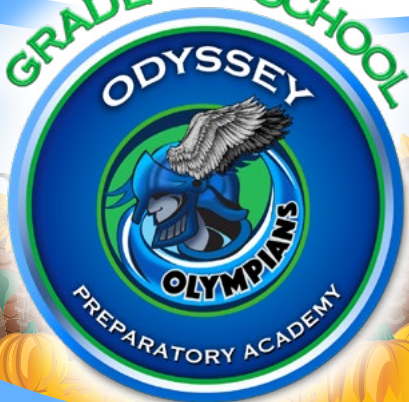


GRADE "A" SCHOOL

ODYSSEY



# Odyssey Preparatory Academy

1350 Wyoming Drive S.E. • Palm Bay, Florida 32909 • 321-372-7263

## FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

*"Committed to academic excellence and the education of the whole child"*

### OUR MISSION FOR EVERY CHILD

The mission of Odyssey Charter School is to work in partnership with the family and community, with the aim of helping each child reach their full potential in all areas of life. We seek to educate the whole child with the understanding that each person must achieve a balance of intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and social skills as a foundation for life.

### FOUNDER

**Ms. Constance Ortiz, Founder**

### SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Ms. Shelly Miedona, Principal
- Mr. William Svendsen, Assistant Principal
- Ms. Kim Cappelen, Behavior Tech
- Ms. Marie Cimirro, Instructional Coach
- Mrs. Courtney Goodenow, Instructional Coach
- Ms. Leslie Guevara, ESE Coordinator
- Ms. Megan Bigwood, STEAM Coordinator
- Ms. Emily Dent, Gifted/GATEway Teacher
- Ms. Nancy Gervais, Registrar
- Ms. Alia Hartwick, Early Childhood & After Care Director

### From the Desk of the Principal, Ms. Miedona

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We have had an amazing, productive first quarter as you will see in the pictures in this newsletter. Our teachers and Olympians are working hard each and every day to ensure student growth and mastery.

As you know, the state of Florida has a new progress monitoring assessment to measure student growth and achievement. This assessment is taken three times a year and your student took the first test in September. It will be given again in December/January and then in May. Due to the new test and standards setting of the test, we will not have school grade information until January. OPA had success in some areas and growth is needed in others. Administration and teachers dug into the Progress Monitoring 3 data from May to develop the school improvement plan and teacher/admin action plans.

One change we made this school year is having a school-wide walk to acceleration block beginning at 8:10 and ending at 8:45. Close to 40% of our entire student population is in a small group receiving intensive interventions or acceleration in math, reading or science. If your student is not in a small group, he/she is working on an accelerated grade level task to meet his/her needs during this time. It is imperative that all students arrive at school ready to begin their day at 8:00 a.m.

This year, we continue to focus on the important partnership between the school and your family, and on effective communication. Please ensure your email address is correct in your Focus account. School communication is sent through Focus. We will also begin a two-month paper newsletter to showcase the previous month's activities and upcoming events. As we collaborate together to educate your child, please know we value and welcome your feedback. Your input on what we have done well or where we need to improve helps us to make any adjustments needed in order to serve our students better. We ask that lines of communication be two-way between families and the school, and that we work to make all interactions respectful, friendly and optimistic. Working together, we can offer your child a wonderful educational experience and have the best year yet.

Please mark your calendars with the family events we have planned for the first semester. We had an amazing turnout for Open House and Dads Take Your Child to School Days. Please continue to support your student by participating in the activities planned this year. We love seeing our family participation! As always, I am available at any time via the telephone or email at [miedonas@odysseyprepacademy.com](mailto:miedonas@odysseyprepacademy.com) or by phone at 321-372-7263 (OPA) or 321-408-9549 (cell). I am here to serve you and your students. Thank you for the opportunity.

Shelly Miedona Ed.S.  
Principal



## CALENDAR

Friday Early Release Days – K-5th dismiss at 1:45 p.m.

