

## **JOB SPECIFICATION**

**ORGANIZATION:** Odyssey Charter School  
**POSITION:** Head of School  
**LOCATION:** Wilmington, DE  
**REPORTS TO:** Board of Directors

### Background

In 2006, Odyssey Charter School (OCS) opened its doors as Delaware's first mathematics content focused, dual-language (Greek) elementary charter school. Since its founding, Odyssey has quickly grown and expanded from an elementary school to a K-12 charter that serves nearly 2,000 students in their lower, intermediate, middle and high school buildings. Located 30 minutes south of Philadelphia, mid-point between New York and Washington DC, Wilmington, DE is a diverse city rich in culture, and the demographic makeup of Odyssey reflects this diversity. Of the 2019-2020 student body, 51% identified as people of color and 29% qualified for free or reduced lunch.

The mission of OCS is to prepare 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. Odyssey Charter School provides an innovative educational and multicultural experience for its diverse community of students, faculty and staff. Central to the vision and mission of Odyssey is the teaching of the Modern Greek language, with a focus on developing critical thinking skills with a multicultural and world citizenship perspective. In keeping with its mission, the school cultivates critical international partnerships that enables multilingual and multicultural educational experiences and programming across grade levels. Odyssey Charter School delivers on these goals by a collaborative effort of the entire teaching staff, of which native speaking Greek faculty comprises approximately 20%, and who bring their European educational and cultural backgrounds with them to enrich students' academic experience.

At OCS, a rigorous standards-based curriculum and instruction in the Greek language and Greek culture is delivered in a challenging, yet nurturing, learning environment. Odyssey offers students and families a rigorous academic program grounded in the classical ideals of Hellenism in a small-school environment (the student/teacher ratio is 12:1 and the average class size is 23 students). Odyssey Charter School 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 Greek math class are taught each day by credentialed instructors from Greece. Students also experience specialized instruction in art, physical education, and music, and are encouraged to maximize their second language and foreign culture experience across all content areas. Families have the option of enrolling their students in the Greek immersion program, typically starting in Kindergarten, where students receive half of their instruction in English and half in Greek. The immersion program offerings and enrollment, currently at K-3, will grow organically each year until it spans the entire K-12 academic program.

Odyssey Charter School educates students for future success; promotes academic excellence and equity for a diverse population of students within the public education system, and provides an exceptional choice of educational opportunities for K-12 within a public school system for parents, students, and educators. OCS was rated a Superior School by Delaware's Department of Education in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, and graduated their first class of high school seniors in June 2020.

For more information about Odyssey Charter School, please visit their [website](#).

### Opportunity

Odyssey Charter School's board of directors is seeking a dynamic, collaborative, and proven educational leader to serve as the Head of School (HOS) and build upon the success and legacy of the school. The new HOS will be expected to embody and promote the mission, vision and goals of OCS, with an emphasis on its dual-language and mathematics focus, with all internal and external stakeholders. The HOS will lead through a multiculturally competent lens to unite the Odyssey community by clarifying and reinforcing the school's vision, direction, and multi-year strategic plan. The HOS will be expected to codify unique aspects of "The Odyssey way" that includes development of Greek language and culture and developing global citizens and building out supports and structures to unleash the full potential of OCS. Though historically OCS has maintained a strong academic reputation and student achievement results, the HOS will be expected to build cohesion and alignment across the K-12 model, driving towards the aspiration of becoming the top charter school in the state of Delaware.

The HOS will report to the board of directors and directly manage the leaders of the academics, operations and business teams. The HOS will prioritize organizational culture and stability, ensure role clarity, effective collaboration, and communication across all teams and stakeholder groups. The HOS will also manage the organizational budget of roughly \$32M, while investing time and energy in fundraising and external partnership building, in collaboration with the board.

This is an exciting opportunity for a passionate, relationship-driven leader who is a strong manager of people and has a track record of leading teams to achieve ambitious results for students. The ideal candidate is personally aligned with Odyssey's mission and approach and possesses the change management experience and executive leadership skills to unite families, staff, students and partners as they drive towards common goals and write a new chapter in Odyssey's history.

In the first year, the Head of School (HOS) will be expected to:

- Establish strong relationships and deep trust with Odyssey families, students, staff, the board of directors, funders, and other key stakeholders;
- Work with the board and other stakeholders to clarify the strategic multi-year vision for Odyssey;
- Unite the team in a near-term operating plan by establishing key priorities, codifying systems/structures, setting measurable goals and leading staff members to achieve annual goals;
- Observe and assess the academic model, curriculum, systems, processes, and student achievement data, and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement;
- Work with academic leadership to set goals and milestones and determine key strategies to continue to produce strong student outcomes;
- Plan for long-term financial sustainability by ensuring fiscal and operational efficiency across the organization, and working with the board to broaden the base of financial support for Odyssey;
- Ensure the right team and people strategy are in place to carry out the short- and long-term priorities of the organization, with a focus on excellence that includes improved diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Responsibilities

### **Vision Setting and Strategic Planning**

- Clarify Odyssey's strategic vision, priorities, and short and long-term goals;
- Oversee a new strategic planning process in collaboration with the board;
- Engage and invest all stakeholders including the board, staff, parents, students, community, and other supporters, in the strategic plan and the realization of the vision;
- Champion the vision of Odyssey and lead the organization to fulfill its mission;
- Set organizational priorities and determine how the organization's overall performance will be assessed;
- Ensure accountability across the organization by setting clear academic, operational, and financial goals and managing towards them, adapting as necessary given changes in internal and external environments.

