

*Charter School  
Annual Report*

*2013-2014*

*Odyssey Community School*

# **ODYSSEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

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## *Mission Statement*

Odyssey Community School provides a positive elementary and middle school experience that emphasizes academic excellence, the ability to communicate effectively using traditional and technological media, and the development of strong character and self-confidence. The unique mind and heart of each child is nurtured as students are taught to internalize the CIRCLE values (Courage, Integrity, Respect, Curiosity, Leadership and Excellence) and to become productive members of their community.

## ***Contents***

Letter from the Director of the School and Governing Board Chairperson	1
About Our School	2
Curriculum Design and Instructional Method and Modification	3
School Goals	4
Financial Information	8
Best Practices	9
Governance	12
Summary of Other Key Accomplishments	13
Attachments	14

## ***A letter from the Director of the School and Governing Board Chairperson***

This was the school's first full year under the single principal model. With the assistance of a Dean of Students, the model is working out exceptionally well. Clear guidelines were given to staff as to the administrative responsibilities of the Principal, the Dean of Students and the Executive Director to alleviate confusion about who to go to with which issues.

We had planned to do the final stage of construction during the summer of 2013. We received permission by the Manchester Building Department to put the project off by one year due to fiscal constraints. It turned out to be a good decision, as new guidelines were issued in the wake of Sandy Hook Elementary School that required us to rethink the layout of the new entrance and office. Construction began in June when students left for the summer. We had to take out a bank loan for \$300,000 as the new safety features doubled the cost of the project.

We have been approved for bond funds for debt repayment of the original \$1.2 million bank loan.

The Principal and Dean of Students attended the five day SEED training for teacher evaluation.

We invested a significant portion of our Title I funds to hire teachers to realign our curriculum to Common Core standards during the spring and summer months. We have also invested funds in in-house CREC training for teachers in understanding Common Core, which will continue into the next school year.

We replaced an aging computer lab with Google Chromebooks, as well as enhancing the number of Chromebooks that are available to loan to classrooms. This is an economical solution to the replacement of old equipment which also gets us closer to our goal of beginning Smarter Balance testing in the spring of 2015.

Odyssey's budget sustained a large deficit in special education this year, which led us to take a look at our staffing. For two years in a row, we graduated several students with intensive IEPs. Students coming into the school were arriving with significantly smaller IEP needs, so over time we saw our billing diminish. We believe we have a handle on the situation for the coming school year.

Our Board remains active and committed. We lost one very valuable staff member due to a job change that made large demands on evening time, but we have been lucky enough to fill the vacancy with another very talented trustee.

We activated our School Governance Committee. We were pleased with the number of parents and staff who were willing to become part of the group. A continuing agenda was developed so the committee could begin its work again in September following summer break.

Elaine Stancliffe, Executive Director

Elizabeth Mix, President, Board of Trustees

# *About Our School...*

## **School Program**

### **DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT ADMISSIONS PROCESS INCLUDING DEADLINES**

The recruitment process for OCS is very well-defined and consistent. In January, parents of existing students have the opportunity to inform the school of their child's intention to return for the next year. They are also given the opportunity to pre-enroll siblings, depending upon the availability of seats. Staff members are accorded the same pre-enrollment privilege for their children and grandchildren. Once the deadline for these commitments is reached, the school is able to determine how many openings will exist in each grade for the upcoming year. Parents and staff members who miss the deadline for re-enrollment and pre-enrollment must participate in the lottery process.

#### **2013-2014 RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE**

Current student and sibling pre-enrollment letters mailed	January 4, 2013
Current student and sibling pre-enrollment commitment letters due	January 25, 2013

Students who do not have their commitment letters submitted on or before the due date will have to enter the lottery process. There are no exceptions.

Open House with 6:30 p.m. Orientation Program: Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Deadlines for Applications	3:00 p.m.	Friday, April 3, 2013
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Applications received after the due date will be put on the waiting list following the lottery. There are no exceptions.

Lottery	7:00 p.m.	Thursday, April 25, 2013
Acceptance letters will be mailed approximately two weeks after the lottery.		
Commitment forms due by 12 Noon		Friday, May 17, 2013

If commitment forms are not received by the due date, the slot will be given to the first student on the waiting list. The student who did not return the commitment form will be placed at the end of the wait list. There are no exceptions

### **STUDENT RECRUITMENT METHODS**

Each year our technology teacher develops a short video with students and staff members to introduce our open house guests to OCS. Signs are placed in front of the school for approximately six weeks to announce the dates of our open houses, which also appear on our web site.

