It’s hard to believe the 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 Algebra 1 and Algebra 1 were fully prepared for their exams. Moreover, 420 students 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 look forward to 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 privilege of honoring students for their contributions to the 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 need. 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.
Principal’s Message continues...

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 2014-2015 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 18, 2014 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. 5222316.

During the summer, all schools and district offices will be on a modified schedule from June 19, 2013 through Wednesday, August 6, 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

Principal’s Message continues...

The District Multilingual Parent Leadership Council held their annual award ceremony Spirit of Excellence on Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 6:00 p.m. at Olympia High School. The Spirit of Excellence District Selection Committee selects four students from elementary schools, three from middle schools and three from high schools, and five staff members to represent each learning community.

We are proud to announce that our very own Ariana León was selected to represent the Southeast Learning Community. Ariana and her family moved to Orlando in 2011, in search of better healthcare and educational opportunities for her brother David, who has Down Syndrome. Since her arrival, Ariana has worked diligently to earn a 3.87 G.P.A. while volunteering in the community and participating in Odyssey Middle School’s STEP Team.
6th Grade Language Arts

Ms. Martinez’s Language Arts classes are wrapping up the year by gaining more experience in analyzing fiction, using critical thinking skills, and improving writing skills through our novel studies. We are currently reading Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix, and have used the issues presented in the novel to expand vocabulary, complete character analysis, and even fuel a class debate! Although the end of the year is quickly approaching, students in Advanced classes should continue to read 40 minutes nightly, while those in Regular Language Arts should read for 30 in order to be prepared to complete their last Reading Counts tests for this school year.

6th Grade Science

In Mrs. Dy’s Science class we are learning about life over time, ecology, and cycling of matter and energy. The students have been given work that requires critical thinking skills and activities that allow them to become independent thinkers. 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 the parents for all your help and support this year and to encourage the students to always strive for excellence. I hope everyone will enjoy the rest of the school year and have a safe and fun summer!

6th Grade History

As we approach the end of yet another school year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your commitment to learning about Ancient World civilizations. Our 6th grade History school year will end with Ancient Greece and Rome. Thank you for a successful year! Have a wonderful and safe summer!

Mrs. Mitchell

Wow! Summer is almost here. FCAT Testing is complete. Our Math school year will end with the final units on solving equations, proportional reasoning, and integers. 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 grades periodically to be sure your child finishes the year strong at http://parentaccess.ocps.net.

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 the parents for all your help and support this year and to encourage the students 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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I just wanted to thank each and every one of you, parent and student alike, for another great year here at Odyssey. All teachers would agree that it has indeed been a pleasure to have crossed paths with your son or daughter. They have enriched our lives so much and we hope that every student has also been positively influenced this year. Have a wonderful summer!!

Science
In the last quarter of Science we spent a lot of time on genetics and heredity; everything from finding out about our unique characteristics to extracting a sample of DNA. The latter part of the year we concentrated on Interdependence with our studies on food webs, symbiotic relationships, and limiting factors. We extended that to include natural selection as a form of evolution and fossil evidence.

Math
Well it’s the end of the year and our students have accomplished many great things in math this school year. We’ve learned to multiply and divide decimals and fractions as well as other concepts. We’ve learned what strategies to use when problem solving and the basic math concepts through Big 20’s. We’ve learned that “Math Counts” and math is used in everything from designing shoes, to fashion design and building skate boards. We have worked in small groups in rotations and learned how to not be afraid to try new things and to never give up. But most of all…we’ve learned that “We are Unique, We are a Winner, We are Somebody!” Never give up and keep on trying!

Social Studies
What a great year we had in 6th grade World History Class. We started learning about Geography and ended with Ancient Rome. Throughout the year your kids have learned about some of the most important ancient civilizations in the history of the world. They have worked together to create some awesome projects, like building their own city-state to making a propaganda poster for an important Greek Philosopher. I had a great time teaching your children this year and I hope they had a wonderful time in my class and learned a lot of information. Hope you all have a wonderful summer.

Language Arts
Language Arts Rocks! Your children have increased their Lexile© scores (vocabulary) by an amazing combined 13,527 points over their original test scores from September, 2013! The 800 point mark for end of 6th grade school year was met and surpassed by 90% of the students. Remind your children to read over the summer as Lexile© scores can decrease up to 200 points when a student stops reading for a long period of time. It would be disappointing to see the incredible increase in points disappear come September.

With this good news, I look forward to seeing the FCAT Reading Scores. Our daily, affirmative cheer for roll call, “I’m going up!” echoed in the halls. The students carried a card that read, “I am prepared for the FCAT. I am calm, confident, and certain that I will do my best on every test!”

I want to add that I cherish the experiences I shared with your children this year. I watched them acclimate to the middle school environment, grow in confidence, and develop into self-reliant students ready for 7th grade. Enjoy the summer months!

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Dear Parents,

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. As we are wrapping the 2013-2014 school year, we would like to update you on what your child will be accomplishing during the remainder of the fourth nine-weeks.

**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 they provided students additional practice in preparing for FCAT-related test items which they would ultimately encounter in both FCAT Reading and Math. We will complete our historical journey by studying Ancient Greece and Rome.

**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. As we move forward, 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 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 variety 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.

