

## School Nominee Presentation Form

### ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

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#### School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

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### U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

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☐ Public ☒ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Private ☐ Independent ☐ Rural

Name of Principal: Ms. Denise Parks

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name: Odyssey Charter School

Official School Name Mailing Address: 4319 Lancaster Pike, Wilmington, DE 19805

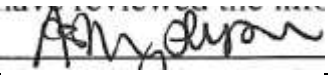
County: NCC State DE School Code Number \*: DE 86-585

Telephone: 302-516-8000 Fax: 888-780-5962

Web site/URL: www.redclayschools.com/cooke E-mail: linda.ennis@redclay.k12.de.us

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space*

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date: 2/12/20

Name of Superintendent: n/a

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)

District Name: n/a

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:  
(Superintendent's Signature)

### **Nominating Authority's Certifications**

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.


1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: Delaware Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Mrs. Tonyea Mead, Education Associate Science

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nominating Authority's Signature) Date: 2/11/2020

### **SUBMISSION**

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2021

### **Public Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

National Green Ribbon Application  
Odyssey Charter School

## Summary Narrative

Odyssey Charter School, an innovative and diverse dual-language Greek School (KN-12), was founded in 2006 and is currently the second largest public charter school in Delaware. Odyssey is a 100% choice lottery school located immediately outside the city limits of Wilmington, Delaware on the site of a former DuPont business park. Odyssey's mission is to provide its students with a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, to help students develop a keen awareness of world citizenship and culture, and to establish critical thinking and problem-solving through participation in a foreign language education program. The Odyssey Green Team, which consists of students, teachers, and parents, is deeply committed to providing our nearly 2,000 students with hands-on and meaningful real-world opportunities to be environmental stewards of the earth. We strive to foster the attitudes, skills, and knowledge within our students to become responsible and empowered global eco-citizens. This is evident in our student created Eco-Code prominently displayed in our cafeteria. All of these efforts have been made through the framework of National Wildlife Federation's Eco-School USA, working towards pathways of sustainability. Odyssey Charter is a participant in the Delaware Pathways to Green Schools program and has worked toward the Sustainable Foods, Energy, Waste and Consumption, Healthy Living, and Schoolyard Habitat Pathways. Most recently, Odyssey earned an Eco-Schools Green Flag in November 2019. We are the first charter school in Delaware and only the fifth public school in the state to earn this prestigious international award.

An award-winning program, Odyssey has received over \$30,000 in grant funding. This diverse and prestigious donor list includes Teaching Tolerance, National Geographic, NEA Foundation, New Castle County, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), American Heart Association, Voya, Whole Kids Foundation, and Energize Delaware. Most recently, Odyssey was chosen to create "upcycled" ornaments for internationally renowned Longwood Gardens.

We are most proud of the accomplishments of our student body. In 2019, high school students won second place in the Alfred M. Greenfield UNLESS Regional Contest with the Philadelphia Zoo for their project "Ban the Bag, Save the Bat." Due to our students' efforts in collecting plastic film collection, Odyssey received a TREX bench. We were one of only 60 schools (out of 776) that won a bench for our outdoor classroom.

Not only did Odyssey Charter collect plastic film on campus, they played an active role in advocating for DE House Bill 130, the "Plastic Bag Bill." Our 5th-7th and 9th-10th grade students participated in every stage of the legislative process. They attended Governor Carney's press conference, wrote and met with legislators, and testified in the House and Senate Committees of Natural Resources. One high school student even wore a dress made of 500 plastic bags- the average number of bags consumed by an individual American in a year! The bill passed both chambers and was signed into law in July 2019. Several of our students attended the formal bill signing.

Recognizing the power of student voice in environmental advocacy, Odyssey is one of three partner schools leading the effort to plan a statewide and student-led Youth Environmental Summit (YES!) to engage at least 200 students. Odyssey strives to make environmental education accessible to students beyond our own community. High school students worked on a joint project with the Louise-Henriette Gymnasium School in Berlin to learn about sustainable food and grassroots activism. The project was titled "Going Green Together." In addition, 3rd

grade students participated in a pen pal program with a rural Liberian school to learn about water scarcity and to develop global understanding. Another project included our school fundraising more than \$3,400.00 to help build a well near the school, improving water access for hundreds of Liberians.