Casual Dress Days – last Friday of each month (10/27, 11/17, 12/22, 1/26, 2/23, 3/22, 4/26, 5/24)

### OCTOBER

10/20 – Elementary Report Cards Issued

10/24 – Gateway/Gifted Night

10/25 – Grades 3-5 Harvest Meal

10/26 – Elementary Student-Parent-Teacher Conference Night (by appointment)

### NOVEMBER

11/8 – Veterans' Day Event

11/10 – Veterans' Day Holiday for All

11/13 – 17 – Scholastic Book Fair

11/15 – Science Night and Parents as Partners meeting

11/15 – OCS Inc. Board of Directors Meeting

11/20-24 – Thanksgiving Holiday for all

11/29 – Second Quarter Interim Ends

11/30 – Picture retakes

### DECEMBER

12/5 – Grades K – 2 STAR Progress Monitoring Assessment Begins

12/8 – Winter Dance

12/12 – Author Visit

12/22 – End of 2nd Quarter

12/25-31 Winter Break

### JANUARY

1/1-5 – Winter Break

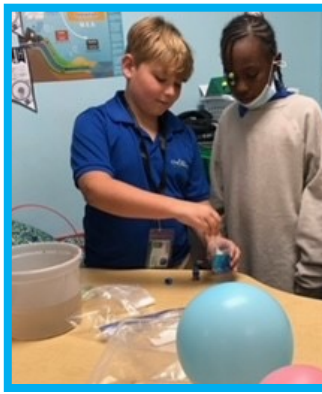
1/8 – Students Return

1/9 – SRO Appreciation Day

1/10 – Grades 3-5 F.A.S.T. Progress Monitoring

2 Assessment begins

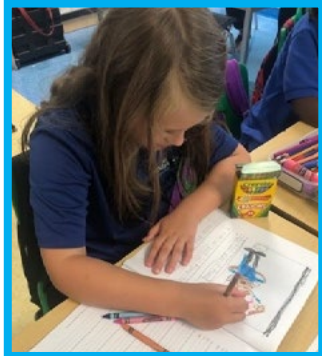
1/12 – Report Cards issued



5th Grade Science Investigation



2nd Grade Practicing Math Facts



1st Grade Writing Lesson



2nd Grade Hands on Math Activities



Walk to School Day



2nd Grade Harris Family Farm Field Trip

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## Read Aloud Program – for Volunteer Hours!



The Read Aloud program is a wonderful way for parents to fulfill their required annual volunteer hours while supporting their student's academic growth. In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education report "Becoming a Nation of Readers" found that, "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."

We make it easy for parents to volunteer at our school by spending your time in the comfort of your own home with your child. To participate in the Read Aloud program, parents spend 15 minutes reading aloud quality literature to their child. Find a book that both you and your child will enjoy. Then log your time on the Read Aloud log which can be provided by your classroom teacher, or through the front office, or from the school's website. Next turn in your log at the end of each month to your classroom teacher or to the front office and you will receive volunteer hours for the time spent reading aloud to your child.

For more information about the importance of reading aloud to your child, please visit Jim Trelease's web site at: <http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/> or you can visit our website at <https://odysseyprepacademy.com/read-aloud.html>.

Our media center has many books recommended by Jim Trelease. Parents are invited to check out books from our Media Center for their Read Aloud. Please feel free to contact Ms. Kyleigh Gross at [GrossK@odysseyprepacademy.com](mailto:GrossK@odysseyprepacademy.com) if you would like to come a check out a book or have any additional questions.





## GATEway Gifted and Talented Program

Some exciting things we have been going on in the GATEway classroom with our Gifted and Talented students. Each group of students are pulled weekly, and participate in hands-on project-based learning, while working collaboratively with one another.

### Kindergarten: How the Sun Makes Our Day

Kindergarteners are learning about light energy. We measure how the Sun changes our shadows throughout the day and identify natural and man-made light sources. Students are also working on completing their Renzulli Profiler which helps describe their interests and learning styles.

### 1st Grade: Botany

First graders are learning about systems and how there are many structures with functions within different systems. We have learned about the parts of school systems, restaurants, and more. Soon they will apply this knowledge to a terrarium system, taking care of multiple plants inside a contained environment. Students are also working on completing their Renzulli Profiler which helps describe their interests and learning styles.

