to the faculty at the August In-service, and follows a Breaking Ranks Model developed by the national Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Based on last year's data, the goal's School Improvement Committee selects goals from three major areas of focus: 1.) Collaborative Leadership, 2.) Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and 3.) Personalization of the School Environment. Our academic theme for the year was based on a Kid President video shared at the August Meeting, *Be More Awesome*.

OCS School Improvement Plan (SIP) Goals:

1. Our top priority goal for this year is to eliminate the differential between our math levels of achievement and those of our reading. An analysis of DCAS reading and mathematics scores reflect a tremendous level of improvement from three years ago in almost all disaggregated data groups except one. The gap between the content areas varies from one to 10 percentage points. We will begin a new textbook adoption introducing the Benchmark Literacy Series, expand Accelerated Reader K-7, participate in Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0, refine our Response to Intervention (RTI) Reading and Math processes, and introduce a school-wide schedule change by adding an enrichment block daily.
2. Sustain math achievement levels - There is cause for celebration with the school across in all grade-levels due to exceptional mathematics DCAS scores. Sustaining the positive momentum will be supported with the adoption of the Engage N.Y. Modules and expansion of the mathematics RTI program.
3. Continue to develop middle school K-7 Greek language and Greek mathematics curriculum aligned to the CCSS - Dr. Gregory Fulkerson, working with the Greek Instructional Staff, has developed a new Strategic plan for the Greek Program 2014-15. We have assigned Greek grade level content specialists and are piloting a Greek mathematics text from the Embassy to serve as additional support and reference. We will also continue consultation with Mrs. Lynn Fulton Archer from the DE DOE to provide additional expertise in aligning Greek instruction to the CCSS.
4. Commit to open communications among OCS staff – to help foster a positive school culture, build trust and develop staff relationships.

5. Maintain a positive school culture - through the use of Positive Behavior Support (PBS), and developmentally appropriate classroom management and instructional strategies, as we aggressively expand.

Last year the School Board also entered into a contract with Mr. Lee Daney of North Star Consulting to help develop the Board's Strategic Plan. It is posted on the school's website for all stakeholders and any other interested parties to review. The school's website is: <http://odysseycharterschooldel.com/>.

Based on the data for the 2013-2014 school year, Odyssey Charter School has been rated as **Meets Standard** by DDOE. The Organizational Performance Framework lists expectations the charter school is required to meet through state and federal law and the Charter Performance Agreement. For each measure a school receives one of two ratings: "Meets Standard" or "Does Not Meet Standard." Odyssey Charter School has received a rating of Meets Standard in each of the assessed framework elements. This section does not include and exceeds rating.

### **Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities for Growth**

**Strengths:** Odyssey works diligently to be in compliance with all DOE requirements. We will continue this practice in the coming school year. With an efficient and dedicated leadership team, we are focused on building from within our internal capacity to continue to meet all organization expectations. Our administrative team, school board and staff strive to hold ourselves to the highest standards and decorum.

**Challenges and Opportunities for Growth:** The charter landscape in Delaware is continually changing. Each year brings new regulations, requirements and expectations. Outside pressures continue to utilize resources that should be solely focused on students and our school.

OCS's expansion, both horizontally and vertically, has presented an opportunity for growth. Our staff has grown rapidly due to new grade levels and added classrooms, and this growth has presented challenges and potential. Identifying and acquiring talented teaching staff consumes significant amounts of time and capital resources. In addition, during the last school year, the recommendations from the Personnel and Compensation Committee were adopted by the Board. Working together with the Headmaster, these new compensation scales have formalized the employee compensation and benefits structure to promote equity within OCS and to be competitive with surrounding school districts. Through acknowledgement by competitive compensation, OCS aims to attract and retain quality administration, teaching and support staff.

OCS is also working diligently to finalize arrangements for the permanent location of our facilities for all our schools at the Barley Mill location. This year we transitioned the K-4 operation from the Pantano Building on Lancaster Pike to Barley Mill. We currently continue our Upper School Operation, grades 5-7, at the former St. Thomas School at Second and Bayard Streets in Wilmington. These two campuses are approximately two miles apart. The Board, Headmaster, and other community constituents are in the final stages of securing the facility at Barley Mill Plaza by the end of 2014.

