It’s hard to believe the 2012-2013 school year is nearly over. There are lots of accomplishments over the past year worthy of recognition. First, is how proud the entire administration is of our students’ and teachers’ hard work in preparation for FCAT! Students and teachers also worked very diligently to make sure those taking End of Course Exams for Honors Geometry, Honors Algebra, Algebra 1, Honors Earth Space Science and High School Spanish 1 are fully prepared for their exams. Moreover, hundreds of students have demonstrated that their primary focus is on academics by maintaining the A/B Honor Roll and/or Principal’s All A’s Honor Roll status this year. Congratulations to these students! They truly exemplify that Odyssey is a great place to learn! I enjoyed recognizing all these academically exemplary students at our Evening of Excellence.

In addition, it has been a pleasure to recognize students for a variety of achievements. With our Student of the Month program, we have recognized one male and one female student from each team for character, leadership, service, and scholarship. We have also had the privilege of honoring students for their contributions to our school and community through awards and recognitions such as Martin Luther King Humanitarian, Disney’s Dreamer and Doer, Spirit of Excellence, Art Reflections sponsored by PTSA (at both school and county level), Woodmen of America Speech Contest, The Water Color Project sponsored by OUC, All County Chorus, Band, and Orchestra Students, and Athletics. Parents, thank you for your support of our students. We all should be very proud of the way that they represent themselves, their families, and our school.

Parents, we realize that students are excited about the end of the school year, however, it is very important for students to remain focused on their academics up to the very last day of school. This is a critical time in the school year for all students, whether a student has all A’s and B’s and wants to maintain Honor Roll status for final grades or a student is in danger of failing a class. We want all students to finish the school year on a strong note, and we want their academic record to reflect the highest grades and test scores possible. Please continue to encourage your student to complete homework and required assignments nightly. Continue to check the planner and progress book regularly. Though your middle school student may not act as if he/she needs your academic guidance at home they very much do. Your support, encouragement, and even the occasional prodding truly makes a difference in your child’s success at school and in life. Remember, you are their first teacher in life, Mom and/or Dad, and in partnership we help our students achieve academic success.

With summer around the corner this is a good time to discuss summer reading. The purpose of summer reading is to help students maintain and strengthen their skills in reading, writing, and problem-solving. Research shows that academic regression occurs after several weeks away from the classroom, and we want to minimize...
academic regression among our Odyssey students. Summer assignments will be accessible on our school website (www.odms.ocps.net) over the summer break. Please encourage your student to complete these assignments with fidelity in order to be sharp and ready for the 2013-2014 school year in August.

Parents of rising 7th grade students according to FLORIDA HEALTH STATUTE (232.032) 7th grade students must have a Tetanus Diphtheria or TD Booster Vaccination on file. If your child has already received this immunization, please bring the 680 Health Form to school immediately so we can update our records and assure a smooth transition into 7th grade. We must receive this documentation prior to the first day of school which is Monday, August 19, 2013 in order for your child to start school on time. If you have any questions or would like further information please contact Ms. Guzman, the registrar at 407-207-3850, ext. 316.

During the summer, all schools and district offices will be on a modified schedule from June 20, 2013 through Wednesday, August 7, 2013. Odyssey Middle School’s hours during this time period will be 7:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M., Monday through Thursday. All schools and district offices will be closed on Fridays. In addition, Odyssey Middle School, along with other OCPS schools, will be closed the week of July 4th.

As we prepare to close out this school year, I would like to express on behalf of the administration our sincere appreciation of your continued support of our students, staff and school programs. We cannot have successful students, successful programs, and a successful school without our parents, community members, faculty, and staff.

On a personal note I would like to share again, how extremely fortunate I am to lead the Odyssey family. It is a privilege and honor to lead this great Blue and Gold Nation- GO DRAGONS!

Yours in Education,
Suzanne M. Knight Ed. D.
Principal

“STEM” Has Officially Hit Odyssey…

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) is an exciting global initiative that OCPS as well as Odyssey Middle School supports. Indeed, what an exciting initiative STEM is for us! Recently our 6th and 7th Science and Math teachers worked cooperatively to create some very exciting STEM activities for their students. Although this year we are starting off on a small scale with two grade levels and two subjects, next year we will be expanding STEM to all three grade levels.