### 2nd Grade: What's the Matter?

Second graders are learning about the different changes states of matter can go through. They have already learned how to classify examples of change into different categories. Second graders will become expert scientists while choosing a state of matter to study in depth. Students are also working on completing their Renzulli Profiler which helps describe their interests and learning styles.

### 3rd Grade: Interactions and Ecology

Third grade is currently working on answering the question: should humans cut down trees? They have analyzed different fiction and nonfiction texts on deforestation had how these interactions effect animals, habitats, and humans. Students have finished their Renzulli Profiler which helps describe their interests and learning styles, and parent letters with this information will go home with Report Cards.

### 4th Grade: I'm Not Just Gifted, Little Bits, The Walking Classroom, The Earth Beneath Our Feet

Fourth grade comes to GATEway for a full day of instruction, and students have been working on understanding what it means to be a Gifted or Talented student. They have also worked with Little Bits, snap together electronic circuits, in connection to our Science curriculum. They are familiar with the expectations and devices used during our Walking Classroom lessons, and they are so excited to walk and learn from podcasts coming up soon. Students have finished their Renzulli Profiler which helps describe their interests and learning styles, and parent letters with this information will go home with report cards. Finally, our main fourth grade curriculum is about studying Earth Science. Fourth graders have already defined geologists and studied how nature can shape the Earth over time. Soon we will study the Earth around our school's playground and garden areas, looking for layers of soil.

### 5th Grade: I'm Not Just Gifted, Little Bits, The Walking Classroom, Space Structure and Story

Fifth grade is similar to fourth grade and comes to GATEway for a full day of instruction. Fifth grade students have also been working on understanding what it means to be a Gifted or Talented student. They have also worked with Little Bits, snap together electronic circuits, in connection to our Science curriculum. They are familiar with the expectations and devices used during our Walking Classroom lessons, and they are so excited to walk and learn from podcasts coming up soon. Students have finished their Renzulli Profiler which helps describe their interests and learning styles, and parent letters with this information will go home with report cards. Finally, our main fifth grade curriculum studies the connections between outer space, literature, and structure. We are currently reading A Wrinkle in Time and using story quotes to understand the deeper meaning of the text.

## Parents as Partners

We welcome all parents to join our Parents as Partners (PasP) organization. We need your support to be the best we can be. The PasP organization supports the school by working on annual goals that will directly impact your student and their success. Our fundraising committees this year will be raising funds to prepare for our Students Award Ceremonies, Annual 5k, Field Trips, and Teacher Appreciation.

Note that ALL Parents are our Partners. To become an active member, please join us at the meetings held in person. Mark your calendar for our next upcoming PasP meeting on November 15th from 6:30-7:00 after the Family Science Night. Please contact Megan Rego by email at [megreggo25@gmail.com](mailto:megreggo25@gmail.com). for more information.

## Positive Discipline

We have really focused on the implementation of our Positive Discipline in the Classroom program, sharing compliments and appreciations, building community within the classroom and beginning to develop the problem-solving process within our class meetings. We know that making students feel valued and capable within the classroom goes a long way toward their academic success. An important aspect of Positive Discipline is the importance of encouragement, rather than praise. Check out the link below for some ways to use encouragement with your child at home. <https://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/encouragement-whatdoes-it-mean-and-how-it-done>

## Uniform Policy (Grades K-5)

All Odyssey Prep students are required to wear a school uniform. Our uniforms can be purchased from our uniform provider:  
All Uniform Wear - 4335 W New Haven Ave, West Melbourne  
(Note: Please be certain you select Odyssey Preparatory Academy uniforms and not Odyssey Charter School uniforms).

You can find our uniform policy on our website at <http://odysseyprepacademy.com/OPA-Uniform-Policy.pdf>.