Our rapid growth has also presented the need and opportunity to formalize organizational processes. A revised faculty handbook has been created for the 2014-2015 school year, and this year will be an opportunity for reflection and revision for policies and procedures.

**STATUS OF CONDITIONS PLACED UPON THE CHARTER:**

Not applicable.

## STUDENT RETENTION GOALS AND TARGETS:

The percent of students who have enrolled from the prior year according to demographic category.

**Students in Grades K-5:** Approximately 88% of students enrolled in 2013-2014 returned to Odyssey Charter School for the 2014-2015 school year. Higher attrition rates are attributed to a transition from an elementary school to middle school. Of the students who left Odyssey, the majority of students chose not to return after their fifth grade year citing middle school choice as a main reason for not returning. For elementary students, Odyssey has a retention rate of 96.8% historically.

	% Enrolled	Total	Attrition	% Re-Enrolled
African American	16.79%	118	6	94.92%
American Indian	0.28%	2	0	100%
Asian	6.26%	44	0	100%
Hawaiian	1.14%	8	0	100%
Hispanic/Latino	6.97%	49	4	91.84%
White	75.53%	531	57	89.27%
Low Income	**	**	**	**
Special Education	14.79%	104	8	92.31%

**Total Students:**  
**936**

\*\*\*\*Note: Low Income Student data is not currently available from DDOE.

For the 2013-2014 school-year, Odyssey Charter School added its inaugural 6<sup>th</sup> Grade class. This is part of Odyssey's strategic plan to build out a grade level each year, thereby creating the OCS Middle and High Schools. Of 89 students in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade from the 2012-2013 school-year, 58 chose to enroll in Odyssey's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. We anticipate that the percentage of students continuing with



OCS through middle and high school will stabilize over the next few years as our secondary programs become more established.

#### **Why Do Students Chose to Withdraw?**

99.6% of the students enrolled on Sept. 30, 2012, remained enrolled through the end of the school year. OCS had 2 students withdraw during the school year. Both families relocated for out-of-state work-related reasons.

The majority of students remain at Odyssey Charter School from K-5. Of the families who choose to not re-enroll at OCS, most withdrew due to economic reasons and/or the need for the family to relocate.

#### **Percentage of Students Who Did Not Pass from One Level Grade to Another.**

In the 2012-2013 school year, four students were retained. All four students were first graders. These students were new to our school and had not gone through the OCS Kindergarten Program the previous year.

#### **Attendance and Student Retention**

98.28% of our students attended school every day. Our attendance goals are consistently higher than the state average.

Our student retention rate of 96.8% is high for elementary. With the addition of the middle grades, Odyssey still has a very high retention rate of 88%. As OCS establishes the Middle School, more students will decide to remain at OCS. Currently, Odyssey is in direct competition with two accomplished and established Middle Schools. After filling all placements, OCS maintains a wait list of over 400 students.

## INNOVATION:

Odyssey Charter School continues to provide an innovative approach to academics and enrichment activities. Our school prepares students for a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, develop a keen awareness of world citizenship and culture and establish critical thinking and problem-solving proficiency through the added learning of the Modern Greek language and Mathematics focus.

Through fulfilling its charter's mission, OCS will:

- Enable students to excel academically by providing a structured dual language program integrated with a rigorous core curriculum, while encouraging the development of effective critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Enhance each student's understanding of Mathematics, English, Science, and other Western languages by utilizing the Modern Greek language, with a Mathematics focus, as a vehicle to explore the roots of vocabulary, mathematical concepts, and scientific theories.
- Prepare students to demonstrate exceptional understanding and academic achievement through standardized testing and other credentialing methods.
- Assist students in the development of a broader world view through exposure to other world cultures through Cultural Connections in the content areas.
- Teach students the value of respectful and responsible citizenship as a critical component to the development of an appreciation for democracy and diversity.
- Encourage the involvement and engagement of parents in the education process to enhance and enrich learning opportunities for students.

Following are specific areas that support these innovative initiatives.