In 6th grade our students studied DNA and genetics through the “creation of teenagers”. In science class the students will be using their knowledge of genetics to create a teenager. They took this information to their math classes to enhance their learning by studying probability, possible outcomes ratios, and proportions. To connect probability to real life, students worked with Skittles to demonstrate probability at work! Students predicted, graphed, and charted possible outcomes of the Skittles colors found in a Skittles bag.

In 7th grade the students studied how volcanic eruptions affect the geological features of the Earth through “Lava Layering”. For the activity students measured the viscosity of different liquids by timing how long it took for the liquid to pour out, next created multiple volcanic eruptions that represented the layering of igneous rock, and then took core samples from the igneous rock layers. Once all the data was collected from the hands-on activities, students were able to connect this information to skills learned in math. In their math classes’ students analyzed the data and created graphs on the viscosity of the simulated lava liquid, the weight, and thickness of the different core samples from their simulated layered lava.

Based on our student’s reactions this year, we know they are looking forward to next year! Parents, next year will be your turn to participate in STEM activities during the STEM Parent Night (look for information in the future about this event)!!

Finally, Science and Math teachers would like to thank PTSA for their generous support to our STEM initiative. Without their support we would not have been able to have such a successful week with multiple hands-on activities. Parents, please support PTSA. Your support DOES help YOUR child!

Odyssey Middle School – The home of the “STEM”ulating dragons!
The STARS Team has had a very successful year! The team started a “Zero Zero’s” Club to reward those students with no missing assignments in selected classes and watched how the blue “missing assignment” squares in our grade book disappeared. Many of our students made Honor Roll each nine weeks and fifty-one of our fabulous STARS have been invited to the Evening of Excellence. We have enjoyed our students this year. All of the STARS teachers want to thank our parents for their support and encouragement!

In science, our focus the last nine weeks has been on Earth’s Structures: plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, rocks /minerals, and Earth’s layers. A STEM activity with our math teachers explored how viscosity is related to magma flow in volcanoes. A look at Earth’s History, Weather and Climate, Erosion and Weathering, and Energy in Earth’s System completed our units of study. A big thank you goes to the PTSA for providing a grant so we could do a really cool energy transfer lab on sublimation at the end of the year!

This year has really flown by; I have enjoyed teaching your children. Even though it is 4th quarter and the FCAT’s are completed, we still have a lot of work to do. Currently we are learning about our county government; how it works and impacts our lives. After that, we will concentrate on US geography and economics. At the end of May we will have an end-of-year exam of all the material covered in this class. All students will be reviewing material in class, but please make sure they study at home as well. There is a lot of material to memorize. I hope your families have a great end to the school year and a safe and relaxing summer. Thank you, Mr. Domenig.

Yeah! FCAT is over and we will begin to prepare for 8th grade in Mrs. Futch’s math class. Regular math students will be solving multi-step equations and inequalities. Advanced math students will be studying operations with square roots, The Pythagorean Theorem, and angles. In addition the class will study geometry. During the last 3 weeks of school all math students will be focused on preparing for the End of Course Exam. The review will cover all topics studied throughout the school year. Please make sure students are studying at home to prepare for the exam. The exam dates are 5/28 and 5/29.

Have a wonderful summer break!

This quarter students began by preparing for the FCAT Reading test. I am glad to say students did a great job all throughout the FCAT testing window. Our other activities this quarter all related to telling a story. We pretended to be passengers of the Lusitania and then hotly debated who was ultimately responsible for the sinking of the ship. Students created newspapers for their last reading contract project to tell the story of their chosen novel. The short story “The War of the Wall” helped students to see how art can also tell a story. Finishing out the quarter, we analyzed poetry to see many unique ways that poets use to tell their stories. We hope everyone has a fun and safe summer...see you next year!
The Navigators Team teachers are so proud of our students for their efforts put forth during FCAT week. Students worked hard throughout the year and really stepped up to the plate when it was crucial. We would like to thank all our families for your support during that week and all year long. We are gearing up for the end of the year. Please look for information regarding end of the year exams. There will be study guides and review sheets going home and we are stressing to each students that every day counts. Learning happens in every class, every day.

**Final Exam Schedule:**

- Math - 5/28, 5/29
- Language Arts - 5/30
- Social Studies - 5/31
- Science - 6/3, 6/4

Ms. Martinez’s language arts classes are wrapping up their unit on writing poetry. Students have been given the opportunity to study and create several types of poems. Sharing these poems and working together has strengthened and enriched the whole experience! Following the poetry unit, we will be moving into a class reading of the novel *Freak the Mighty*. Readers will complete vocabulary activities, comprehension questions, written reflections, graphic organizers, and post-reading activities. Students should continue reading nightly to maintain reading skills as we approach final exams.