### **Team Management and Culture Building**

- Develop, coach and retain a high-performing leadership team and manage them towards ambitious goals;
- Build upon the collaborative organizational culture that currently exists and provide an enterprise lens and commitment to excellence in diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Foster an environment focused on professional development, where faculty and staff are engaged and empowered with the autonomy to do what is best for the students, combined with support and accountability;
- Oversee and provide leadership to the academic, operations and business teams;
- Regularly monitor and assess role clarity and organizational structure to ensure the right team is assembled to achieve goals;
- Preserve and promote the Odyssey mission while also codifying and communicating the core values, philosophy, and operating norms so that the "Odyssey way" is clear and consistently practiced throughout the organization;
- Ensure instructional alignment across the lower, intermediate, middle and high schools.

### **External Partnership, Engagement and Sustainability**

- Externally champion the vision, mission, goals and values of OCS;
- Cultivate and maintain community partnerships to provide resources and support for Odyssey students and families;
- Build coalitions and relationships with key stakeholders in support of Odyssey's mission and goals;
- Attend community events, speak publicly, and communicate widely about the work and accomplishments of Odyssey Charter School;
- Develop, oversee, and implement marketing and outreach programs to continue building on OCS's brand and reputation;
- Continue to develop an engaged, and active board in close partnership with the board chair;
- Work closely with the board of directors and its committees, to provide information to them in a transparent and timely manner and more effectively connect the board to the experiences of staff, students and families;
- In collaboration with the board, ensure that Odyssey has a strong long-term financial plan and a diversified and sustainable funding base;
- Oversee and manage an organization wide budget of **\$32M**;
- Ensure that the organization follows all legal requirements implemented by the authorizing authority, the state of Delaware, Delaware charter schools, and stay up to date on relevant legislative issues;

- Prepare annual reports, major/minor charter modifications, and charter renewal requests for the OCS Board and Department of Education.

### Qualifications

The ideal candidate will bring the following experiences, skills, and mindset/values:

#### **Experience**

- At least ten years of professional experience, including successfully leading a school, education nonprofit or other related organization to meet ambitious student achievement goals in the education sector;
- Experience leading a high performing school or system of schools, ideally in a charter setting;
- Experience successfully leading in a multicultural environment required; exposure to/understanding of dual-language and immersion programs, studying/living abroad or learning a second language a plus;
- Demonstrated commitment to, and accountability for, a rigorous academic environment;
- Experience setting vision and direction for an organization and defining strategies to operationalize a vision through layers;
- A track record of coaching, motivating, and empowering others and investing stakeholders in a vision;
- Experience building, managing, developing, and supporting high-performing teams (ideally large teams through layers) to achieve strong outcomes;
- Successful change management experience;
- Experience building and stewarding external partnerships and serving as the external face of an organization;
- Experience managing a budget required, fundraising/development experience a plus;
- Experience successfully working with boards highly preferred;
- A track record of successfully overcoming obstacles in challenging/complex environments;
- A Master's degree or equivalent from an accredited four-year university required; PhD preferred.

#### **Skills**

- Culturally competent leader with the ability to build an inclusive workplace where diversity, equity and inclusiveness is valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization;
- Superior relationship management skills, the ability to engage a variety of stakeholders, and the executive presence to inspire confidence and passion in both internal and external audiences;
- Strong people and team management skills;
- Ability to build and maintain a strong organizational culture over time;
- Ability to drive change management with people and create/codify systems to support change;
- A clear and effective communication style with a wide variety of audiences/constituents and an ability to empathize with and understand the perspectives of others;
- Deep instructional expertise and knowledge of current trends in education, ideally along the K-12 continuum;
- A strong understanding of and investment in students' use of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in all content areas; a background in special education a plus.

### **Mindset/Values**

- Philosophical alignment with and commitment to the unique mission, and vision of OCS, in particular the school's focus on Greek language and culture and developing global citizens;
- Appreciation for Odyssey's history and legacy, combined with a value for continuous improvement;
- A deep-seated commitment to (and history of) leading with integrity and transparency, including building long-term relationships that engender trust and establish a sense of family/community;
- A balance of urgency and focus to achieve results;
- Openness to piloting new initiatives and ability to create the space for teams/individuals to take risks;
- Collaborative, inclusive, and accessible leadership style; track record of being a present and engaged leader;
- Belief in the importance of fostering high-functioning and cooperative multicultural environments and teams;
- Evidence of well-developed growth mindset, humility and receptiveness to feedback.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email your resume to [Jobs@k12searchgroup.com](mailto:Jobs@k12searchgroup.com) with a subject line of "Odyssey Charter School HOS." **Applications must be received by midnight August 30, 2020.**