

The Parliament Times

Monthly Head of Schools Communication



Odyssey Charter expands reopening

On March 8th, Odyssey Charter will expand its reopening of the school to include 42% more students.

Odyssey has successfully ushered in its reopening with a focus on safety as our top priority. We are happy to report that Odyssey has successfully conducted hundreds of tests across all grade levels. Cumulatively, we have 0% positivity rate for our staff and and less than 0.5% positivity rate for students! After the first round of testing, we are able to conclude our reopening to hybrid in-person instruction has not contributed to an increase in COVID rates. As we expand our roll out, please look for updated communications regarding our next phase of reopening on March 29th. Thank you to all the nurses, staff, teachers, families, and larger community for your support in helping us get our kids back in school! Cheers!

O

DID YOU KNOW

Odyssey High currently offers more than 10 career pathways ranging from business to biomedical science to performing arts!

C

OCS DEI and Outreach Committee has donated food to support over 150 families in need! Go Owls!

S

DID YOU KNOW

OCS has conducted 208 COVID tests the week of March 1st and had ZERO positive cases!!!



Odyssey High's Business Professionals of America Leadership Team earns top honors at the State Leadership Conference!

The following students were recognized:

Nidhi Patel: BPA Student of the Year, 1st Place Personal Finance

Suveer Ganta: 3rd Place Banking and Finance, Personal Finance

Mitchell Smith: 1st Place Personal Finance

Nitya Patel: 2nd Place Payroll Accounting

Torch Service Awards
Diplomat, Statesmen:
Milly Desai, Nidhi Patel, Nitya Patel, Charlotte Walder

Diplomat: Alaina Balkaran

Odyssey Charter to honor graduates with Formal Graduations for Grades K,5,8,12 this year!

Formal Cap and Gown ceremonies to occur for our OWLS!

Beginning with our high school seniors, formal graduations will occur to celebrate the milestones of our owls as they complete the requirements to promote to the next stage in their lives. These ceremonies are tentatively scheduled for the first two weeks of June, with High School Senior Graduation on June 5th and K, 5, and 8th grade graduation ceremonies occurring on June 12th. We look forward to sharing these wonderful achievements with our families in the coming months! Reach out to your building dean for more details. Go Owls!



**CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF
FRIENDSHIP
USA - GREECE**

This year marks the bicentennial celebration of the Independence of Greece from Ottoman rule. Greece 2021 is an international effort to commemorate the event through various celebratory and reflective activities. Here in the US, we are using this opportunity to highlight the 200 year friendship between the countries and the similarities in the ideals that led to the our collective independence. Our school is organizing several events throughout the month of March and the rest of the year to honor this important milestone.

Head of School Updates

As mentioned in last month's communication, we would like to focus on increasing our fundraising and investment into the school, focus on a high quality education through our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives and offer programming that best leverages the talents of our students. Over the last month, we have launched our Buy a Brick fundraiser which is aligned with our project to install beautiful flagpoles areas in front of each of our buildings. The first building project will occur in front of Building 21. Please look for communication for our PTO about how you can be a permanent part of the history of our school through the purchase of these gorgeous customized bricks. On the academic front, we are working on retooling our grading policies to make sure we provide the best, most transparent and equitable representation of student progress we can. As such, we are shifting our focus to standards mastery based grading, which focuses on how well students demonstrate skills associated with specific standards and aligns very well with research indicating students score better on high stakes testing like Smarter Balanced Assessments and SATs. The shift will allow us to strategically create programming that will increase student achievement by knowing exactly what standards and skills require reinforcement. More details are coming in communication going out later this month. We are always looking for feedback and fresh ideas on how we can improve our program so please feel free to join board members and I at one of our upcoming meet and greets. They are scheduled for March 11, April 15, and May 27 from 6-7pm. You can join by zoom or stop in to meet in person. I am always available by email at elias.pappas@odyssey.k12.de.us to serve your needs. Thank you for choosing Odyssey Charter School! Go Owls!

***Additionally, I am including my executive summary from the February board meeting for your review.



	Date: 02/17/2021
Meeting: February Monthly Board Meeting	Facilitator: Elias Pappas

Our VISION: Open as many doors as possible for our students once they matriculate through our program.
Our MISSION: The Mission of Odyssey Charter School 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.
Our CORE VALUES: Ubuntu. Comunidad. Aien Aristeuein.

