

Impact Award recognizes a school leader that has made a significant impact on Delaware's education community.

Nominee Name & email: Dr. Nick Manolakos, Headmaster Odyssey Charter School

Explain how your nominee meets these criteria. The Impact Award nominee should be a visionary for significant educational improvements who inspires others while utilizing innovative or creative approaches while addressing a compelling student need. It should be evident that the nominee is committed to sharing ideas and helping to sustain awareness of the charter movement.

Dr. Nick Manolakos, headmaster at Odyssey Charter School, is the quintessential candidate for the DSCN Impact award. In two short years, he has made an extraordinary impact on Odyssey Charter School.

Odyssey Charter School opened its doors in 2006 as Delaware's first language charter school. Our mission is to develop students as lifelong learners, global citizens and critical thinkers by through a rigorous curriculum.

In October of 2011 our school suffered the devastating loss of our founding headmaster, Tony Skoutelas. Dr. Manolakos joined Odyssey in July of 2012 to deliver on our school's vision and Tony's legacy.

Dr. Manolakos came to Odyssey Charter School with over 25 years of experience teaching and serving as an administrator in the Red Clay and Smyrna school districts.

In eight short years, Odyssey has grown into a large elementary and middle school with 943 students from across Wilmington and New Castle County in kindergarten through 7th grade.

Dr. Manolakos, working with his team of administrators and highly-qualified teachers, has delivered outstanding results. It is clear to see, while Dr. Manolakos is recruiting a diverse group of students & teachers and our school is growing by leaps and bounds, Odyssey has achieved a strong trajectory of significant academic progress.

<u>Longitudinal DCAS Statewide Rankings</u>			
	<u>2013-2014</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2011-2012</u>
<i>Reading</i>			
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		
<i>Math</i>			
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		
Science			
Gr 5	10/102	25/98	18/97
Social Studies			
Gr 4	2/108	5/104	4/103

We welcome all our students through a lottery and recognize that students who join our school have a variety of academic experiences and preparation. During his two years at Odyssey, Dr. Manolakos' leadership has resulted in outstanding academic performance with diverse population as seen in our student demographics.

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity			Other Student Characteristics		
	<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2012-13</u>		<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2012-13</u>
African American	18.0%	16.4%	English Language Learner	0.2%	0.5%
American Indian	0.2%	0.3%	Low Income	13.2%	6.9%
Asian	5.4%	5.1%	Special Education	3.6%	3.9%
Hawaiian	0.4%	1.7%	Enrolled for Full Year	100.0%	N/A
Hispanic/Latino	7.4%	7.3%			
White	68.6%	69.2%			

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Detailed Academic Stats

Students meeting their fall to spring instructional growth targets improved from 59.9% in 2010 to 83.3% in 2013. In ELA, students went from 56.5% to 80.7%.

The lowest academically-performing students met their fall to spring instructional scale score growth targets, improved in mathematics from 34.7% in 2010 to 71.2% in 2013. In ELA, 33.3% students in the lowest quartiles (proficient in 2010) improved to 70.6%. Using DOE three-year projection models, students making sufficient academic growth is 92.8% in mathematics and 90.9% in ELA.

Students achieving proficiency in mathematics grew from 84.4% in 2010-2011 to 91.7% in 2012-13 and from 78.5% to 91.3% in ELA.

Low socioeconomic subgroups at OCS showed continual improvement in ELA over the 3 years with a proficiency percentile of 63.4% rising to 80% in 2012-13. In mathematics, the proficiency levels have been 75.0%, 87.5%, and 80% respectively.

African-American students have demonstrated consistently higher ELA and math proficiency rates for the last 3 years. In mathematics, the proficiency rate was 66.7% in 2010 – 11, 77% in 2011 – 12, and 79.1% in 2012 – 13. In ELA the proficiency rates are 55.6%, 75.4% and 81.4% respectively during the 3 years.

Attendance/Retention 99.6% of the students who enrolled on September 12, 2012 stayed at OCS for the entire school year and 97% of our students attended school every day.

In addition, Dr. Manolakos and his team ensure a safe and positive behavior environment for all students with no expulsions in 2012-2013 and a limited number of suspensions.

Suspensions and Expulsions	
	2012- 13
Number of Suspensions	11
Number of Expulsions	0
Count of Students Suspended/Expelled	7
September 30 Enrollment	591
Percent of Students Suspended/Expelled	1%
District Percentage	1%
State Percentage	14%

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Odyssey also continued to achieve its DOE Superior School rating during Dr. Manolakos' first two years of leadership. OCS was also one of 10 schools in the U.S. featured in *Parents Magazine's* [October 2012](#) article highlighting innovative elementary schools.

Under Dr. Manolakos' tutelage, Odyssey Charter School significantly improved its 2012-2013 DOE annual report rating to an Exceeds Standard with a score of 91 points. In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, Odyssey received an overall rating of "Meets Standard" with 76 points and 67 points respectively.

Dr. Manolakos is using several approaches innovative or creative approaches and sharing ideas including "Breaking Ranks" model driving collaborative leadership, curriculum/instruction/assessment for personalized learning environments; establishing structural leadership systems allowing for substantive involvement in site-based decision making by students, teachers, families, community; developing scope & sequence documents across all teams to sustain excellence in instruction.

Dr. Manolakos is using innovative and creative approaches to inspire our teachers including driving a "Breaking Ranks" model for collaborative leadership, curriculum/instruction/assessment & personalized learning environment; establishing structural leadership systems allowing for substantive involvement in site-based decision making by students, teachers, families, & community; developing scope & sequence documents across all teams to sustain excellence in instruction.

Dr. Manolakos is delivering on our vision of a high performing charter school with a unique educational curriculum of a second language and a mathematics emphasis. He's training a new generation of teachers who will help sustain charter movement.

In a recent survey, 86% of Odyssey staff rated their experience as very positive and positive and 85% said Dr. Manolakos provides leadership for changes needed to implement the goals of the school improvement plan, and solicits employee input for these changes.

Here are some **quotes from our teachers:**

"Dr. Nick is fantastic. He is knowledgeable, experienced, and goes out of his way to show how much he appreciates all of the teachers and staff members' hard work. He takes criticism gracefully and does everything he can to help improve our school."

"Leading with the goal in mind and focusing on our contribution to the work of the team felt like a priority and Dr. Manolakos achieved this as well as having sparked the spirit of the whole school."

"Changes are frequently made to better meet the needs of our growing school."

"Dr. Manolakos took the time to listen every time and was helpful not only in excellent ideas but also in action."