In just three short years, Odyssey has implemented several major sustainability initiatives on our urban campus. We have built an edible garden with 24 raised beds (750 sq. ft), added a community chicken coop (ten hens and a rooster), built an outdoor classroom, planted 27 trees, built pollinator and milkweed gardens, and implemented an indoor aeroponic garden program. Every season, as part of our Farm to School Program, KN-12th grade students consume vegetables harvested from the garden. The extra produce is delivered to staff who sign up to receive a free, personally delivered share to their office or classroom. This bounty is also shared with the local community, and over 1,000 pounds of produce have been donated to local distribution and support programs.

Furthermore, in 2019, the school purchased an interactive and mobile culinary cart to teach KN-12th grade students how to be food citizens. High school students in Food Studies participate in weekly cooking labs and 7th-8th grade students take an exploratory culinary arts course taught through a Greek lens. Produce from our many gardens serve as ingredients for these innovative courses.

Our mission to create global citizens is illuminated in our eco-conscious international studies opportunities. In the spring of 2020, high school students will be travelling to Germany and Switzerland to learn more on innovative sustainability efforts by seeing state-of-the-art models of renewable energy. Faculty and students will bring these experiences back to Odyssey to enhance their learning and course experiences.

Lastly, we have already fundraised and secured grant funding to expand our garden program to 40 raised beds to serve our students and our broader community. The Green Team will also plant a sensory garden in a common area. Finally, the school is scheduled to add two pygmy goats to complete our urban farm program in spring 2020.

Each year students at Odyssey learn to protect their heart and brain health, the importance of helping others and being active by skipping rope while raising funds for heart and stroke prevention by participating in the American Heart Association's (AHA) Jump Rope for Heart program. This is a KN-5th grade initiative that includes elementary school-wide health initiative practices taught and then focused on through a culminating event. In the past two years, Odyssey has raised over \$30,000 for the AHA. Last year, the AHA helped Odyssey to purchase 20 CPR dummies to enable 6th-12th grade students to learn and practice CPR through their general Health Education curriculum.

Beyond creating a nature-centered space, the school community has embraced the importance of reducing our overall environmental footprint and made simple and more challenging changes in the following areas: waste, energy, greenhouse gases and transportation. In 2018, Odyssey made the switch to compostable trays. To date, 168,000 Styrofoam trays have been prevented from entering a landfill. In spring 2020, we will replace all single-use plastic cutlery on our campus by switching to metal cutlery. We anticipate this will prevent at least 200,000 individual pieces of single-use cutlery from entering a landfill. In 2019, Odyssey installed six water bottle filling stations to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic bottles. Consequently, we have saved over 15,000 plastic bottles from entering the landfill. Lastly, Odyssey has consistently placed in the top three of the Green Schools Clean Streams pledges, a county program that educates others on what should go down the drain and into the sewer

system. The recycling of over 1,000 pounds of single-use plastic bags ensures fewer bags will end up in the environment and our streams.

Enhancements to reduce energy consumption and awareness have become standard practices at Odyssey. In 2017, Odyssey received a formal energy audit from Practical Energy Solutions. The audit revealed actionable revisions to Odyssey's efforts to reduce energy use. During the 2017/2018 school year, a \$250,000 project to upgrade electricity by replacing fluorescent lights with LED lights (indoor and outdoor) began. Based on the average in 2017/2018 and the average in 2018/2019, our total number of kWh decreased on average of 42,000 per month. The school sets standard heating and cooling points of 68-70 degrees during the heating season and no lower than 73 degrees for air conditioning to conserve energy. Odyssey has also begun to replace the aging heat pumps with high efficiency boilers. As our school continues to grow, our efforts to reduce energy are paramount; even though our school has added over 120,000 square feet of classroom, these efficiency measures have saved the school nearly \$4,000.00 on utility bills each month. Students practice energy saving measures by turning off classroom lights and computer monitors, resulting in at least a 18,140-pound savings in carbon dioxide per year. Our greenhouse emission reduction plan for transportation includes 13 school buses- eight low sulfur diesel buses and five propane buses. These changes have enabled Odyssey to benefit from reduced power bills and the environment through reduced energy use.