School Site Priorities: What goals are we focusing on? What data do we have to support this goal (the next 4-6 weeks)?

School Site Goal #1	Next year's course offerings, hirings, enrollment specifically with the high school
School Site Goal #2	DE&I: Analysis of all programs and structures
School Site Goal #3	Fundraising 2.0, facilities updates
School Site Goal #4	Focus on visual branding, universal branding

Update 1 COVID UPDATES Notes/Data	<p>a. Students are required to have a negative test within one week prior to the scheduled return date</p> <p>b. Roll out of staff vaccinations are beginning, with some of our teachers already receiving their first dose. We can expect more invitations to follow from the state. We are hopeful upwards of 85% or more of our staff will be vaccinated by late spring, although the timing depends exclusively on the state roll out program.</p>	Current testing data as of 02/16/2021:			Data as of 02/16/2021: 259 total active OCS employees full & part time as of today, 25 Monitors/LTS 25 total staff members working remotely for various reasons including ADA, FMLA, Quarantined or other (includes 21 Educators; 4 Others; 1 Admin Assistant, 1 Bus Driver, 2 Administrators) <ul style="list-style-type: none">86% of Academic Staff on-site (151-21)96% of Other Staff on-site (108-4)90% of all OCS staff on-site (259-25)																							
		<table><tr><td>Staff Testing</td><td>At OCS</td><td>Outside</td><td>Total Tested</td></tr><tr><td>Lower</td><td>29</td><td>1</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Intermediate</td><td>39</td><td>3</td><td>42</td></tr><tr><td>Middle</td><td>48</td><td>9</td><td>57</td></tr><tr><td>High</td><td>29</td><td>3</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>145</td><td>16</td><td>161</td></tr></table>	Staff Testing	At OCS		Outside	Total Tested	Lower	29	1	30	Intermediate	39	3	42	Middle	48	9	57	High	29	3	32	Total	145	16	161	
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	<table><tr><th colspan="5">OCS Students</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Tested</td><td>Unable to Test (Have had COVID in the last 90 days)</td><td>Awaiting test Results</td><td>Total Hybrid Students (K, 3, 6, HS)</td></tr><tr><td>Lower School</td><td>267</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>275</td></tr><tr><td>Intermediate School</td><td>268</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>270</td></tr></table>			OCS Students						Tested	Unable to Test (Have had COVID in the last 90 days)	Awaiting test Results	Total Hybrid Students (K, 3, 6, HS)	Lower School	267	6	2	275	Intermediate School	268	1	1	270					
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In 7th grade we have 39 students attending in cohort A and 47 in Cohort B for a total of 86 students. This is about 49% of our 7th Grade.

In 8th grade we have 44 students attending in cohort A and 35 in Cohort B for a total of 79 students. This is about 44% of our 8th Grade.

IM: IS: We have successfully rolled out all cohorts in the Intermediate School (Grades 3, 4, 5). Approximately 47% of students in the Intermediate School have returned for in-person instruction. Between both cohorts, this equals 256 students out of 550.

Grade 3 has ~47% of students returning, Grade 4 has ~42% and Grade 5 has 52%.

At this time, only 1 registered in-person student has not presented a negative COVID test and has not returned to the building. A special thanks to our nursing staff for organizing and communicating with all families for a safe and successful return for our students and staff.

LS: At this point, all cohorts in all grade levels K-2 have returned for in-person instruction, with approximately **54% of the total K-2 grade band registered to return for in-person instruction**, or 296 of the 552 total students in the lower school.

At this point, only 2 registered in-person students have not presented a negative COVID test and have not yet returned to the building.

