



# Odyssey Charter School of Nevada

Presentation for the SPCSA Board of Directors

March 7, 2025

## **Administration**

- Timothy Lorenz, Superintendent of Schools
- Shelli Guthrie, Executive Director of School Operations
- Stephanie Han, Director of Human Resources
- Robert Handwerker, Director of Business and Finance
- Derek Stafford, High School Principal
- Dr. Julie Charles, Middle School Principal
- Gerry Born, Elementary School Principal
- Nancy Herrod, Director of Federal Programs
- Rebecca Fitzgerald, Director of Professional Development and Online Curriculum and Instruction
- Brad Evans, English Language and Assessment Coordinator
- Michael Fitzgerald, High School Assistant Principal
- Casey Roden, High School Assistant Principal

## **Board of Directors**

- Alan Diskin, Board President
- Richard Douglas, Board Vice President
- Larry Moulton
- Sharon Rushforth
- Serena Guimarey
- Laurie Kelman

Odyssey Charter School serves students grades kindergarten through 12th grade from all over the Las Vegas Valley, Henderson, and Boulder City. Our students are organized into three individual schools.

Elementary School, grades K-5, 354 students

Middle School, grades 6-8, 615 students

High School, grades 9-12, 1400 students

## **History**

Odyssey Charter School (OCS) located in the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, opened its doors to the students of Clark County in 1999. The school began with 200 students and currently serves approximately 2,340 students, grades K-12. The official mascot of OCS is the owl, representing wisdom, knowledge, and change. OCS has been a leader in the Charter School Movement, celebrating 25 years of excellence in education. The school is proud to be one of the first blended-learning educational models in the nation and is the longest-standing charter school in Nevada.

In addition to OCS being a Blended Learning Model, it is also a fully inclusive school, allowing all students to be in the least restrictive and normalized learning environment. Special services and supports are delivered in the general education classroom. Every student is valued and every student is recognized as having unlimited potential for continued success. OCS is committed to strong support in the area of literacy and mathematics, recognizing these are critical skills required to be successful in every area of life. The elementary, middle, and high schools all have designated literacy and math Instructional Strategists to support learners.

Odyssey believes that the Charter School Movement was established to support, advance, and promote positive and productive change in public education as a whole. The school is tuition-free and open to all students residing in Clark County. OCS is a single, independent public charter school which has no affiliation or reliance on any Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Educational Management Organization (EMO).

## **Demographics**

OCS believes that all students are unique and possess a multitude of gifts, talents, and unlimited potential. We are also mindful that all students are multi-dimensional in their educational and life experiences and cannot be defined by any one systematic grouping or categorization. Diversity exists within all communities of students. With this acknowledgment and understanding, OCS's demographic breakdown is as follows: 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4% Asian, 42% Hispanic or Latino, 12% Black or African American, 28% Caucasian, 1% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 13% Two or more races. The disaggregation of students qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) between the three schools is as follows: High School 56%, Middle School 61% and Elementary School 75%. 6% of students are English Learners (EL) and 13% of students are on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Odyssey celebrates the diversity of our population and believes the strength of our school is reflected in our ability to recognize, support, and enhance the unlimited gifts, talents, abilities, and uniqueness of each individual student.

## **Governance**

OCS has an amazing Board of Directors made up of six outstanding individuals who meet quarterly throughout the school year to graciously and selflessly volunteer their time, energy and expertise. The OCS Board of Directors is well-versed in Board governance and is made up of specific categories consisting of a Representative of Higher Education (also serves as the Board President), a Financial Services and Accounting Representative (also serves as the Vice President), a Retired Licensed Special Education Teacher/SEIF, a Retired Licensed Teacher and a Parent Representative. The OCS Board is active, focused and aligns all of its decisions with OCS's Mission and Core Values. The OCS Board hires and supervises the Superintendent of Schools, who is responsible for school

safety, academic achievement, managing finances, personnel and resources, as well as promoting the School's Mission and Core Values.

The governing body of OCS is responsible for ensuring the success of the school and its students. While the school leadership and staff manage the day-to-day responsibilities of operating the school, the OCS Governing Body is ultimately accountable to the charter school sponsor for students' academic achievement, effective organizational practices, and strong stewardship of public funds.

OCS's Leadership Team is divided into three categories which includes a Central Office Team consisting of the Superintendent of Schools, Executive Director of School Operations, Director of Business and Finance, and a Director of Human Resources. A school-based administrative team with both the elementary and middle school each having a principal and the high school consisting of a principal and two assistant principals. The organization also has administrators who serve all three schools, K-12, which include a Director of Federal Programs (Oversight for Special Education, Title 1, Title 3, and English Learners), a Director of Professional Development (Providing one-on-one professional development for the Instructional Team and course design and development support) and an English Learner and Assessment Coordinator (Overseeing State and Federally mandated assessments as well as supporting English Learner programs).

