



OCS Board Bytes

Dear OCS Community,

We wish you the grace of quality time with your loved ones, rest, rejuvenation, and the optimism to embrace the next year together. Happy holidays and please find below some updates about the Board activities.

As we implement plans for a hybrid reopening, see page 3 for information about the installation of the Bipolar Ionization system installed in all the buildings and the cleaning protocols that have been put into place to mitigate the spread of COVID.

We also want to congratulate our very own nurses, Ms. Brittney Henning and Ms. Kristin Weaver, who informed us that they were among the first DE recipients to receive a COVID vaccination as part of their roles as front line workers (see page 4) – hope feels like it's around the corner!

In addition, the Board and the administration have requested 2000 rapid, 15-minute COVID tests and analysis equipment from the Division of Public Health. This will give the school onsite capability to conduct rapid COVID assessments of staff and students. More to come on implementation of this capability, but [here](#) is a link to a short video on the testing capability.

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Elias and the Board

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SCHOOL REOPENING OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Eva Jannelli, Maryann Yarram, Ken Przywara

On December 16th, the Board unanimously approved the hybrid, in-person reopening recommendations presented by Odyssey's Leadership Team as follows:

- Virtual learning will continue from January 4th to January 18th, 2021
- Flex Wednesdays will begin on Wednesday, January 6th, 2021
- A rollout of in-person, grade-level re-openings across our four schools, starting on January 19th.
- All complex, small group, extracurricular and other activities will also restart on January 19th.
- Staff teaching in grades starting on January 19th will return to school on January 14th to prepare their classrooms for in-person learning.
- All other staff will return on January 19th to support the reopening rollout. Should their own classes reopen later for in-person learning, they will teach virtually from their classrooms.

The presentation material is available on the [reopening page](#) of the school's website.

- The School Reopening Committees have been meeting weekly to explore the safest options to mitigate community spread and reopen effectively.

*Board meetings continue to be on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.
[Here](#) is a link to the monthly meetings.*

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

**Georgia Halakos
Maryann Yarram**

Next Meeting: The dates and times will be updated on the OCS website by January 4th.

Click [here](#) for the Zoom link to the Fundraising meetings.

As of now, we are looking to collate all the information we already have on fundraising into one virtual access point.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION INTEREST GROUP

Helen Anderson/Eva Jannelli

On Tuesday, December 1st, we held our monthly meeting and the subcommittees gave reports. The current staff members who were trained with the company 4th Dimension in the Equity Practitioner Program (EPP) shared that their experience was powerful. We are now looking for another group of staff members to participate in the EPP. We hope that all these efforts will lead us to foster an environment that will elevate diversity, equity and inclusion at our school.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

FOOD DRIVE/PANTRY

Eva Jannelli/Paula Lowe

Paula Lowe and Eva Jannelli held another food drive and gave food boxes including turkeys to about 25 OCS families in November. In December, another 10 families were able to pick up food boxes. We also contributed to the FISH program at St. Paul's Church. Our pantry is an active donor to our community and since its inception earlier this year, we were able to serve many OCS families. Families in need of food can contact one of us at eva.jannelli@odyssey.k12.de.us paula.lowe@odyssey.k12.de.us and evan.winokur@odyssey.k12.de.us . We will be happy to meet you at the school or deliver food to you.

BI-POLAR IONIZATION AIR PURIFICATION SYSTEM

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Odyssey Charter School installed a Bi-polar Ionization air purification system in buildings 20 (LS), 21 (MS), 22 (IS) and 23 (HS) at its Barley Mill Plaza campus. The \$130,000 system was incorporated in all roof top HVAC units. The installation process started on October 26 and was completed on November 6, 2020. The system covers all classrooms, hallways, small gym, cafeterias, and offices.

The HVAC upgrade cleans the indoor air safely continually and –

- Prevents mold
- Kills bacteria
- Kills viruses
- Has been tested against SARS-CoV-2 and was able to inactivate the virus

The roof top HVAC systems are configured to recycle the air throughout the buildings so the air is constantly being cleaned. The system does not require any maintenance and has a patent-pending self-cleaning design. The system comes with a three-year warranty. In addition to the new system, expanded HVAC preventative maintenance was also introduced to keep all HVAC units operating at peak condition. HVAC filters are being replaced on a quarterly basis.

We are also using an EPA registered antimicrobial surface protectant which, over the winter break, is being sprayed on surfaces in the classrooms and common areas. Once sprayed on a surface, this product will start to work as soon as microorganisms come into contact with it. The product can last on the sprayed surface for up to 90 days, but more frequent applications are being considered. Frequency of applications will consider the COVID-19 trends at school and in the County. This approach will provide an additional layer of protection for our students, faculty, and staff.

In addition to the HVAC improvements, the custodial staff will be performing the following daily tasks to help keep our students and employees safe –

- Cleaning and disinfecting all restrooms as per CDC guidelines every two hours or less
- Cleaning and disinfecting all common areas during the course of the day when students and staff are in school
- Cleaning and disinfecting students' desks during the school day
- Promptly removing breakfast and lunch trash outside of classrooms during the day
- Re-cleaning and disinfecting all classrooms after school hours
- Performing necessary floor maintenance after school hours
- Handling all trash removal and other cleaning needs as required

Every effort will be made to ensure a safe and clean environment for our students, employees and visitors.

SEARCH COMMITTEE

*Elias Rigas/Erin Allard/
Anamaria Anagnostou*

We are happy to report that our new Head of School, Elias Papas, will be officially starting in his role as Odyssey's Head of School on January 4th. Elias' contract runs from 4 Jan 2021 through June of 2023. We look forward to his leadership as we embark on the next chapter of Odyssey's drive for excellence in education.

Additionally, the Board has hired Greg Meece as a part time consultant to support Odyssey and the Head of School. Greg helped launch Delaware's first charter school, The Charter School of Wilmington and also helped create and lead the Newark Charter School (NCS), which opened in 2001. Greg ran NCS, a K-12 school, until he retired in 2019.

IMMERSION EXPANSION COMMITTEE

*Anamaria Anagnostou/
Valerie Caras*

The immersion committee continues to meet every two weeks to plan out the most effective ways to integrate the immersion curriculum across the school.

COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

*Maryann Yarram/Erin
Allard/Valerie Caras/John
Nicholson*

We are looking for more writers interested in writing press releases and communication on behalf of the school. If interested, please email Maryann at mar-yann.yarram@odyssey.k12.de.us

There is a lot going on at OCS and we could use some help getting information out to the larger community.



Our School Nurses, Brittney Henning and Kristin Weaver received the Covid19 vaccine!

Both nurses have worked on the frontlines since the pandemic began. Nurse Henning works in the Medical ICU. Nurse Weaver works in the Cardiovascular Critical Care Complex.



ASK THE BOARD

WHY DOES THE BOARD HOLD EXECUTIVE SESSIONS? WHAT IS DISCUSSED?

The Board holds executive sessions primarily to discuss matters requiring a degree of confidentiality that isn't possible in the public forum. This could include discussions of real estate transactions related to the leasing portions of Odyssey's property, qualifications of an individual to hold a job, personnel matters involving employees of the school, discussions involving legal counsel or advice from an attorney related to potential litigation, or even hearing of staff or student disciplinary cases. Any item covered in an executive session that requires a Board vote must be voted upon in public, following the confidential discussion in executive session.

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