Middle School	234	0	5	239
High School	85	1	0	86
OCS Students	854	8	8	870

- HS has 45 other students that have submitted tests but are not coming in currently for hybrid (Sports, PSAT, Driver's Education)

Total students that have been tested that are signed up and have started hybrid
 $= 854 / 870 = 98.16\%$

If we remove the amount that CAN NOT test =
 $854 / 862 = 99.07\%$

Total Tests at OCS approx 500 - 3 positive results
 School Positivity less than <1% ($497 / 500 = .994$)

	To our knowledge, we have had 1 confirmed case of COVID-19 in the building at this time.		
Part 2 COVID	<p>OCS was certified as a testing center within 24 hours of application being submitted.</p> <p>Testing is available for all staff Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri in school building</p> <p>Survey has been sent to families about the next hybrid return date. In preparation for this there will be a testing event on March 3, 2021 for the March 8, 2021 start.</p> <p>Phase 2 Testing: All on campus students will be required to provide COVID test results at a minimum of 1 time a month. <i>(Students will be able to submit a test result at any time during that calendar month. Example March 1-March 31 – to continue in person for the month of April.) This will occur in March, April, and May.</i></p> <p>Families may choose to have COVID testing at a site of their choice or the school offered BD Veritor Antigen testing.</p> <p>Students will not be allowed to start in-person on-campus learning without a negative COVID test within one calendar week prior to the first day they return to school. Please make it a point to schedule COVID testing accordingly. All children that have currently participated in oncampus learning will need to submit an additional result each calendar month.</p> <p>Phase 2 testing to begin March 1st.</p> <p>Walk in Testing – Building 21</p>	<p>Updated CDC guidelines have no significant material changes. Please see attached link for full access to the guidelines. Updated CDC guidelines for return to school</p> <p>The implications of the guidelines include the fact that the physical distancing between students desks should remain at 6 feet. This poses a significant limitation to the number of students we can have in each classroom and therefore will limit the amount of students we can have on campus beginning March 8th when Phase 3 of reopening begins.</p>	<p>Parent surveys were sent out yesterday about the March 8th return date. The completion window is February 16-22. Please do make sure to fill out this survey. If you did not receive one, please reach out to your building office administrator or dean for the link.</p>

	<i>An Update to Drive through testing, beginning March 1st 2021</i>		
Flagpole initiative and fundraising updates	Jon Stewart and Kaijia Miller have been working with me to launch our Flagpoles fundraiser. The goal is to raise upwards of \$80,000. We will be creating small islands in front of every school with bricks that can be purchased individually. The bricks can have family names, messages, or can even have names of graduating classes. Please look for communication from our PTO about ways to purchase these bricks and be a part of the permanent footprint of our schools!	Board members, the fundraising committee and I have started engaging the community to increase investment back to our schools. We have met with folks from Longwood Foundation, The Walton Foundation, private investment groups and national foundations to enhance our existing relationships and help us achieve the long term vision we have for our school. Our board and I are actively gathering information to build out our new strategic plan which includes significant facilities upgrades and improvements. We have also met with 3rd party consultants to help us coordinate our efforts and build out a systematic approach to long term success in fundraising. More details will follow in this meeting. Exciting times are ahead!	
Culture Focus	The schools are focusing on reviewing all its grading and attendance policies to ensure we are providing the best education for our students. Please look for updated policies in the weeks to come as we finish vetting these updates.	OCS is working to build out some community level events as we have several celebrations in the coming months. This year marks the bicentennial anniversary of Greek Independence, so Odyssey Charter is planning an ongoing series of events to commemorate it. Details will follow from your local schools. OCS is also happy to announce that this year, we will be celebrating the promotion of our students for grades K, 5, 8, and 12. That means we will be hosting 4 graduations in the late spring. Please look for updates as the dates get closer.	The PTO is starting a student store. This will be an opportunity for our students to purchase swag and supplies on campus. The store is located next to my office in Building 22. Please contact Ms. Kaijia Miller for details about store hours and operation.