Open houses involve all school members. Parents, students, staff members and board members are present to greet visitors, collect brief registration information, and to give directions to the Common Room and classrooms. Visitors are encouraged to explore the school after the orientation program and to talk with teachers in their classrooms. We open with a welcome and the video, which presents an overview of the school. The COOP (Circle of Odyssey Parents) president speaks to the mission of the parent group as well

as parent experiences with their children's teachers, events, etc. A list of frequently asked questions is distributed, which offers practical information on topics such as nursing services, Power School, lunch, etc.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Nearly 75% of our students are from Manchester. The Manchester Board of Education Transportation Department maintains a very collaborative relationships with our school. We have five buses assigned to our students for morning and afternoon, as well as two late run buses for students who attend after-school programs and clubs.

This year we had students from 15 towns. These parents must drive their children to and from school, use public transportation or form carpools. There is a city bus stop directly in front of the school.

### **Student Information 2012-2013 School Year**

1. Number of applications received by grade by date of lottery:

K	38
1	45
2	30
3	32
4	54
5	14
6	13
7	10
8	0
Total	236

2. Number of students on waiting list by grade as of October 1, 2012:

K	2
1	5
2	10
3	12
4	12
5	7
6	8
7	5
8	1
Total	82

### **2013-14 School Year**

3. Number of applications received by grade as of date of lottery:

K	103
1	23
2	16
3	26
4	39
5	15
6	12

7 12  
8 3  
Total 249

4. Number of students on waiting list after the 2014 lottery: 170



# *Curriculum Design and Instructional Method and Modification*

## **Brief Summary**

Odyssey Community School's written curriculum tells what will be taught, to whom, for what length of time, in what sequence, and how student learning will be assessed. The five essential characteristics of the OCS Curriculum are:

1. **It is meaningful.** A meaningful curriculum focuses on fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a changing society and world.
2. **It is coherent.** A coherent curriculum provides opportunities at each grade level to learn and relearn fundamental knowledge and skills.
3. **It is articulated.** An articulated curriculum is one in which learning at different grade levels is appropriately sequenced and related.
4. **It is aligned.** An aligned curriculum connects the written curriculum document, what is taught and learned in classrooms and assessment practices.
5. **It sets high standards for student learning.**

Our curriculum is based on our mission and goals, and is aligned with state and national standards. OCS offers a planned, ongoing and systematic curriculum for students in grades Kindergarten through 8. We maintain high academic and behavioral expectations for all of our students, and teach a rigorous yet developmentally appropriate curriculum throughout all grade levels. With approximately 36 students per grade, Odyssey provides an average class size of 18, with smaller math classes in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. Odyssey's core curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the CT Common Core of Learning and the content strands contained in the Connecticut Mastery Test for Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. Odyssey's core academic areas are Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. In addition, formal curricula are in use in the areas of All School Exploratory (interdisciplinary, exploratory units of study), Advisory, Physical Education and Health, Music, Art, and our mission-driven courses of Media Literacy, Character and Communication. Throughout the entire curriculum, the following 5 skill areas are addressed at every grade level:

### **1. Writing to Learn.**

Writing is viewed as a basic skill and means of communication. Writing facilitates learning and should be taught as a direct skill as well as integrated throughout the curriculum.

### **2. Reading Efficiently.**

Reading plays an instrumental role in most academic learning at school. It is necessary for teachers at every grade level and in every subject to view themselves as teachers of reading—either in direct reading instruction or through content-related instruction.

### **3. Critical and Creative Thinking**

Critical thinking, the ability to analyze and reason, is the key factor in an individual's ability to solve problems. The ability to use fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration in both the cognitive and affective areas of the mind is characteristic of creative thinking.

#### **4. Communication Skills**

Proficiency, confidence and fluency in speaking, listening and using information and technology are critical areas that should be addressed at every grade level in order to prepare students to meet the literacy demands of the 21st century. A commitment to helping student develop these skills is part of the OCS mission statement.

#### **5. Study Skills and Learning to Learn**

Learning to learn addresses those skills that are necessary in order to be successful in the fundamentals of organization and life management. Study skills include the importance of being able to take notes, prepare for tests, manage time efficiently, etc.