### **Academic Acceleration and Enrichment (ACE) Programming**

Academic Acceleration and Enrichment (ACE) programming will be available to students in third through sixth grade. Throughout the school year, OCS employs a combination of standardized test scores (DCAS, MAP), report card grades, portfolio assessment, and teacher recommendations for selection in ACE programming.

ACE programming is provided throughout the academic day in both “push in” and “pull out” sessions. Students identified for ACE services will receive differentiated instruction in both their core and Greek Language classes to extend and deepen their understanding and expression of grade-level and above grade-level standards and learning outcomes. Students also receive supplemental enrichment options to extend and deepen learning opportunities. These

enrichment activities will occur within the regular education classroom, as well as in special enrichment class periods.

ACE students participate in such educational activities as Odyssey of the Mind, Math Olympiad, Noetic Learning Math Challenge, Scripts Spelling Bee, and Charter Challenge. Families also have the option to participate in John Hopkins' Center for Talented Youth Talent Search for enrichment activities beyond the school day.

In sixth grade, gifted and talented students may participate in Honors-level English Language Arts and Math courses. These yearlong courses are co-taught by both a regular education teacher as well as a teacher specifically focused on gifted and talented education. OCS is establishing a chapter of the National Junior Honor Society to support middle school students' academic achievement and co-curricular activities.

#### **Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0**

Thorough collaboration with the Delaware Department of Education and districts across the state, Odyssey Charter School is participating in the Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0 initiative.

Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0 builds on the knowledge base developed in the initial Common Ground for the Common Core 1.0 trainings. During the 2013-14 school year, Common Ground for the Common Core 1.0 was launched as a statewide initiative, with the DDOE working with 99 school-level guiding teams, central office personnel and outside agency partners. Odyssey Charter School created school-level "Guiding Teams," which included a building level administrator and teacher leaders in ELA, Math, Greek Language and Greek Math. The administrative team, in conjunction with its Guiding Team, created a 2-year Common Core Implementation Plan (see attached document), which was vetted with a rubric and Guiding Teams were given descriptive feedback and resources. As suggested by the Delaware Department of Education, our 2-year Implementation Plan, "is guiding Odyssey Charter School toward successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards by addressing school culture and leadership, curriculum and instruction, and assessment practices aligned to the CCSS."

Odyssey Charter School has chosen to continue working with DDOE in this endeavor, and to utilize its support as the school implements its 2-year plan. As such, Odyssey Charter School is working closely with DDOE in the Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0 initiative. A primary goal of Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0 is to continue to ensure successful implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices aligned to Common Core Standards to improve student learning. Whereas Common Ground 1.0 focused primarily on curriculum and instruction, the primary focus of Common Ground 2.0 is assessment practices.

Odyssey Charter School identified, with DDOE, a series of outcomes that link Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0 to its school improvement goals:

- Formative and interim assessments aligned to Common Core Standards

- Understanding of the process of deconstructing the standards to understand learning progressions
- Creating common formative and interim assessments that ensure the rigor of the CCSS through ongoing “checks for understanding” in Math, ELA and Literacy across the content areas
- Structure, instructional, and assessment implications of performance tasks
- Selecting clusters of standards from various content areas in order to back-map to a quality performance task
- Understanding and building components of quality performance tasks
- Assessment cycles that use PLCs as a vehicle to inform both instructional and assessment practices and to ensure student growth.
- Collecting data and analyzing to drive instruction, reflective practice, and student engagement
- Distinguishing a data-driven culture from a “test prep” mindset
- Connecting PLCs and RTI, and constantly asking themselves: Are our students learning?
- Engaging students in the learning process through use of rubrics, checklists, and differentiated, student-friendly targets

Devised by OCS administrators and Guiding Team members in spring 2013, the Common Ground implementation plan identified specific outcomes, action steps, resources and timelines to support a meaningful, deep understanding and implementation of Common Core State Standards across the school. A team of 30 reviewers provided feedback on the OCS Common Ground plan. The review team was comprised of outside organizations (Achieve, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Teach for America, Student Achievement Partners, and The Vision Network), six Delaware central office/charter administrators, and several work groups from the DDOE. OCS’s implementation plan was then revised and is developed through June 2015.

