



inspired learning in "green" and healthy schools



Fall Newsletter

From Our Founder
November 2026

Our Mission for Every Child

Odyssey's mission is to work in partnership families and our community with the aim of helping each child reach their own unique and wonderful potential--spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. Our child-centered programs are selected so that children have multiple opportunities to find and develop their passions.

A Message from Our Founder

Dear Odyssey Families, Faculty, Staff, and Friends,

I have always loved this time of year in our schools! As the weather cools, our students have settled into their classrooms, learning is well underway, and there is wonderful energy across our Odyssey family. I want to share important updates and celebrate what makes Odyssey so special.

It is a tremendous honor to educate and nurture your children. This newsletter is a little longer than usual, but there is much to share, and I hope you enjoy reading about the work underway in our schools!

And don't forget to scan the QR code below to receive your volunteer hours for reading this newsletter!



Use this QR code or click this link [HERE](#) to earn your volunteer service time and participate in our school engagement competition.

November Calendar

Nov 6	Veterans Day Celebration – OPA & Jr/Sr High
Nov 10	Veterans Day Celebration - OCSE
Nov 11	Veterans Day Holiday
Nov 19	OCS Inc. Board of Directors Meeting
Nov 23 – 27	Thanksgiving Holiday for All
Nov 30	Students Return

Celebrating Our Principals During National Principals Month

October is National Principals Month, and I certainly don't want it to pass without recognizing the wonderful individuals who lead our schools!

My heartfelt appreciation goes to:

- **Dr. Brian Dawson** — Odyssey Charter School Elementary
- **Mr. Mike Davis** — Odyssey Charter School Jr./Sr. High
- **Mrs. Shelly Miedona** — Odyssey Preparatory Academy
- **Ms. Alia Hartwick** — Director of Montessori Village Green

School leadership is not easy! Our principals support teachers, help children succeed, work with families, solve unexpected problems, and build positive school cultures each day.

Great leadership takes wisdom, compassion, patience, courage, and, most importantly, a genuine love for children.

To each of our school leaders, thank you for your dedication, your hard work, and the many ways you help make Odyssey such a special place. I know the challenges can sometimes seem endless, but please know how much you are appreciated!

T.H.R.I.V.E.: Helping Students Build Skills for Life

Our sixth-grade T.H.R.I.V.E. program is off to a wonderful start, helping students develop the organizational, study, and life skills they need in school and beyond.

Students have already completed lessons focusing on self-awareness, understanding how the brain learns, time management, organization, developing good habits, and taking responsibility for their learning. They are now moving into test-taking strategies, including how to prepare effectively, manage test anxiety, and learn from mistakes. Our goal is to help students become more confident, independent, and successful learners.

We look forward to sharing more about the program and its next steps at a T.H.R.I.V.E. parent meeting in November. Please watch for additional information.



If you have questions, please contact our T.H.R.I.V.E. Instructor, Ms. Ambrose at ambrosew@odysseycharterschool.com or our Sixth-Grade Counselor, Ms. Wonsey, at wonseyw@odysseycharterschool.com.

The Deep Read: Building Well-Educated Minds



This summer, Odyssey strengthened its commitment to reading through our Summer Reading Program, introducing students to carefully selected literature, classical works, and American heritage selections. Our goal is to develop strong, confident readers who appreciate meaningful books.

This school year, our new Deep Read initiative brings complete, carefully selected books into classrooms at every grade level. Beyond excerpts and short passages, students are developing reading stamina, vocabulary, comprehension, and the ability to explore characters, ideas, themes, and historical connections in depth.

Our selections include wonderful books such as *Charlotte's Web*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *The Lightning Thief* in our elementary grades; *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry*, *The Hobbit*, *The Jungle Book*, and *The Call of the Wild* in our middle grades; and classics such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Pride and Prejudice* in high school.

These works open doors to rich language, different perspectives, history, and enduring questions.

Philosophers such as Socrates and Aristotle understood that education develops the ability to reason, question, and exercise sound judgment. Reading is foundational: when children read deeply, they learn to think deeply.

With screens and short-form content competing for attention, students need the ability to concentrate, question what they read, distinguish fact from opinion, and think independently.

Our goal is not simply to teach children to read, but to develop well-educated minds—curious, thoughtful, discerning, and prepared for a lifetime of learning.