All curricula are on a 3 year revision cycle to ensure that they continue to meet the latest state guidelines and to foster continuous improvement.

Odyssey is proud to offer three multi-age, interdisciplinary units of study each year called All School Exploratory, or ASE. These units provide opportunities for intensive, experiential exploration of topics of interest to pre-adolescents and young adolescents. In 2013 – 2014 the ASE topics were Renaissance, Africa, and Earthkeepers.

Odyssey's CIRCLE values and corresponding curriculum remains a vital part of OCS's core mission. The CIRCLE values, Courage, Integrity, Respect, Curiosity, Leadership and Excellence are taught intensively in the elementary grades and to all students who are new to OCS, and are taught to the rest of the students during MCC, our mission-focused classes consisting of Media Literacy, Character and Communication; in addition, these guiding values are infused into every aspect of our school's culture, from hallway interactions to classroom behavior, to our school-wide discipline plan.

Odyssey's curriculum evaluation focuses on goals and learner outcomes. The information having to do with whether students have met their learning goals that the review team gathers during the curriculum review process will assist in making decisions regarding improvement. There are many forms of evidence that a curriculum program is successful, including gains in student achievement, observed improvement in student skills, etc.

Some of the systems in place at OCS that enable assessment and reporting of student progress include:

- Report cards and progress notes
- CMTs
- AimsWeb universal screening assessments
- Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessments
- Direct assessments in reading, writing and math
- Student work samples
- End of chapter tests

- Performance assessments such as musical performances, lab demonstrations, oral presentations, etc.
- Student project work and portfolios
- Parent surveys

# *School Goals*

*In the areas of:*

1. Educational Progress of Students
2. Accomplishment of Mission, Purpose and Specialized Focus
3. Efforts to Reduce Racial, Ethnic and Economic Isolation to Increase the Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Student Body

## **I. Educational Progress of Students**

**Goal A:** Odyssey students will increase academic achievement during their tenure at OCS.

**Measurable Objective A.1:** Odyssey students will continue to demonstrate improvement in Language Arts.

**Measurement Tool:**

1. Monitoring and comparing 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade individual CMT scores for increase in written language and reading subtest scores.
2. Monitor and compare fall, winter, and spring AIMSWeb Nonsense word fluency and R-CBM Assessment scores in Language Arts for K-1 students
3. Monitor and compare AIMSWeb R-CBM and MAZE Assessment scores in Language Arts for 2-8 students.
4. Monitor and compare fall and spring Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment scores for students in K-4.

**Benchmark:**

1. 85% of students in grades 3 – 8 will score proficient or higher on the reading CMTs.
2. 85% of students in grades 3 – 8 will score proficient or higher on the writing CMTs.
3. 80% of students in grades K – 8 will meet the target score during the spring administration of Aimsweb reading tests.
4. 80% of students in grades K-4 will read on or above grade level according to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment on the spring administration.

**Measurable Objective A.2:** Odyssey students will demonstrate improvement in mathematics.

**Measurement Tool:**

1. Monitoring and comparing 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade individual CMT score in mathematics.
2. Monitor and compare fall, winter, and spring AIMSWeb scores in Mathematics for all students.

**Benchmark:**

1. 85% of students in grades 3 – 8 will score proficient or higher on the mathematics CMTs.
2. 80% of students in grades K – 8 will meet the target score on all administered

mathematics assessments in the spring administration Aimsweb.

**Progress in Meeting the Goal:**

In a comparison of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' CMT scores last year to their scores in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, scores have maintained or increased in every subject, and in most cases, shown significant growth throughout the years. 5th grade students' scores last year in comparison to their scores in 4th grade have decreased in math, reading, and writing. 4th grade students' scores last year in comparison to their scores in 3rd grade have increased in all subjects.

The following results show growth of 4th grade students in 2014 to their scores as 3rd grade students in 2013:

- **Math:** Increase from 67.6% at or above proficient to 83.8%.
- **Reading:** Increase from 52.9% at or above proficient to 75.7%.
- **Writing:** Increase from 61.8% at or above proficient to 86.5%.

The following results show growth of 5th grade students in 2014 to their scores as 4th grade students in 2013:

- **Math:** Decrease from 96.9% at or above proficient to 90.6%.
- **Reading:** Decrease from 84.4% at or above proficient to 59.4%.
- **Writing:** Decrease from 93.8% at or above proficient to 90.3%.