- As part of our uniform requirement, students must wear their issued ID badge/lanyard at all times while on campus.
- All students are required to wear full-length solid-colored black or khaki pants, shorts, skirts or skorts. Inappropriately rolling or altering the pants in any way is in direct violation of the dress code. Shorts, skirts and skorts length must be at least mid-thigh.
- Pants, shorts, skirts and skorts that are too big or too tight, as determined by Administration, are not acceptable and will be deemed in violation of the uniform code. Joggers are allowed. Jeans, stretch pants, and athletic wear are not allowed. Students may wear solid color leggings under uniform shorts or skorts, but leggings worn alone as pants are not permitted.
- Students must wear an approved t-shirt, collared polo shirt, or dress shirt. Student shirts must be a solid color and in accordance with the individual schools' uniform guide below. All shirts must bear the School logo.
- Any attire, including backpacks, displaying gang related paraphernalia or symbols, profanity or any inappropriate logos or displays are strictly prohibited.
- All headgear (hats, scarves, bandanas etc.) are prohibited on school property.
- Shoes must be closed or be strapped in the back. Flip-flops, slippers, or high heel shoes are prohibited.
- If a student chooses or needs to wear a jacket or sweatshirt due to cold weather, it must be a solid color of blue, black, or grey and in accordance with the individual schools' uniform guide.

## Tardy Policy

Elementary students are expected to be in their seats and ready to learn by 8:00 a.m. If you arrive at 7:55 a.m. or later, parents must park and walk their child to the front office, sign him/her in, and have a tardy slip issued for admittance to class. Parents, please do not park in the fire lane – this is a safety concern. We thank you for making the effort to have your student to class on time each and every day.

## Early Check-out for Students

Parents, we are asking that if you need to checkout your elementary student early, that you do so by 2:00 p.m. on a regular dismissal day and by 12:45 on an early release day. It can become a safety concern when students are checked out too close to the dismissal time. Please remember that we do not take dismissal changes over the phone. All changes made to your child's normal means of transportation home are required in writing. We would also like to encourage you to make appointments for your child outside of our school hours in order to maximize your child's learning time and minimize classroom disruptions for all students. We thank you for your partnership!

## FOCUS

FOCUS for Parents – if you have not received your FOCUS log in (newstudents/parents) please email Mr. Svendsen at [Svendsenw@odysseyprepacademy.com](mailto:Svendsenw@odysseyprepacademy.com).



FOCUS for students who returned to OPA is the same for both students and parents from last year. If you have questions, please email Mr. Svendsen.

FOCUS App – there is a new FOCUS app. You can download it to your smartphone and get easy access to grades and communication with your child's teachers.



## Grading Policy

Did you know that Odyssey has a Grading Policy? It was adopted by our OCS Board to establish uniform procedures for marking and reporting student progress to their families. We have a focus on mastery grading, ensuring that grades assigned reflect the child's progress/ achievement in mastering the specific subject matter. You can read about this and much more at <https://odysseycharter-school.com/7013-Grading-Policy.pdf>.

## Weather/Lightning

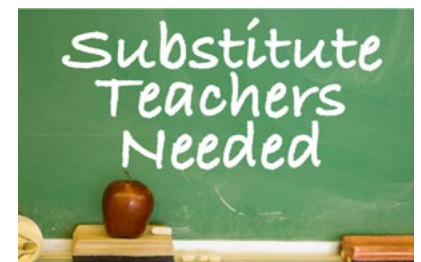
During this rainy season, when we are likely to have severe weather during dismissal, we want to make sure our families are aware of our rainy-day/severe weather dismissal plan. If there is lightning within 3-5 miles, we will keep students inside the building and dismissal will be on hold until the weather clears a bit and it is safe to have staff and students outside.



Once staff deem it is safe to resume dismissal, we will continue. We thank our families in advance for your understanding and support to ensure the safety of both students and staff!

## Substitutes

We are always looking for parents or community members to join our OPA family. We need positive, driven individuals looking to make an impact in our Olympians' daily scholastic goals. Training is provided. Substitute teaching rates are as follows: HS Diploma (\$100/day; \$50/half day); Bachelor's Degree (\$120/day; \$60/half day); Certified Teacher Substitute (\$160/day; \$80/half day). If you are interested in joining our team as a substitute, please contact Ms. Nancy Gervais at [gervaisn@odysseyprepacademy.com](mailto:gervaisn@odysseyprepacademy.com)



## Student ID Badges

Odyssey student ID Badges are now considered a part of the everyday uniform. Please ensure your child has their ID badge daily. Badges have a variety of uses at our school. Students wear their badges for safety purposes, as well as for entry on our school buses, purchase of school breakfast/lunch, and book checkout in our media center. We are happy to report we have about 95% of our students following our school uniform policy and wearing their Student ID Badge daily.

