



# Odyssey Charter School

*Nurturing a Lifelong Love of Learning*

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**School Overview:**

Odyssey Charter School is a public charter school opened in August 2006. An innovative school for grades K-5, Odyssey is Delaware's first mathematics content focused, 2<sup>nd</sup> language elementary education charter school. Children from all walks of life attend a second language class each day, Greek, and then have additional instruction in a critical subject matter such as Math, also in that classic language. This dual approach reinforces the learning as taught in English. An ethnically and socio-economically diverse group of approximately 400 students, with enrollment reaching just under 500 pupils once all grades have been fulfilled in the 2010/2011 school year, gravitate to Odyssey for the strong academics, insight into the classical learning ideals of Hellenism, a small-school environment, and a fresh approach to learning.

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While content focused, or applied 2<sup>nd</sup> language education schools are somewhat new to Delaware, Odyssey's approach in developing higher-level learning and problem solving skills has delivered very significant indicators of success in standardized state testing:

DSTP Report for 2008/2009

- Second Grade Scoring  
Reading – 94.3% met or surpassed state standards  
Math – 97.2% met or surpassed state standards
- Third Grade Scoring  
Reading – 97.6% met or surpassed state standards  
Math – 100.0% met or surpassed state standards

The Odyssey Charter School is a public charter elementary school. Since it is a public school, **there are no fees or tuition** associated with attending this very special educational opportunity. The skills learned through this dual language instruction enable our students to meet and exceed expectations in all required content and performance standards for the State of Delaware.

### **Focused 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Education and Greek (a living classic language):**

With Odyssey's 2<sup>nd</sup> language instruction, children from all walks of life participate in various classes during each day where the teacher speaks with the students only in the second language. It is as though the student is attending a school in another country! More than any other living language today, the Greek language has played an integral part in the development of the English language. From the structures of its alphabet to the word derivations in the sciences, mathematics, and beyond, the English language is directly linked to Greek. For children coming from a wide demographic cross-section of backgrounds that learn Greek, they are able to make connections between English vocabulary and their Greek counterpart words because many of the mathematical and scientific terms used are Greek in origin. In addition to the obvious cognitive and linguistic benefits, Greek culture and history also serves as a model for instruction. The concepts of democracy and citizenship, as well as the teaching of classical literature and art provide students with a unique well-rounded education and the basis for understanding of our modern world.

### **Sites and School Buildings:**

Lower School Campus (Grades K through 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Located in Delaware, just west of the Wilmington city limits on Lancaster Avenue, Odyssey established a long-term lease in a former DuPont Company building. With the two-year renovation project completed for that building and its 4.8 acres site costing over

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three quarters of a million dollars, it has become a destination choice in Delaware for a preeminent primary education.



### Upper School Campus (Grades 3 through 5<sup>th</sup>)

Also located in Delaware, just inside the city line of Wilmington and only a half-mile from our the Lower School just off Bayard and Second streets, Odyssey purchased the 26,000 square foot facility and grounds formally occupied by the St Thomas Elementary School. With an investment exceeding \$3 million dollars in facilities acquisition and grounds improvements, this Odyssey operation is truly a landmark for elementary education and community partnership.



### **Future Expansion:**

Having established a preeminent elementary academic program within the community of Delaware public schools, family interest and enrollment at Odyssey have nearly doubled in each year of operation. This welcomed growth has necessitated the establishment of waiting lists for all grades offered during our open enrollment periods. As such, the Odyssey Board continues to explore expansion opportunities to accommodate consumer access in other geographic areas as well as with the higher grades. It is important to note that Odyssey requires the support of the local school districts, the state board of education, our state representatives, as well as philanthropic groups in order to advance its mission in addressing the ever changing needs of public education.

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## **Faculty and Curriculum:**

Odyssey Charter School employs Delaware certified teachers to instruct core subject matter using the Houghton-Mifflin program;

- the curriculum offered completely meets or exceeds Delaware content standards
- it is the market leader in Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics
- one in four Americans learns to read from Houghton Mifflin Reading programs
- strong emphasis on Math skills building, problem solving, and concepts mastery

The content focused, second language instruction for Odyssey's augmented mathematics, Greek language classes, and many other subjects such as history, social studies, and the arts are provided by credentialed instructors from Greece. This portion of the curriculum is taught to the National Greek Ministry of Education academic standards for elementary schools. In many of the special subject areas offered at Odyssey, our students will be encouraged to maximize their second language and foreign culture experience.

In addition to having Math reinforced by 2 sessions of instruction each day, Odyssey students are presented with the importance of scientific inquiry through the hands-on experience of Smithsonian science kits. Our students are exposed to the nature of science and the procedures that all scientists follow in their daily work. The children also gain a deep appreciation for sustainability and with it renewable resources, energy, water and materials. To assist our teachers in providing this instruction in life science, earth science, and physical science each year, Odyssey faculty receive specialized training that familiarizes them with the science kit content, materials, activities, and assessments.

## **Organization:**

Odyssey Charter School, Inc is established and exists to operate as a charter school in the State of Delaware. Odyssey Charter School is an educational organization within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Odyssey organization is managed by an Executive Committee and Governing Board under guidelines established by Delaware Department of Education regulations for charter schools. Odyssey Charter School, Inc is a nonprofit corporation.

Supporting the Odyssey Charter School Board is a significant and well-respected organization, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA). This non-profit philanthropic group, founded in 1922, continually pursues the development of new and more responsive ways to create a better learning environment for children. AHEPA offers scholarships on a broad, national basis to a wide variety of students that promotes an awareness of the principles of Hellenism to people outside the Greek-American community. AHEPA believes the ideals of education, humanity, freedom, democracy, and philanthropy are ones that should be experienced by all.

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