The following results show growth of 6th grade students in 2014 to their scores as 4th grade students in 2012:

- **Math:** Increase from 84.2% at or above proficient to 88.2%.
- **Reading:** Increase from 76.3% at or above proficient to 82.4%.
- **Writing:** Increase from 77.5% at or above proficient to 94.4%.

The following results show growth of 7th grade students in 2014 to their scores as 4th grade students in 2011:

- **Math:** Increase from 78.8% at or above proficient to 94.1%.
- **Reading:** Increase from 69.7% at or above proficient to 97%.
- **Writing:** Increase from 74.3% at or above proficient to 97.2%

The following results show growth of 8th grade students in 2014 to their scores as 4th grade students in 2010:

- **Math:** Increase from 73.5% at or above proficient to 93.7%.
- **Reading:** Increase from 58.8% at or above proficient to 90.9%.
- **Writing:** Increase from 76.5% at or above proficient to 90.9%.

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment shows that at least 80% of students in grades K-4 are reading at grade level. While the objective measured by the AIMSWeb reading and math assessments were not met as a whole school, most grades showed improvement in these assessments.

### Reading Benchmark Assessments

Grade	Assessment	Fall 2013	Winter 2014	Spring 2014
K	Nonsense Word Fluency		83%	94%
	Fountas and Pinnell		57%	85%
1	Nonsense Word Fluency	68%	68%	83%
	R-CBM		51%	54%
	Fountas and Pinnell	66%		83%
2	R-CBM	59%	59%	67%
	MAZE	49%	40%	38%
	Fountas and Pinnell	78%		89%
3	R-CBM	46%	77%	82%
	MAZE	75%	71%	77%
	Fountas and Pinnell	74%		80%
4	R-CBM	41%	70%	73%
	MAZE	70%	86%	70%
	Fountas and Pinnell	81%		92%
5	R-CBM	69%	69%	58%
	MAZE	50%	39%	35%
6	R-CBM	47%	53%	30%
	MAZE	53%	61%	42%
7	R-CBM	76%	46%	63%
	MAZE	78%	46%	57%
8	R-CBM	91%	81%	88%
	MAZE	78%	70%	42%

### Mathematics Benchmark Assessments

Grade	Assessment	Fall 2013	Winter 2014	Spring 2014
K	ORAL COUNTING MEASURE	49%	63%	88%
	NUMBER ID MEASURE	80%	74%	88%
	QUNATITY DISCRIMINATION	77%	84%	82%
	MISSING NUMBER MEASURE	60%	77%	88%
1	ORAL COUNTING MEASURE	58%	46%	62%
	NUMBER ID MEASURE	58%	43%	66%
	QUNATITY DISCRIMINATION	61%	49%	74%
	MISSING NUMBER MEASURE	58%	40%	60%
	M-COMP	71%	43%	60%
2	M-COMP	62%	76%	81%
	M-CAP	51%	68%	51%
3	M-COMP	54%	66%	80%
	M-CAP	65%	66%	74%
4	M-COMP	59%	81%	86%
	M-CAP	37%	65%	62%
5	M-COMP	75%	66%	66%
	M-CAP	53%	52%	52%
6	M-COMP	75%	78%	83%
	M-CAP	61%	78%	52%
7	M-COMP	57%	76%	78%
	M-CAP	78%	74%	81%
8	M-COMP	73%	76%	65%
	M-CAP	42%	85%	82%

**Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2013-14 School Year:**

No modifications were made to the goal or objectives.

**Improvements Planned for 2014-15:**

- In the 2014-2015 school year, we will add a part time ESL tutor that will provide instruction to our English Language Learners who are in need of assistance to acquire English and/or meet curricular goals in grades K-8. The tutor will meet with students in classrooms and provide supplemental instruction as needed.
- We have added a part-time paraprofessional in our second grade classes in order to provide additional support to our students in meeting goals.
- A K-6 Intervention Teacher was added to support students receiving Tier III interventions and special education students.
- We have allotted additional time into the schedules of our Literacy Specialist and Math Specialist in order to provide coaching to our teachers in grades K-8.
- A school-wide goal related to health and wellness will be added to address Odyssey's movement towards promoting a healthy lifestyle for our students.
- We have been working closely with representatives from CREC to gain greater expertise in Common Core Standards. Professional development has been provided to staff on Common Core related topics such as an overview of the standards, effective teaching practices, assessments, and Webb's Depth of Knowledge.