Creating a National Model for Healthy Schools

Odyssey was founded on the belief that educating the whole child means more than academics. We partner with parents to help children grow intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, developing healthy habits and strong character for life.

Our vision of becoming a National Model for Healthy Schools guides our work, from freshly prepared meals and school gardens to Positive Discipline and nurturing classrooms.

This year, our elementary gardening program includes a formal curriculum connecting gardening with science, nutrition, healthy eating, and hands-on learning.

We are also strengthening PE through Fit 4 Life professional learning and more purposeful opportunities for fitness, movement, and wellness—helping children build confidence and healthy habits for life.

At Jr./Sr. High, a new breakfast cart under the gym awning offers quick, nutritious choices, including delicious grab-and-go egg wraps! From PE and recess to our nature trail, farms, and gardens, our children have many ways to move, explore, and discover outdoors.

There is more to accomplish, but I believe deeply in creating academically challenging, healthy, beautiful, nurturing schools where children flourish!

Preparing Our Students for a Bright Future

We want every Odyssey student to explore interests and talents and prepare for a successful future. Opportunities include Digital Design, Emergency Medical Responder, Engineering, Advanced Placement, clubs, athletics, and Edmentum electives suited to individual interests.

Students may also earn college credits through Dual Enrollment at Eastern Florida State College or, if qualified, Early College at Florida Tech. We provide bus transportation to help make these options accessible.

I am especially proud of our 99% graduation rate—a reflection of the commitment of students, teachers, and families! Whether graduates pursue college, technical training, or work, we want them well-educated, confident, and prepared.

For more information about these opportunities, please contact our Assistant Principal, Mr. Mike Guevara, at guevaram@odysseycharter-school.com.



Cybersecurity: Moving Forward Together

September brought significant challenges when a cybersecurity incident disrupted phones, intercoms, computers, and other systems. I sincerely thank our families, faculty, and staff for their patience and support.

The disruption also coincided with **September 11, a day of remembrance** that holds special significance for our country. Despite the challenges, our U.S. History students participated in a meaningful lesson developed by the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and shared through the Florida Department of Education. Their teacher also shared his personal memories of that day, including conversations with his father in Brooklyn as the events unfolded. Our school leaders ensured that September 11 was also recognized at our evening athletic events, with a moment of silence honoring the lives lost and the heroes of that day. I am especially grateful to those who helped make these remembrances possible during such an extraordinary week.

We continue improving our technology, cybersecurity, and operations to provide a safe, secure, well-prepared learning environment.

Important Update: Understanding Our School Funding: Millage and Sales Surtax Renewals

With the November election approaching, I want families to understand two important sources of funding for our schools and children.

We all want the very best for our children. Strong schools begin with great teachers, and great teachers help build strong, capable children. The benefits extend beyond the classroom, strengthening our communities, attracting families, and helping support property values. Quality schools matter to everyone!

On November 3, Brevard County voters will consider renewing two existing taxes—not new taxes, and renewal would not raise their current rates. The one-mill property tax dates to 2022 and the half-cent sales surtax to 2014. Both support traditional public and public charter schools, including Odyssey.

Millage supports teacher and staff salary supplements, helping Odyssey attract and retain dedicated educators. According to the National Education Association's 2026 rankings, Florida is 50th in average teacher pay.

The half-cent sales surtax supports school facilities, safety, and infrastructure. At Odyssey, it has helped fund roofs, parking lots, playgrounds, buses, and HVAC systems.

Everyone making taxable purchases in Brevard County helps pay the surtax, including residents, snowbirds, and visitors.

Both measures would continue at their existing rates if renewed, with public accountability and independent citizen oversight.

While we cannot tell you how to vote, we can certainly inform! I encourage families to understand these measures and make their own informed decisions.

Important Brevard County Voting Dates

- Early Voting: October 19–31, 2026
- Monday–Friday: 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
- Saturday–Sunday: 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026, 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

During early voting, Brevard County voters may vote at any designated early voting location. On Election Day, voters must vote at their assigned precinct.

For more information, visit VoteBrevard.gov or Brevard Public Schools.

A More Thoughtful Approach to Technology and Screen Time

This year, Odyssey is significantly reducing screen time in elementary classrooms and using technology more strategically and selectively at Jr./Sr. High.

Technology has its place, but too much screen time can displace reading, writing, discussion, hands-on learning, and direct interaction. At the secondary level, it should enhance instruction and research where appropriate.