Mrs. Mitchell’s world studies classes are studying the important achievements of Ancient Indian Culture and how they compare to our society today. Along the way, students will learn about the powerful Mauryan Empire and how their religion influenced the world today. Following our unit in India, students will end the year with Ancient Greece and Rome. A final exam will be administered on May 30, 2013. Please look for a study guide that will be sent home with your child.

Wow! Summer is almost here. FCAT Testing is complete. Our math school year will end with the final units on geometry and measurement. We will be finishing our algebra unit and reviewing how to multiply and divide fractions. Students need to remember to log on to the Holt McDougal website (http://my.hrw.com) for tutorial videos, workbook pages, and a wealth of other resources. Please check the weekly posts available at http://parentaccess.ocps.net to access documents, web links, and class information.

A few important tests will be given before the school year closes. Students will be given a test to help determine if they can take Algebra next year. The math final exam will be administered on May 28th and 29th. Please look for the study guide that will be sent home with your child.

In Mrs. Dy’s science class we are learning about life over time, ecology, and cycling of matter and energy. We will end the nine weeks with human sexuality education required by Orange County. Please be on the lookout for an information flyer going home soon. In addition, we are preparing for the end of the semester exams. I want to thank you for a great year and wish all my students a great summer and a terrific 7th grade year.

Please remember the same focus and dedication needed at the beginning of the year is necessary to end the year successfully. I want to say thanks to you, our students’ parents, for all your help and support this year and for encouraging your child to always strive for excellence. I hope everyone will enjoy the rest of the school year and have a safe and fun summer!

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**Adventurers Team**

In *science*, we are studying Plate Tectonics. Students will apply their new knowledge in the design and construction of different types of volcanoes. We will end our year with the study of energy transfer. It is important that students remain focused on their schoolwork. It is my expectation that students will remain focused and in academic mode until the last day of school.

Although FCAT is in the rear-view mirror, students haven’t skipped a beat in *language arts class*. In preparation for FCAT, each class designed their very own test, which was an assessment of the content-based curriculum students acquired this year. The finished product was beyond impressive and looked astonishingly similar to the actual FCAT! We have begun reading the classic, young adult novel *The Outsiders*, by S.E. Hinton. Students have taken a fond liking to this piece and are excited to learn how the plot will progress. Hats off to Ms. Martin’s students for all their hard work this year in language arts!

With the Math FCAT behind us, we officially begin the 8th grade school year. As opposed to scaling down the curriculum as the school year comes to a close, we are rigorously pursuing our *math studies* to have our students ready for this coming August and the new school year. We have just completed a unit on “PROBABILITY” and will be pursuing a variety of topics that I hope the students will find interesting. Please encourage your student to work their hardest all the way to the end of the school year. After all you know what they say about “idle hands”. Also, all students will have a summer assignment to complete and turn into their math teacher at the very beginning of next school year.

Wow—it is difficult to believe that the end of the 2012-2013 school year is rapidly approaching, and summer will be upon us! While FCAT is complete, “End of Course” exams are scheduled, and the *civics* exam is scheduled for May 31st. In addition to covering a segment on economics, we will spend a week of industrious review, in preparation for the exam over the next several weeks; consequently, it is imperative that your child come to school each day, be on time, prepared, and focused to learn. This has been a memorable year, and it has been my pleasure and honor to have had your child in my class. I am amazed at seeing the intellectual growth and maturity from each student since the beginning of the year. I look forward to seeing your children as 8th graders next year, and having them stop by to share some of their new successes and adventures. Thank you, parents, for all that you do, and I wish each of you a safe and fun summer!
Although we are rapidly approaching the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the Endeavor Team is still going strong. With successful preparation for and completion of FCAT testing, we are now focused on getting ready for high school by maintaining a strong academic focus. Please help us help our students by reminding them that transcripts will reflect their efforts through the last day of school so it is essential that students complete assignments on time and meet all obligations at Odyssey through the end of the year.

Science - We are fast approaching the end of the school year and in science we will be learning about the process of weathering, and weather. We will also be reviewing for the semester II exam in the middle school science level classes, as well the end of the year exam for the high school level classes. It has been a pleasure to guide your students this year through the world of Earth Science. Thank you!