## **Pillar I. Reducing Environmental Impact and Costs**

Situated on an urban campus in Wilmington, Delaware; Odyssey Charter School's campus has undergone a significant transformation to reduce its environmental impact. The school community has embraced the importance of reducing our overall environmental imprint and made simple and more challenging changes in the following areas: waste, water, energy, greenhouse gases and transportation.

Prior to 2014, Odyssey Charter School was on a mission to find a property to expand our school. At the time, Odyssey was a KN-7th grade school and our aspiration was to become a KN-12th grade school, growing one grade per year. In February 2015, Odyssey purchased a property that was approximately 30 years old, located at the site of a former business park. It consisted of eight buildings at 60,000 square feet each. Two of the buildings were demolished and a three-acre athletic field was constructed. The remaining six buildings were used to grow the school. In the fall of 2015, the first of the 60,000 square foot buildings were renovated from hundreds of offices to 31 classrooms, a library, cafe, and offices. This brought grades KN-8 to the new campus. As each year followed, the school grew by a grade and in the Fall of 2019, we were officially a KN-12 school.

Over the past five years, the school has gone through seven rigorous renovation projects changing the buildings into an educational campus. With improvements to the buildings consisting of new security systems, LED light upgrades, HVAC improvements, playgrounds, etc. the school has completed a tremendous amount of work to meet its goal of a KN to 12th grades campus. Each of the four buildings occupying our KN to 12th grades were renovated from an office environment to almost 29+ classrooms in each building. With over 110 classrooms and 240,000 square feet of space, the school is now home to 1,900 students. The remaining two 60,000 square foot buildings are currently being leased to KN-5th Spanish immersion school and another 60,000 square feet in reserve for future expansion.

Reducing overall waste production and finding environmentally responsible ways to recycle has become a mainstay at Odyssey. Recycling efforts have encompassed the school classrooms, outdoor grounds and the surrounding community. The OCS Green Team has made recycling at our school an institutional practice. In the school cafeteria, significant changes have reduced waste and made sure recycling is effective. Nearly 2,000 students recycle in the cafeteria based on county, single-stream recycling regulations; food containers with waste removed including cardboard, cans, plastic and glass are collected in the same container separated from trash. In 2018, the school received a \$1,920 grant from Energize Delaware towards a composting project; the equipment allowed Odyssey to further reduce organic food waste. Last year a “share table” was introduced in the cafeteria; students are encouraged to reduce waste by placing items they will not eat on the table to share with others. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Honor Society collect and recycle can tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House. In the Fall of 2018, the cafeteria switched from Styrofoam trays to compostable trays. To date, 168,000 trays have been prevented from entering a landfill. In spring 2020, we will replace all single-use plastic cutlery on our campus by switching to metal cutlery. We anticipate this will prevent at least 200,000 individual pieces of single-use cutlery from entering a landfill. This project is made possible by a grant from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

In each of the 100 + classrooms, students and staff are provided single stream recycling containers. Last year, our audits revealed that we recycled more than 41,854 pounds of paper, metal, and food waste! The lobby of each of our four campus buildings houses several containers for items that are not recycled by our state to reduce waste. Each building participates in the Crayola Marker Program, we have recycled 100+ pounds of markers or approximately 5,032 markers. In the lobby and throughout each building you can find TREX recycling containers for plastic film waste. A school-wide plastic bag awareness campaign was held February 2019, in which KN-11<sup>th</sup> grades collected 32,734 plastic bags or 443 pounds of plastic film. To date, students have collected and recycled 1,000+ pounds of single-use plastic bags. This initiative has helped our students develop a deeper awareness of their consumption habits. The simple act of counting collected bags in class helps students, particularly the youngest learners- fully visualize this unsustainable consumption. Our high school has implemented a 1:1 technology initiative to reduce consumption of paper in class. Teachers in every building keep scrap paper in class for students to use. The installation of hand dryers has eliminated paper products in student bathrooms. Odyssey students also reduced waste by collecting plastic waste such as water bottles and plastic caps, these were used to create ornaments to decorate a tree at Longwood Gardens, which shared with the community the ways plastic can be repurposed and kept out of landfills. Additionally, Odyssey has a standing practice and agreement with a third party to recycle hundreds of pounds of electronics, toner cartridges, and old batteries on an annual basis. Finally, the school and greater community also reduces waste through participation of used uniform sales held by the Odyssey PTO. These sales, which are held several times a year, prevents thousands of pieces of clothing from entering a landfill. Recently, Odyssey has partnered with Phoenix Used Clothing, which provides a container on campus to collect shoes, toys and clothing.