The following are key areas of focus for the Common Ground implementation plan:

- Align CCSS language, practices, and expectations;
- Provide pedagogical knowledge and planning support;
- Initiate coaching sessions, face to face meetings, and webinars;
- Receive intensive training and ongoing support on use of CCSS aligned materials, tools and strategies, and;
- Collaborate within the school community and with other state districts and charters.

The Common Ground Guiding Team will review their plan and measure expected outcomes on a regular basis. With such monitoring and reflection in place throughout the year, OCS expects teachers to experience growth in their professional practice, while students will achieve greater performance in standardized, high-stakes assessment due to refined curriculum, instruction and assessment calibration.

### **Multicultural Curriculum**

Odyssey offers an innovative approach to education by providing its students with instruction in a second language, Greek. The Greek language provides an additional focus on the classic roots and fundamentals of English, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Starting in Kindergarten, students spend 45 minutes per day learning the Greek language including reading,

writing and speaking Greek. Students also spend 45 minutes per day in “Greek Math” coursework, where core math concepts aligned to Common Core State Standards are taught in Greek.

New to Odyssey programming this year is the Greek Culture class, a weekly class offered in grades K-4. The Greek Culture class ties in the Greek language practice with relevant cultural and historical content. These Greek Culture classes are taught by credentialed educators from Greece, supplemented by Greek-American teachers.

Additionally, the Greek Program at OCS includes an emphasis on the arts through the creation of the Greek Art Club (after school), Summer Immersion Program and Greek Music Program (during the holidays). Odyssey Charter School has also participated in a multi-cultural parade in Philadelphia each year.

Because of the importance of enhancing and promoting the Greek language aspect of Odyssey’s mission, in February 2014 Dr. Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate in the DDOE’s World Languages Department, was retained as a consultant to evaluate, then strengthen and expand Odyssey’s current Greek language educational model and curriculum.

#### **School Culture and Climate**

Odyssey Charter School encourages positive and compassionate school relationships through the school-wide Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program. PBS emphasizes rewards for positive behaviors by acknowledging students who “do the right thing” throughout the school day. Students are given OWLS tickets for positive behaviors. These tickets can be redeemed for rewards including prizes from the prize cart, quarterly PBS parties and dress down days. All teachers and staff members at OCS use the OWL tickets to recognize “Odyssey Owl Behavior” amongst students.

To support and promote the PBS program, a PBS team was created that is comprised of teacher representatives from each grade-level K to 6, guidance counselors and administrators. This team provides professional development and support to staff members on the correct use of the PBS program, as well as planning PBS rewards for OCS.

As Odyssey expands to another grade level each year, its middle school students and culture mature, as well. To this end, Odyssey Charter School has employed the services of Dr. Nancy Doda, a leading consultant in middle school programming through the Association for Middle Level Education. Dr. Doda conducts a series of professional development sessions focused on middle school culture and instruction. The administrative team then walk through visits with the middle school teachers to observe these strategies and initiatives in action.

Through these efforts, Odyssey Charter School perpetuate a culture that reflects:

- an understanding of and appreciation for the special developmental nature of 11-14 year old learners;
- knowledge of research on best middle grades instruction and implications for classroom climate, and instructional approaches; and
- implementation of models of instruction that support student engagement empowerment and rigorous learning.

### **Professional Development**

Odyssey Charter School engaged in a needs assessment process as part of its annual review and improvement plan process. This needs assessment was conducted through review of high-stakes testing results, DPAS II evaluations, and end-of-year teacher surveys. At the conclusion of the needs assessment process, the team identified the several areas of need for professional development in Curriculum and Instruction, Assessments and Leadership Capacity.

Two areas of need were identified with regard to supporting our staff in providing targeted professional development in curriculum and instruction. When examining longitudinal standardized assessment data, as reported by DOE for the DCAS assessment, Odyssey Charter School consistently scores higher on the mathematics assessment than on the reading assessment. While OCS students' scores in both subject areas are comparatively higher than other elementary and middle schools throughout the state, there is a discrepancy between performance in reading and performance in math. Additionally, on the teacher survey, teachers reported a lack of high-quality curricular materials aligned to the CCSS for English/Language Arts when surveyed. Based on these two data points, the administrative team at Odyssey began the process during Spring 2014 for an English/Language Arts textbook adoption in Grades K-5. As part of the textbook adoption process, teachers and administrators evaluated four textbook series using an adapted version of the "Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy" developed by the authors of the Common Core State Standards and ultimately selected the series Benchmark Literacy Common Core, with planned implementation during the 2014-2015 school year.