Math - Students in Ms. Schneider’s math classes are working hard to finish this year on a high note. Pre-algebra classes have completed FCAT testing and are preparing to enter Algebra 1 next year by learning many of the Algebra concepts they will need next year. Algebra 1 and Geometry Classes are headed towards End of Course Exams. These exams will be given on May 14th (Algebra 1) and May 23rd (Geometry). Students should be reviewing material from earlier this year at home. They can use their class notes and/or FCATexplorer.com. In order to make sure that your student is ending this year successfully, please log onto Progress Book to monitor his or her grades.

U.S. History - Students in Ms. Honeycutt’s history classes have been busy covering the topics of early presidents, westward expansion, industrialization, and reform movements this spring. To finish out the year, students are learning about the Civil War in our most exciting unit which will culminate with a debate between the Blue and Gray teams. Additionally, we have been working on our presentation and public speaking skills by doing research projects and peer teaching assignments. Please remember to check Progress Book regularly to monitor student assignments and grades.

Language Arts - Ms. Vazquez’s language arts classes will end the year with a mix of fiction and non-fiction selections, as well as, creative poetry writing using figurative and descriptive language reflecting on the Holocaust Unit and Elie Wiesel’s memoir, Night. In addition, students will be creating a Legacy Project in order to leave a lasting positive message for their Middle School peers as they move on to high school. This project involves research skills, which are so much needed in high school. Please remind your son or daughter we are preparing for the end of course exams and they need to remain focused to finish strong. On another note please encourage your son or daughter to continue reading this summer to increase their vocabulary. Please let them see you reading and if possible take them to the public library to check out books.

The Endeavor team teachers would like to wish all our students and their families much success and happiness in the future. It has been our privilege to work with you this year! Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us via email at:

Ms. Honeycutt/U.S. History: missty.honeycutt@ocps.net.
Ms. Vazquez-Morales/Language Arts: elba.vazquez-morales@ocps.net
Ms. Valerie Schneider/Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry Honors: valerie.schneider-christians@ocps.net
Mrs. Eunice Velazquez/Science eunice.velazquez@ocps.net
Dear Parents,

As we move towards the end of the 2012-2013 school year, we would like to update you on what your child will be accomplishing during the remainder of the year. Even though the year is just about over, it seems as if it were only yesterday when your children arrived here on our campus and became the newest members of the “Blue and Gold” Nation. It is truly amazing how quickly a year passes, but we feel extremely blessed to have had the opportunity to share our areas of expertise with each and every child. We hope that your child will continue to mature academically and socially throughout the summer once this year is completed so that he or she is prepared for another challenging year in the fall. Thank you for being our partners in education.

World History—In World History, we’ve just completed units on Ancient India and China. Students were exposed to ancient governments, philosophies, cultures, and traditions in addition to having the opportunity to further develop and analyze timelines from those periods of study. Furthermore, students were afforded additional practice in interpreting and analyzing visual cartoons, charts, and tables. The skills acquired through the study of these units were quite valuable, for students were provided with additional time to practice in preparing for this year’s FCAT. Our travels have now taken us to Greece, where we are studying their government, political philosophies, the arts, architecture and wars. Students have been given an assignment in the form of an artifact project. They will definitely be amazing as usual! We will complete our historical journey by studying Ancient Rome. Students will once again have the opportunity to complete archaeological and historical research practices as they study and analyze artifacts from ancient times. Our year will conclude with students taking a skills-based semester exam which will cover skills and topics addressed during the third and fourth nine week periods respectively.

Language Arts—In language arts, students honed their skills in preparation for the FCAT. They were also introduced to figurative and descriptive language excerpts similar to those encountered in most standardized testing arenas. Earlier this nine week period, students had the opportunity to participate in a series of Common Core Lessons. We spent a total of two weeks learning about poetry and stories related to the figurative meaning of “flowers.” Various educational skills were implemented during these highly-challenging exploratory lessons. The students seemed to have gotten a lot out of those experiences. As we move on, we plan to spend additional time focusing on poetry, mythology, writing, and grammar. It is our desire for students to become well-versed in completing essays as well as being able to effectively communicate through written expression as they analyze a variety of literary genres. Students will be given many opportunities over the next few weeks to critique and rewrite their essays from earlier in the year. The literature-based stories we address will be thematically-linked with world history units studied in Greece and Rome. Our semester exam will feature questioning examples which should adequately assess how well all students have progressed. Students are encouraged to continue reading many different types of books and to be able to respond to what they have read as directed through written analysis. Please make sure that your child has a series of books to read throughout the summer months so that the skills developed and nurtured throughout this school term will continue to be enhanced at a progressive pace.