HS College Data Update and Enrollment efforts	<p>Total Applications submitted as of 2/17: 183</p> <p>Percent of Class of 2021 applying to at least 1 school: 68%</p> <p>29% of students have reported merit scholarship/grant awards totaling over \$932,000 thus far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a nearly \$200,000 jump over the last month! <p>83% of applicants have been accepted to at least one college</p> <p>We have 79 acceptances spanning 11 states: DE, PA, FL, NJ, VA, NY, MA, TX, NC, IN, CA.</p> <p>The 2nd annual Youth Environmental Summit (YES!) is next week. Some of the guest speakers include Senator Chris Coons, New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer, and Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long. Odyssey Charter School is a founding school and many of our students are involved in this statewide and student-led summit. Our very own Kanmani is leading the entire conference! Kanmani will give her opening talk on Feb. 22nd.</p> <p>Kanmani Duraikkannan- Student leader of the entire conference Joshua McCrae- He serves on the logistics committee Nitya Patel- She serves on the student recruitment committee Marilyn Corbett- She serves on the logistics committee Samreen Ahmed- She serves on the student-workshop committee</p>	<p>Admitted Student Visit Days/"Step Up" Days!</p> <p>February 24th, March 3rd, March 17th</p> <p>We have planned this day to go from 10:00am-1:00pm and will include the following rotations/activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performing & Fine Arts - Science/STEM Lab - Athletics and Sports - Student Council/Student Activities - Greek/Foreign Language - 9th Grade Academics - Green Team - Lunch <p>Invitations to our incoming 9th grade students who were selected from the lottery (70 invited in the initial round) as well as OCS 8th Graders were sent out on Friday, February 12th. Students received enrollment packets with this letter and some small OCS swag (stickers, keychain). Students who commit to OCHS will receive the Class of 2025 box including more swag and their official Class of 2025 T shirt!</p>	<p>School Choice - HS</p> <p>We invited 70 9th grade students in the initial invitation and still have 70+ on our waitlist. These students have until 3/19 to accept invitations, and the next set of invitations will go out in March.</p> <p>We also invited 11 students to 10th grade.</p> <p>Students who accept invitations will receive the Class of 2025 box including their official Class of 2025 T Shirt, Lanyard, Admissions forms, and more.</p>
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Update on school priorities	<p>Spec Ed Audit is underway:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The review of IEPs is occurring and we should have follow up coming in the next 30-60 days. We are identifying our strengths and areas of need to improve our programming for all learners The school has hired a new Special Education Director, Dr. Stephanie DeMayo. Opportunities to meet with her will occur in the following weeks in a coffee and chat. Please look for communication from the school regarding this event. Dr. DeMayo comes to us from Brandywine School District where she served the needs of thousands of students. She has a wealth of knowledge on best practices and compliance. We are so excited to have her join the Odyssey family. 	<p>DEI:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The first first session for school leadership occurred last week. This is part of a series to empower our school leaders A revised attendance policy is under review by our DEI committee, focusing on supporting families in the maximum capacity by pooling our resources and shifting our overall approach. An updated grading policy is currently being vetted to create more transparency for families to serve as partners in education but also to ensure we are doing everything in our power to foster equitable outcomes for ALL learners. 	<p>Stakeholder communication updates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> UCP and updated policy for homeless and foster youth to be ratified by the Board in the coming session. Final drafts are currently under review. Monthly communication from the Head of School with Executive Summary began on Feb 1 and is posted on our website. Parent, Student and Staff Surveys will be conducted by a national normed independent company. We are currently looking at costs for each vendor. I am leaning toward Panorama Education which has excellent analytics. These anonymous surveys will focus on school culture, climate and safety. We will use this data to drive our future decision making.
Financial Update	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The final majority of payments from the State have been processed. Approximately \$250k expected for the duration of the year for known adjustments, degree changes, and PPL/payout reimbursements. Overall, for State funding, we expect to exceed our preliminary budgeted amount by approximately \$400k. Odyssey has been awarded \$873k in ESSER II (CARES Act II) funding as a State LEA pass-through. Similarly to ESSER I, the allocation is calculated based on the ratio of FY21 Final Title I allocations that each school received. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DOE has created 15 activity codes that correspond with 15 focus areas to use the funds. 		

	<p>b) Funds are available to be spent through 9/30/2023.</p> <p>c) School preliminarily budgeting the funds for facility improvements to improve air quality and sanitation (Bi-Polar HVAC, Bldg 23 carpet removal, increased HVAC maintenance services), supplemental janitorial services, PPE, costs surrounding being a testing site, hybrid learning initiatives, IT equipment/Chromebooks, personnel costs for ADA accommodations and staffing redundancies for reopening.</p> <p>3) Final invoice for the Building #23 renovation was processed in January, coming in \$30k under the GMP contract. Furniture was received earlier in February to fill the classrooms.</p> <p>4) Projections currently showing a positive variance to the preliminary budget for approximately \$820k. The projected year-end cash on hand is \$4.5mill.</p> <p>5) Cash Basis investors report projects 1.50 debt coverage ratio (requirement is 1.10) and 62.76 estimated days of cash on hand (covenant is 60.00 days) at year-end.</p>		
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