**Science**

As we rapidly approach the end of the 2011-2012 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 Cooties based upon genes selected through construction of Punnett Squares in the activity. In class, pedigrees were also a part of our discussions. 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.
8th Grade U.S. History

Eighth Grade U.S. History students spent the second semester analyzing the early presidents, westward expansion, and the changing culture of the nation as new political parties emerged and reform movements spread. We finished the year in our most exciting unit on the American Civil War and reconstruction. Throughout the year, our students practiced literacy skills by analyzing primary sources, reading a variety of texts, and completing document-based essays to improve writing. All of these efforts should make our Dragons better prepared for high school and beyond! Please be advised that U.S. History is required in high school and the first quarter will be spent reviewing what was learned in 8th Grade before continuing with later periods of history. We wish our students the best of luck in all of their future endeavors. It has been our privilege to be your teachers this year!

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8th Grade Science News

Well, our 8th graders were really challenged once again this year by taking four Benchmark Tests and the Science FCAT which includes material from all of their middle school science years. Each benchmark test became easier as they acquired more information by progressing through the years’ worth of topics. It really helped the students focus on what to expect when faced with the Science FCAT and they felt much better about taking it afterwards because they reviewed very well for it! Finally, as we say farewell to our 8th graders, hopefully they take great care of their Rock they received for FCAT and that they enjoy the summer before they begin their high school years! We are going to miss them.

8th Grade Language Arts

In language arts, we are journeying through utopian and dystopian themes via our current novel The Giver. This award-winning text has been made into a movie, projected for release in August 2014. Students are excited to see Jonas’ ventures put on the big screen, and look forward to the release. Discussion of literature turned to film is a topic students enjoy. Through our study of the novel, students acquired new vocabulary, compare/contrast strategies, and textual citation skills. As we round out the year, students will learn the basics of MLA format, and how to set up a research paper properly. This exposure will help them as they enter high school English. Students are already talking about high school, and they look forward moving on, with their newly acquired knowledge and experiences, developed through their years here at Odyssey Middle School.

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8th Grade Language Arts

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The Reading Department congratulates all students taking this year’s FCAT Test! The students and teachers worked diligently and in depth on reading strategies in preparation. Good luck to all of our eighth grade students as they begin their new endeavor - high school.

According to research from Sylvan Learning Center, numerous students lose the equivalent of one to two months of reading and math skills during the summer. Negative long term effects on students overall academic success can result. Summer shouldn’t mean taking a break from learning, especially reading. Studies show that most students experience a loss of reading skills over the summer months. Children who continue to read actually gain skills. Therefore, we encourage all students to read over the summer. Summer reading can help maintain and improve reading skills learned throughout the school year as well as increase vocabulary. All students will receive a required summer reading assignment brochure. This brochure will contain a summer reading list and directions on completing the summer reading assignment. Also, there will be information about two summer reading challenges! The summer reading assignment will be posted on the Odyssey Middle School website at www.odms.ocps.net.

Students can also maintain skills at home during the summer through using FCAT Explorer (www.fcatexplorer.com) as well as sites like Study Island (www.studyisland.com). Please help your child to find time this summer to READ!

Thank you from,
The Intensive Reading Teachers
Brandi Boone (8th grade)
Sara Vause (6th- 8th grade)
Tara Wilson (6th- 8th grade)
Marla Lee (6th- 8th grade)
Jordin Corder (6th – 8th grade)
Shannon Skeates (Literacy Coach)

Media Staff: Mrs. Woods & Ms. Nguyen (pronounced “Wen”)
Hours: The Media Center will be closed over the summer. Keep reading!

Read the Sunshine State Books: The new 2014-15 SSYRA list includes these 15 books:

- Apothecary by Meloy
- Boy at the End of the World by Van Eekhout
- Dead City by Ponti
- Doll Bones by Black
- Endangered by Schreiber
- Far Far Away by McNeal
- Ghosts of Graylock by Poblocki
- Half Upon a Time by Riley
- Homesick by Klise
- I, Emma Freke by Atkinson
- Lions of Little Rock by Levine
- The Raft, by Bodeen
- Small as an Elephant by Jacobson
- Ungifted by Korman
- Variant by Wells

Destiny Quest: Students can use Destiny Quest to see new book arrivals, books they checked out, and find books of interest. Follow the Odyssey Media Center Catalog information below, and then click on Destiny Quest on the Catalog page. Logon: Student ID Number and birthdate yyyymmdd.

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Valuable Websites: The following websites are available to our Odyssey family.
- Odyssey Media Center Catalog (find books and use recommended websites)
  http://destiny.ocps.net > Click Odyssey Middle School > Catalog tab
- Britannica Online (both English and Spanish encyclopedia paid for by OCPS with copyright- free images)
  Address: http://www.school.eb.com/eb
  Logon: ocps; Password: orange
- NetTrekker (an educational Search Engine paid for by OCPS with copyright- free images)
  Address: http://www.nettrekker.com
  Logon & password: ocps1
- Safari Montage (videos available for free)
  Address: ocpsondemand
  Logon & Password: your school ID number and birthdate

The Odyssey band program would like to invite everyone to the Spring Concert! It will take place on Thursday May 29 at 7:00 pm. We perform in the gym and will feature the combined Beginning Bands, the Odyssey Jazz Ensemble, Concert Band and Symphonic Band.

Congratulations go out to the Jazz Ensemble and Symphonic Band members as they received straight Superior ratings at the District Music Performance Assessment held earlier at Oak Ridge High School. This is the highest rating possible and continues a streak of eleven straight years that the Odyssey Band has received Superior Ratings.

We look forward to a great year next year with everyone signing up to continue our strong band tradition. I encourage all band members to consider taking lessons over the summer to improve or to consider attending one of the great Summer Music Camps that are held at the colleges around the state. More information is available from Mr. Douglass at 407 207-3850 x227 or timothy.douglass@ocps.net.

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