Math—Throughout the remainder of the last nine weeks, we will work on solving ratios and proportions, graphing functions, solving equations and inequalities, and understanding integers. As you can see, we still have quite a number of concepts to cover so please continue to encourage your student to come to school every day prepared and ready to work. We will take our End of Course (EOC) Math Exam on Tuesday, May 28, and Wednesday, May 29. We will complete a study guide in class for this exam and for students to review at home.

Science—As we rapidly approach the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the Pioneers team remains focused on academics and continues to move forward with the curriculum. We have just finished with a unit on genetics in which students created their own drawings of dogs based upon random genes selected through the activity. In class pedigrees were also a part of our discussions. In conjunction with the math department, STEM lessons were taught in which students used Punnett squares to create model teenagers with various traits. We will finish the year with assignments and activities regarding the Adaptations over Time, Evolution and Natural Selection, and Interactions in Communities. Please encourage your child to maintain a positive approach to school work and to take that work seriously. Our Science End of Course Exam (EOC) will be on Monday, June 3, and Tuesday, June 4. Students will complete a study guide during class and should use this guide to prepare and review at home.
Math - The final nine-weeks of math will be loaded with fractions, ratios, integers, and reviewing for the End of the Year Exam. It has been a very long and labor-intensive year in math and our students are ready for a break. They have worked hard and I am very proud of each and every one! I enjoyed having them in my class and I wish them all the best as they continue their journey here at Odyssey.

REMEMBER: I AM UNIQUE! I AM A WINNER! I AM SOMEBODY!

Language Arts - Learning is not over and school is not out! It is difficult to contain the enthusiasm of sixth graders finished with FCAT. However, please be aware that there are still several academic markers on the agenda.

Another FCAT Writes practice essay takes place this month. This final writing “test” will show the progress your child has made in writing from the beginning of the school year through the end. Writing skills accompany your child throughout their lifetime—high school, college, and the work world. Additionally, each child will leave 6th grade with a writing portfolio to use throughout middle school.

A final Benchmark Reading test is on the schedule, as well. Again, this is for monitoring progress from the first month of school, end of first semester, and end of school. Your child’s FCAT score prediction was taken from the Winter Benchmark Reading score. Many students promised me that they were determined to go beyond the stated score.

As the school year ends, I feel confident that every child is doing their best and making excellent progress. I look forward to congratulating them on their accomplishments and sending them off to 7th grade well prepared.

Science - We have had a great year in science. You should be proud of how hard your son or daughter has worked this year. In the 4th nine-weeks we studied genetics, heredity, interdependence, and evolution. These topics had great activities and labs. Please take a moment to look through the science notebook and see all the fascinating topics. Please remember to keep the science notebooks for future use, as the Science FCAT is in 8th grade, and Biology will not be taught again until 10th. A big THANK YOU to our entire Explorer team parents for a wonderful year. The Explorer teachers could not have done it without you!
Builders Club

The Builders Club has been actively involved in the community throughout the school year. On April 20, Builders Club members Adolfo Valdes, Cassandra LaPlante, Andrea Garcia, and An Ma cooked brunch with Odyssey teachers Sara Vause and Tara Wilson at the Ronald McDonald House. The Ronald McDonald House of Orlando provides a “home away from home” for families in medical crisis. Families of critically ill children turn to the Ronald McDonald Houses in Orlando when their children are hospitalized or receiving treatment in area medical facilities. The Builders Club members made breakfast tacos for the guests and then received a tour of the facilities.

The Ronald McDonald House welcomes donations and volunteers year-round. To learn more about how to help, visit www.rmhccf.org.

Physical Education

Physical education has had three very successful marking periods, and we are looking forward to an awesome end to the year. Students are becoming more physically fit, and they continue to learn about a variety of sports and activities. As we close out the year we will be doing one last sports unit, fitness testing and having notebook checks. We still want to make sure the students are participating, and dressing out every day, so that we can finish strong during the fourth nine weeks. As the weather gets warmer we want to make sure your students stay hydrated, so please encourage them to drink water throughout the day.

Thank you for your continued support, Coach Conley, Coach Loristin, Coach Shave, and Coach Webb.