**II. Accomplishment of Mission, Purpose and Specialized Focus**

**Goal A:** Odyssey will remain true to our overall mission by maintaining small classes, embracing interdisciplinary instruction, integrating media and technology into all subject areas, strengthening our advisory program, and focusing on character development through the daily integration of our CIRCLE values.

**Measurable Objective A.1:** Odyssey will maintain small class size in all subject areas.

**Measurement Tool:**

1. Class rosters

**Benchmark:**

1. Class size will not exceed an average of 18 students per section.

**Measurable Objective 2:** Odyssey will offer 3 curricular units that support interdisciplinary instruction; classes will be multi-grade.

**Measurement Tool**

1. Master Schedule

**Benchmark**

1. Master Schedule includes 3 interdisciplinary units of instruction.

**Measurable Objective 3:** MCC (Media Literacy, Character and Communication) will be offered in grades 3-8. Students in grades K-2 will receive character education. In addition, technology will be infused throughout the curriculum at all grade levels.

**Measurement Tool**

1. Master Schedule

**Benchmark**

1. Master Schedule contains technology classes for each grade level, including video and media literacy classes for grades 6 – 8.

**Progress in Meeting the Goal:**

Class rosters show that the average class size was 17; due to scheduling needs, one or two classes had a roster of 20.

Three interdisciplinary units were offered in all grades. These units were Africa, Renaissance, and Earth Keepers. Students participated in mixed age instruction, school activities, field trips, and guest speakers.

Odyssey’s Character Development program has been formalized and fully implemented. MCC classes are Odyssey’s mission-driven classes, and include Media Literacy, Character and Communications. Students in grades 3-8 take MCC class at least one block (6 weeks) per year.

**Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2013-14 School Year:**

No modifications were made to the goal or objectives.

**Improvements Planned for 2014-15:**

- Beginning in October of 2014, students in grade 2 will receive instruction in basic computer skills such as keyboarding and navigation. Instruction will be provided by our technology teacher to small groups of students during intervention block. Students will receive instruction once a week for the entire school year. Skills will be supported with the use of technology during general classroom instruction.

**III. Efforts to Reduce Racial, Ethnic and Economic Isolation and to Increase the Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Student Body**

**Goal**

Odyssey will continue to attract a diverse student body, and will embrace a culture of acceptance and celebration of diversity.

**Measurable Objective 1**



The school staff will develop and students will actively participate in enrichment and/or ASE units focused on a wide variety of world cultures.

### **Measurement Tool**

Review of All School Exploratory units.

### **Benchmark**

At least one All School Exploratory Unit per year will be dedicated to the exploration of a topic with a focus on diversity.

### **Measurable Objective 2**

Odyssey students will participate in advisory peer groups as well as other assigned groups to address issues related to diversity.

### **Measurement Tool**

All students in grades 5-8 will be assigned to an advisory for the school year; students will be given a variety of peer group opportunities as part of Odyssey's enrichment program.

### **Progress in Meeting the Goal**

Odyssey has a minority population of 53%, making us a thoroughly and successfully integrated and diverse school of choice. In 2013 – 2014 there were no referrals for behavioral incidents motivated by racism or prejudice against low income. Students at Odyssey behave in a way that demonstrates a lack of prejudice. Students consider themselves to be part of the school community, and understand that they are called upon to help their peers achieve their potential regardless of race, ethnicity or economic level.

During the 2013 – 2014 school year, one All School Exploratory focused on Africa. Students participated in a wide variety of exploratory activities, including cultural dance, games, food, history, etc.

### **Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2013-14 School Year:**

No modifications were made to the goal or objectives.

### **Improvements Planned for 2014-2015**

- Lessons on diversity and sensitivity to different cultures and races will continue to be offered as part of a school core subject and/or advisory activities.

# *Financial Information*

Please see Attachment A for Budget.

## *Best Practices*

### Best Practice: Intervention Block

During the 2013-2014 school year, Odyssey implemented an Intervention Block for grades K-2. Two classroom teachers, a paraprofessional, and Odyssey's SRBI Interventionist meet with small groups of students to provide Tier II interventions and remediation for students who demonstrate a need for more intensive instruction. The Intervention Block is 30 minutes long, four days a week. There are three days of focus on Language Arts skills, and one day of focus on Math skills.