The second area of need identified with regards to curriculum and instruction is developing and supporting first year teachers and/or first year-to-Odyssey teachers. During 2013-2014, Odyssey hired 22 new staff members, not including new foreign language staff. During the 2014-2015 school year, Odyssey anticipates hiring 24 new staff members, not including new foreign language staff. The majority of these hires are in their first three years of teaching. To provide support to this cohort of new teachers, Odyssey has revised and enhanced the in-house mentoring program known as the "New Teacher Support Program" and initiated a series of after-school professional development sessions aimed at bringing new teachers on-board with existing curricular initiatives, intervention strategies and classroom management techniques in place at Odyssey.

Two areas of need were identified with regards to the use of assessments and data driven instruction. Specifically, preparation for the upcoming Smarter Balanced Assessment is a critical need area for professional development, which will be administered to students for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year. This was identified as an area of need through teacher and administrator surveys. Parents also expressed concerns about the transition to SBAC and CCSS during PTO open forum discussions. Odyssey Charter School's Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0 participation will provide expert, research-based support for our Guiding Team, who will bring back such training through in-service, after school, and PLC sessions.

In addition to examining Smarter Balanced, teachers expressed a need for a better system of assessments for use with the Response to Intervention (RTI) process, including easier and more valid screening assessments and progress monitoring tools. To address this need, Odyssey is moving to the STAR Assessment Suite (STAR 360) for the 2014-2015 school year. This will allow

students to participate in computerized screening assessments in a whole-class setting, as well as computerized weekly progress monitoring checks. Teachers received a full-day training by Renaissance Learning prior to the school year, and will receive ongoing support through vis-a-vis

Odyssey's needs assessment also identified building leadership capacity and providing professional development to administrators and teacher leaders as a main area of need. Odyssey has traditionally been a small school community; as the school has expanded to include additional students and teachers, the need for additional leadership expanded as well. As a start to addressing this need, Odyssey sent a team of administrators and teachers to the National Charter School Conference during June 2014. Sessions at the conference included a variety of topics, relevant to all areas of charter school operations, instruction, management and leadership. Odyssey's 2014-2015 Consolidated Grant Application also includes funds to send a similar team of teachers and administrators to the 2015 conference. Conference sessions will provide teacher leaders and administrators with professional development in 5 categories: Governance, Instruction, Leadership, Operations and Policy. Odyssey also provides professional development and support to teacher leaders and administrators by participating in the State Data Coaching project through Amplify. This project is funded out of Operating Funds as part of the MOU for the Race to the Top No-Cost Extension.

Finally, the needs assessment also included an in-depth look at current practices for creating a positive school culture and their effectiveness. With relatively low rates of behavioral concerns (suspensions/expulsions), the data shows that Odyssey is already a good place for students to learn. Beyond this data, the day-to-day classroom walk-throughs and formal teacher observations show that teachers have time to teach and students have time to learn, as a result of minimal behavioral interruptions to classroom instruction. Therefore, the committee felt that maintaining this positive school culture was also an important need for our school.

#### Professional Development Priorities:

1. Common Core State Standards Alignment/Smarter Balanced Preparation
2. New Teacher Support & Retention Efforts
3. Response to Intervention Assessments
4. Building Leadership Capacity
5. Continuation of Positive School Culture

Addendum – Page #1

Enrollment Projections

Projected Enrollment						
	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
K	131	132	132	132	132	132
Grade 1	132	132	132	132	132	132
Grade 2	132	132	132	132	132	132
Grade 3	132	132	132	132	132	132
Grade 4	110	132	132	132	132	132
Grade 5	110	132	132	132	132	132
Grade 6	92	110	132	132	132	132
Grade 7	102	110	132	132	132	132
Grade 8		110	120	132	132	132
Grade 9			110	132	132	132
Grade 10				132	132	132
Grade 11					132	132
Grade 12						132
<b>TOTAL</b>	960	1122	1286	1452	1584	1716