Our goal is a healthier balance of technology and traditional learning that encourages deeper thinking.

Honoring Our Veterans and the Freedoms We Cherish

At Odyssey, we teach children to love our country, cherish our freedoms, and honor those who have served and sacrificed. As a veteran myself, this is especially meaningful to me.

One of my favorite Odyssey traditions is the Veterans Day Breakfast, which I began years ago so children could meet veterans, hear their stories, and say thank you.

This November, we invite our students to bring their favorite veteran to breakfast! Celebrations will be held at our Wyoming Campus on November 6 and Eldron Campus on November 10. Each campus will share reservation information with families.

Our celebrations will include patriotic music, the Pledge of Allegiance, and America's White Table, honoring those who are missing and have not returned home. Students in U.S. History, Civics, and fifth grade will also write essays on "What Freedom Means to Me," with one student from each campus selected to read their essay to our veterans.

Our second- and third-grade students will be writing letters and creating cards for **Gunner's Mate Third Class (GM3) Jackson Livingston and his fellow sailors aboard the USS Jason Dunham (DDG-109)**. What a wonderful opportunity for our youngest students to personally thank those serving our country!

We are also proud to be recognized as a **Purple Star School**, reflecting our commitment to supporting military-connected children and their families.

I hope these experiences leave lasting memories and deepen our children's appreciation for the precious gift of freedom.



Our Partnership with Parents

A guiding principle of Odyssey is our partnership with parents. A strong home-school relationship is essential to providing the best education for children.

At Odyssey, we are working intentionally with our students to develop the ability to listen to different perspectives, discuss difficult issues respectfully, think critically, and disagree without anger or hostility. In a world where outrage, quick judgments, and public criticism have become increasingly common, we want our children to learn a better way of communicating and resolving differences. And as adults, we have a responsibility to model these same values.

Parents will sometimes have questions or disagree with school decisions. We welcome constructive feedback and ask for mutual respect, listening, and a commitment to resolving concerns in children's best interests.

We encourage parents to begin with the teacher or staff member, then the principal. Unresolved concerns may be brought to a designated Governing Board Representative through the grievance process.

Designated Parent Grievance Representatives:

Odyssey Charter School
Amber Miller – 321-442-2742
millera@odysseycharterschool.com

Odyssey Preparatory Academy
Laurie Young – 321-446-3594
youngl@odysseycharterschool.com

Join the Odyssey Team!

More than 350 dedicated faculty and staff members make a difference for Odyssey students every day!

From time to time, openings arise in teaching, classroom support, substitutes, food service, custodial services, transportation, and administration.

If you know someone who shares our passion for children, please encourage them to explore current opportunities!

Explore opportunities and apply: Odyssey Employment Opportunities(<https://www.applitrack.com/odysseyschools/onlineapp/>)
Or email your resume to employment@odysseycharterschool.com.

Looking Ahead: New Facilities and Continued Growth

Our dreams for the future of Odyssey Schools continue!

We remain committed to new facilities for Montessori Village Green and Odyssey Preparatory Academy. Although progress has taken longer than hoped, planning continues. We want to be thoughtful and responsible as we plan beautiful, healthy, inspiring facilities that reflect our educational philosophy and serve children for generations.

We look forward to sharing more as these plans progress. Sometimes good things take longer than we would like!

A Season of Thanksgiving

As Thanksgiving approaches, I think about the wonderful people and experiences that have shaped Odyssey's journey.

A vision for a different kind of education has grown into a community of children, families, teachers, and leaders who believe in what we are accomplishing together.

We have had many successes and certainly our share of challenges! But through it all, I continue to believe deeply in what we are doing. Our responsibility goes far beyond academics. We are helping children discover their gifts, develop strong character, care for others, and grow into healthy, capable, and resilient young people who will make a positive difference in the world.

I am grateful for our teachers and staff, supportive families, and wonderful children who bring joy and purpose to our work.

Thank you for trusting us to educate and nurture your children and for continuing to believe in our mission.

I wish you and your families a beautiful Thanksgiving filled with love, laughter, gratitude, and wonderful times together!



With heartfelt gratitude,

Ms. Constance Ortiz

Founder, Odyssey Schools



Use this QR code or click this link [HERE](#) to earn your volunteer service time and participate in our school engagement competition.

Wonderful Children. Wonderful Moments. The Heart of Odyssey!

Every picture tells a little part of our Odyssey story!