Students are assessed at the start of the year using AIMS Web tests in Math, Reading, and Writing. Students are also given the Fountas & Pinnell Test to determine their reading level. Data from these assessments are analyzed by Odyssey's Literacy Specialist and Math Specialist in conjunction with classroom teachers. Students who demonstrate a need for Tier II or Tier III Interventions are placed in SRBI groups. These groups meet during the Intervention Block as well as at other scheduled times. Students who are not placed in SRBI groups are placed either in remediation groups or enrichment groups.

SRBI groups meet with either the SRBI Interventionist or a classroom teacher to implement Tier II interventions targeted to the needs of the students in the group. The group leaders communicate weekly with classroom teachers to determine what concerns the teacher has, what concepts the students struggle with in the classroom, to share strategies, and to report on the success and struggles of the students during Intervention Block. Students are progress monitored every 6-8 weeks to determine the need for continued interventions.

Remediation groups meet during Intervention Block with either a classroom teacher or a trained paraprofessional. The students in these groups do not demonstrate a need for Tier II interventions, but assessments and input from classroom teachers show that they could benefit from specific, targeted, small-group instruction to ensure that they continue to meet grade-level standards. Group leaders communicate with classroom teachers to determine what the needs of the students are and to plan instruction to boost mastery of skills and concepts being taught in class.

The enrichment group is run by a trained paraprofessional, either in conjunction with or under the guidance of a certified teacher. Students in this group consistently perform at or above grade level, and they do activities that support and extend the curriculum during the Intervention

Block time.

Classroom teachers meet regularly to review progress monitoring data from SRBI groups and results of classroom performance and assessments. Based off this information, students can be moved from one group to another to meet their needs. As students demonstrate consistent mastery of skills and concepts being taught, they are moved into the enrichment group. If students begin to struggle in one or more areas, they can be moved into a remediation group. Students that are exited from SRBI groups are often placed into a remediation group to ensure that they continue to meet grade-level expectations.

The specific, targeted instruction combined with the flexible nature of groups has made Intervention Block a success. The dedication of monetary and personnel resources allows staff to not only provide Tier II interventions to students who begin the year not meeting grade-level expectations, it allows staff to intervene before struggling students fall too far behind. In 2014 – 2015 we will continue to provide an Intervention Block for grades K-2, and the block will also be added to grade 3. Odyssey will dedicate professional development time to training the staff who lead groups, as well as to planning and data analysis to ensure that all students are achieving at expected levels.

# *Governance*

## **Governing Board Meetings held in 2013-14:**

August 26, 2013  
September 23, 2013  
October 28, 2013  
November 18, 2013  
December 16, 2013  
January 27, 2014  
February 24, 2014  
March 24, 2014  
April 28, 2014  
May 26, 2014

## **Summary of Major Policy Decisions**

# *Summary of Other Key Accomplishments*

## **A CHRONOLOGY OF SCHOOL ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EVENTS**

Through an agreement with East Hartford Public Schools, Odyssey continued to offer lunch through Sodexo Food Services, as well as free or reduced lunch for eligible families.

Through an agreement with Manchester Early Learning Center we are able to offer after school day care until 6:00 p.m. MELC was flexible enough to offer day care to additional parents for half-day Fridays.

Held middle school physical education field day at Wickham Park; mile run on the track of Manchester High School; and elementary physical education field day at Northwest Park.

Conducted three trimester-long All School Explorations: Renaissance (including a field trip to the Renaissance Faire), Africa, and Earth Keepers

Odyssey staff members, students and parents rode a school bus to the Legislative Office Building in support of the proposed Education Reform Bill.

Invited a dozen former students to attend a parent presentation on high school choice. The graduates did a wonderful job representing their individual schools, talked about why they had chosen them, and how they felt Odyssey had prepared them for the high school experience.

Middle school students and their families participated in the Annual Bigelow Brook Clean-Up. Elementary students and parents participated in a morning playground clean-up session where we pulled weeds and thinned out some of the flowering plants.

Odyssey participation in the Town of Manchester Frank Rizzo Cross Country Race more than doubled this year. A parent was kind enough to purchase team tee shirts for all the kids who ran in a division.

We hired the same graffiti artist who did our wonderful outdoor mural to do an indoor mural in the library.

We hired an experienced, recently retired librarian. She spent the year entering all our inventory into our new data base and check-out program, while at the same time converting our library into the Dewey Decimal System. Student and parent enthusiasm is extremely high for the opening of the library in September, 2014.