If your child loses their ID, replacements are \$5. Please send ID replacement money with your child's name and the name of their homeroom teacher. Please send a check or money order made out to Odyssey Preparatory Academy with your child's name, grade. Families, we ask that you help your child develop a system where they remember to wear their ID badge every day. We encourage students to put the ID badge in the backpack each evening. We appreciate your support!

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## Transportation

We would like to thank all the Odyssey families that have signed up for transportation.

Just a reminder few reminders:

- 1) If you would like to sign up for one of our bus routes, and live 2 miles or more away from your child's campus, please contact our transportation department and they will be happy to assist you.
- 2) We would like to kindly remind all parents that transportation changes may not be made over the phone. You may, however, submit these requests in writing to your child's teacher or to the front office.

To request bus transportation, visit [www.EZrouting.com/Odysseyfl](http://www.EZrouting.com/Odysseyfl). Please feel free to contact our transportation department with any questions at: Transportation office 321-345-4117 Opt. 3 or Email [greerr@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:greerr@odysseycharterschool.com).

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## School Events - OCTOBER

### October 18 and 25

Harvest Lunches

We welcome you to come join your child for our annual Harvest Celebration Lunch and Wellness Expo at our Odyssey Charter School Healthy Café. Our menu includes roasted chicken thigh (or tofu), roasted potato medley, fresh baked whole grain roll, garden fresh salad bar, fresh fruit choice, and fall dessert.

- October 18 – Grades K, 1, & 2
- October 25 – Grades 3, 4, & 5

### October 24th

New Parent Informational night on our GATEway and Talented Program @ 6:00 PM at the Eldron Campus

### October 26

Student-Parent-Teacher Conference Night

Teachers will be sharing information on how to sign up for a conference appointment to talk with you and your child about their progress thus far. Students will share their successes as well as goals they have set for the year and their plans to meet their goals.

## School Events - NOVEMBER

### November 13th – 17th

Scholastic Book Fair

Come celebrate a love for reading at our Scholastic book fair which will take place from October 20th until October 28th. Each classroom will have an opportunity to visit the book fair during this time. The book fair will be open the evening of November 15th from 4:30-6:30. If you can't make it to the Fair, then shop at our school's Online Book Fair. All orders ship directly to your home, and shipping is free for book orders over \$25. Your online orders will also benefit our school. This year, say goodbye to cash and hello to eWallet—your child's digital payment account. Before the Fair, set up eWallet for worry-free, cash-free purchases. Anyone can contribute! Share each child's eWallet so friends and family can add funds and give your kids more books to enjoy.

Please visit <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/odysseyprepacademy> for additional information.

If you would like to volunteer at the book fair, please contact Kyleigh Gross at [Grossk@odysseyprepacademy.com](mailto:Grossk@odysseyprepacademy.com).

Due to the new Parental Rights Bill, we need to ensure parent permission for in-school events, such as our upcoming Scholastic Book Fair. Students will have the opportunity to browse the Book Fair in the Media Center during their Media class under the supervision of the Media teacher. Please let your child's teacher know if you would NOT like your child to attend the Book Fair and they will make other arrangements for them during this special.

### November 8

Veteran's Day Ceremony and Breakfast @ 8:30 am

Ms. Constance Ortiz, School Founder, and our Leadership team welcome all veterans to be honored and celebrated! Our students may bring their Veteran Father, Mother, Uncle, Aunt, Grandfather or Grandmother to school to enjoy breakfast. This important event acknowledges the bravery and courage of our military men and women and increases respect for their service and sacrifice.

### November 15

Family Science Night @ 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. in the café

Parents as Partners @6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. in the café

Book Fair Open @4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. in the Media Center

### November 15

Odyssey Charter School, Inc., Board of Directors Meeting - You are welcome to attend. Our board meetings are held several times annually at the historic 1900 Building, Suite 120, 1900 S. Harbor City Boulevard, Melbourne, FL 32901 or you are welcome to attend via zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81749678859>





## ClassLink – Odyssey Launchpad Online Instructional Support

Family support of each child's education is critical to student success. Research shows that when parents are more involved, students do better! We are happy to share that elementary students (and parents) will have digital access to Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), Savvas EasyBridge (enVision®), i-Ready, Studies Weekly, Study Island, Discovery Science, and Renzulli online programs to support instruction in the Florida Benchmarks through their single sign on through the Odyssey ClassLink Launchpad at <https://launchpad.classlink.com/odysseyfl>. Their username is their 7-digit student ID number (i.e. 1234567) and their password includes their birth date (i.e. OdyMMDDYY).