### **Mission and Core Values**

OCS has developed the trust of students and families by implementing and adhering to our fundamental beliefs as outlined in our Mission Statement and Core Values. OCS continuously reviews our Mission and Core Values. They are painted on the wall of the Board Room in our administrative building and referenced regularly.

#### **Mission**

At Odyssey Charter Schools, we celebrate the uniqueness of each student and their family. Using individualization and sound instructional practices, we foster each student's academic achievement and life success.

#### **Core Values**

1. Students First - Student success is our driving force.
2. Unlimited Potential - All students can achieve lifelong growth.
3. Nurturing Community - Empathy, trust, and respect create a diverse, caring, and non-judgmental community.
4. Readiness for Life - All students are prepared for college, career, and future opportunities.

### **Philosophy of Education**

OCS continues to be committed to a student-centered approach in all areas of the school. The school is fully inclusive, utilizing the blended learning model. The support, compassion, non-judgmental practices, and individualization of Odyssey Charter School extends to every learner, which is reflected in OCS's high enrollment numbers. The school's educational and humanistic approach supports students in developing strong, independent, critical, creative and problem-solving skills which prepares them for college and post-secondary school opportunities.

## **Course Development and Curriculum**

Odyssey Charter School does not purchase courses from a vendor and does not sell our course materials. Instead, all of Odyssey's online instruction is designed by the teacher for their students, typically one to two weeks prior to the lesson opening. For courses that were developed by a teacher a prior year, the course is still continuously updated and new lessons are often added based on student needs. This process is similar to the method used by teachers in traditional settings where they first create lesson plans aligned to standards, then teach the planned content to the students a week or two later. This allows teachers to be responsive to students as they learn. Odyssey's online courses are used for Odyssey students only.

OCS implements strong, effective, rigorous, relevant, and culturally responsive practices by employing highly qualified instructors who actively teach, facilitate, empower, and engage students in the process of learning. OCS also provides specialized instruction and support from a highly qualified team of special education teachers, facilitators, and itinerant service providers, to support students with disabilities. The school also has an English Learner and Assessment Coordinator, accompanied by dedicated instructors, to provide extensive language support to students who qualify and/or require academic support. OCS's teachers utilize rich, diverse, thought-provoking materials from a multitude of sources and, as previously discussed, design, construct and update their own lessons. The lessons are tightly aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Lessons are reviewed regularly in collaboration with the teacher, Director of Professional Development & Online Curriculum and Instruction's team, and school leaders. The curriculum and course design are updated continuously.

The school does purchase some pre-designed programs to supplement and enrich the teacher-designed courses. These programs also assist with academic, literacy and reading interventions for students. OCS uses Moodle as the Student Learning Management System (LMS).

OCS offers a CTE pathway in Graphic Design and is in the process of adding Cybersecurity and Video Game Design. The school offers art, theater and music enrichment courses, K-12.

Students are encouraged to enhance their learning experience with courses in Advanced Placement, Honors, Dual Enrollment, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways. All students have access to comprehensive academic support and services which include fully staffed Learning Labs and Intervention programs, available five days a week. OCS has tuition-free summer school programs for elementary, middle and high school students.

## **Blended Learning Model, Online, Face-to-Face, and Supplemental Supports**

The majority of the OCS's curriculum is delivered online. Our online courses are complemented and supplemented by face-to-face support (Classroom Instruction). The in-person component of OCS's program provides academic instruction, intervention, specialized services and programs, advanced classes (AP, Dual-Enrollment and Honors), college counseling and counseling/social worker services and supports, student council and clubs. OCS is committed to the success of every student and has created a systematically designed support structure to remove learning barriers.

All three schools utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This includes layers of support to address such barriers as attendance, academic progress, health, behavior, the emotional and physical well-being of students, and crisis intervention.

## **Academic Performance**

The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) is designed to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to “meaningfully differentiate” schools. All three of OCS’s schools are currently and have been rated three Stars or greater (out of five) on the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) rankings. Odyssey Charter Middle School is currently ranked 4-Stars, and Odyssey Charter High School and Elementary School are currently ranked 3-Stars. We have maintained a stable student population over the past three years and will continue to make significant gains in our academic achievement.

Odyssey Charter High School’s 4-Year Graduation Rate for the graduating class of 2023-2024 is 93.1%, which surpasses both State and CCSD averages.

## **Goals**

Odyssey will improve academic performance as reflected on the School Performance Plans, which is reviewed and updated annually based on assessment data and current NSPF data.

Odyssey will actively pursue addressing the needs of the school facility. Odyssey will either improve its current facility or move its physical school facility.