To reinforce our K-8 model, 8th graders performed a variety of volunteer duties. They walked younger students from the drop-off point to their classrooms, assisted in kindergarten classrooms before school, and acted as tutors and mentor buddies to elementary students in gaining reading and math skills. We had one memorable buddy day during the winter. Ice would melt during the day and refreeze at night. One morning was so dangerous that middle school students volunteered to escort the youngest students one by one up the lane and into their classrooms. Parents were relieved and we didn't have a single slipping accident.

Work was concluded on reworking our curriculum manuals to reflect common core standards.

Twelve teachers attended common core training.

We had a three day in-house teacher training by CREC consultants on common core training, which will continue through the next school year.

We began a study group to decide whether we should continue with our Saxon Math curriculum. A decision will be made during the 2014-2015 school year.

Began an after school club called Cooking Buddies which purposely paired older and

younger kids in cooking classes. We were able to utilize the skills teaching kitchen in the elementary learning center for this club.

## **COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

A Capital Development Committee had been created the year before consisting of the Board Executive Committee members, Administrative Team and invited guests was reconfigured into a Steering Committee. This committee allowed us to share the developments of the new elementary program and the construction as we proceeded at a fast rate of speed.

## **VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION**

Student Council held a holiday food drive to benefit our local shelter and food kitchen.

Middle school students continued their tradition of working with the East Hartford Lions Club to deliver Thanksgiving food to families in need.

Students continued their commitment to raising funds for girls education in Burkina Faso in West Africa through the sale of friendship bracelets made by Student Council members.

Students continued their annual participation in the Muscular Dystrophy Hop-A-Thon.

Students continued to raise funds and awareness of emergencies they see in the media, such as a school that was closed due to storm damage in Louisiana.

## **COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

The Timken Family Foundation again came to our aid with funding to purchase three additional Smart Boards for the newly built classrooms.

A Technology Committee was formed, consisting of the Administrative Team, technology teacher, technology director, teachers and a parent. This committee is charged with looking forward to the future. Items of particular interest this year were Bring Your Own Device issues, the use of tablets in the classroom, and digital textbooks.

## **LIBRARY RESOURCES**

Sadly, the expansion and resultant reassignments of classrooms, we had to put our library into storage until our new library is built during Phase Two construction. Extra care was put into making sure that teachers had ample classroom libraries.

We received good news in June from the Manchester Board of Education. They were closing an elementary school and we were offered several thousand K-3 books for our future library.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE/ACTIVITIES**

Our school day begins at 8:00 a.m. The doors open at 7:30 and teachers are in their rooms to care for early arriving children.

We established a contract with the Manchester Early Learning Center to provide day care from school dismissal to 6:00 p.m., including half-day Fridays. The program is reasonably priced at \$216 per month and ran close to capacity throughout the year.

Teachers continue to operate a variety of after school clubs from 2:45 to 3:45 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. These clubs change each trimester.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

With the addition of early elementary grades we found a cadre of parents and grandparents who committed to being a room mother to individual teachers.

Our community faced a considerable challenge as we admitted a second grade girl who was being treated for a rare form of ovarian cancer which caused frequent absences from school. From the first day of school her teacher utilized Skype technology to introduce her to her classmates and to keep her involved in the day to day classroom activities. Parents worked with an administrator to put on a fundraising dinner with the generous support of Olive Garden providing the food, cooking and serving. Parents solicited raffle and silent auction items and a total of \$4,500 was raised to assist the family.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

While approximately 75% of our students are Manchester residents, we saw an increase in the number of families from other towns. This year we had students from 15 towns whose parents drove them, formed carpools, or utilized public transportation for older students.

### **FOOD SERVICE**

We were able to develop a contract with the East Hartford Board of Education which made it possible for us to continue to use Sodexo Food Services for lunch and - for the first time - be able to offer free or reduced lunch to eligible families. This saw a large increase in the number of students buying school lunches.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATIONS**

We had an extremely positive experience with our newly adopted Responsive Classroom model in elementary grades K-4.

Our experience with our new SRBI Literacy Specialist position was so positive that the decision was made to make a similar position in next years budget for Math.

Our special education staff and paraprofessional staff was considerably enhanced so that we could provide appropriate support to students identified as benefiting from Response to Intervention techniques.

## *Attachments*

Attachment A  
Attachment B  
Attachment C

Budget  
News clippings  
Photographs of Special Events