- CKLA is our core Language Arts program that is rich in literature, history, geography and science. Your child has access to the CKLA content via the Launchpad and can read (or re-read) stories at home that they have learned at school.
- Our newly adopted math curriculum is enVision® Florida B.E.S.T. Mathematics. The curriculum is designed to help children gain a deeper understanding of mathematics through problem-based teaching and learning. Lessons are designed for students to explore each topic with hands-on materials, then two-dimensional pictures, and finish by connecting their thinking to symbols, numbers, and procedures.
- i-Ready provides individualized online instruction that targets each student's specific needs in both reading and math. Students take a diagnostic at the beginning of the school year to set their learning path and they work their path all year to fill in any gaps in learning or to advance themselves beyond their current level. Students are encouraged to utilize i-Ready for 45 minutes per week in each subject to progress toward their expected annual growth.
- Studies Weekly is a newspaper-based and online program supporting Social Studies instruction.
- Discovery Education Science provides science videos, articles and activities for students in science concepts and supports science instruction taking place in the classroom.
- Renzulli is an online program that all students have access to. Students take an interest inventory upon first using Renzulli, then engage in self-directed learning specifically matched to their individual profile. Renzulli places a strong emphasis on problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking skills to help ensure learners are developing thinking and reasoning skills that will prepare them for college and careers.

We encourage parents to take an active role monitoring students' progress on these programs, and to remind students to utilize these programs weekly. If you need support with any of the programs, contact your child's teacher or our instructional coach Ms. Cimirro at [cimirrom@odysseyprepacademy.com](mailto:cimirrom@odysseyprepacademy.com).

### Grievance Procedures

- Step 1: Request Teacher conference to clarify issue
- Step 2: Contact Principal if unresolved with the teacher
- Step 3: \*\*Contact Board Designated Parent Representative
- Step 4: Contact the President of the Governing Board
- Step 5: Present issue at the next monthly Board Meeting if unresolved
- Step 6: Seek mediation with the Sponsor

\*\*Mrs. Laurie Young has been designated by the OCS Board of Directors as the Representative to Facilitate Parental Involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes according to charter requirements. Mrs. Young can be reached at [youngl@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:youngl@odysseycharterschool.com) or 321-345-4117.

## FortifyFL

FortifyFL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows you to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials. FortifyFL was created and funded by the 2018 Florida Legislature as part of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. The application was named by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The Office of Attorney General, Department of Education and Florida Department of Law Enforcement coordinated its development and roll-out. You can download the app and get more info at <https://getfortifyfl.com/>.

## Title I Corner

Odyssey Preparatory Academy has been designated a high performing charter school by the Florida Department of Education. Our school is also accredited for kindergarten -5th grade by COGNIA, the largest accrediting agency for K-12 schools.

As a Title I school, we continue to hold the highest academic expectations for your child. Title I documents are available online for your review and are accessible at [www.odysseyprepacademy.com](http://www.odysseyprepacademy.com) under the "about us" section under school reports: <http://odyssey-prepacademy.com/reports.html>.

Odyssey Preparatory Academy es una escuela de Título I que tiene las expectativas académicas más altas para su estudiante. Los documentos del Título I están disponibles en línea para su revisión y son accesibles en [www.odysseyprepacademy.com](http://www.odysseyprepacademy.com) en la sección "acerca de nosotros" en los informes escolares: <http://odysseyprepacademy.com/reports.html>.

## Water Bottles and Water Refilling Stations

We have replaced all of our water fountains with water refilling stations. Please make sure you are sending your child with a refillable water bottle each day in order to stay hydrated throughout the day. Water bottles should be labeled with your child's name.



**Odyssey Charter School** is committed to **academic excellence** and the **education of the whole child.**