Odyssey has identified and implemented ways to improve water quality, efficiency and conservation. These improvements have been implemented with the full support of our facilities management team. The OCS Green Team organized a school-wide fundraiser to purchase four water bottle filling stations located in all four buildings and installed them in winter 2019. In summer 2020, we added two additional water bottle filling stations. To date, we have saved over

15,000 plastic bottles from entering the landfill. Facilities practices have been revised to install low-flow water fixtures in all new bathrooms. Our school implements an up-to-date Pest Management Program and has monthly monitoring. Our building maintenance department cleans all water taps and drinking fountains on a regular basis to prevent bacterial contamination. Lastly, Odyssey Charter School placed 3rd in the Green Schools Clean Streams pledge, a county program that educates others on what should go down the drain and into the sewer system. The recycling of over 1,000 pounds of plastic bags ensures fewer bags will end up in the environment and our streams.

Enhancements to reduce energy consumption and awareness have become standard practices at Odyssey. In 2017, Odyssey received a formal energy audit from Practical Energy Solutions. The audit revealed actionable revisions to Odyssey's efforts to reduce energy use. During the 2017/2018 school year, a \$250,000 project to upgrade electricity by replacing fluorescent lights with LED lights (indoor and outdoor) began. Based on the average in 2017/2018 and the average in 2018/2019, our total number of kWh decreased on an average of 42,000 per month. The school sets standard heating and cooling points of 68-70 degrees during the heating season and no lower than 73 degrees for air conditioning to conserve energy. Odyssey continues to replace aging heat pumps. High efficiency gas fired units are substituted for electric heat pumps on buildings where natural gas is available. Over 25 rooftop units have been replaced. As our school continues to grow, our efforts to reduce energy are paramount; even though our school has added over 120,000 square feet of classroom, these efficiency measures have saved the school nearly \$4,000.00 on utility bills each month. Students are also involved in the reduction of energy at Odyssey. The Green Team has put into place a Friday campus walkthrough by students who ensure lights are powered off each weekend. The high school environmental club also issues energy tickets to Odyssey staff who forget to turn off their computer monitors and classroom lights. A student group, BPA (Business Professionals of America) created stickers that staff put on light switches reminding them to turn off lights. In the spring of 2020, high school students will be travelling to Germany and Switzerland to learn more on innovative sustainability efforts by seeing state-of-the-art models of renewable energy. Students practice energy saving measures by turning off classroom lights and computer monitors, resulting in at least a 18,140 pounds savings in CO<sub>2</sub>. These changes have enabled Odyssey to benefit from reduced power bills and the environment through reduced energy use.

Adding more green areas to our campus has also helped Odyssey's efforts to reduce greenhouse gases. Initially our school built eight raised beds for vegetables. Since then, the number of raised beds has increased to 24. All produce is either donated or used in our cafeteria, the production of vegetables reduces travel for produce and the plants absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. Our campus also includes a pollinator garden with repurposed used tires as planters, and a second pollinator garden with 32 milkweed plants, and recently 27 trees were planted around campus. Moreover, this spring Odyssey will build a sensory garden for use by staff, visitors and our 2,000+ students in grades K-12th. The additional garden will expand our outdoor classrooms, provide herbs to the cafeteria and bring students to the outdoors. Odyssey's efforts to develop gardens has reduced grassy areas requiring mowing while enhancing our pollinator habitats. These are also maintained with a commitment to not use non-organic fertilizers and pesticides which are known to emit greenhouse gases. In recognition of this and other changes, in 2019, our school earned the National Wildlife Habitat Certification.



## **Pillar II. Improving the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**

Some of the most exciting and far reaching initiatives at Odyssey recently have been to improve the health and wellness of staff and students. The school has 24 raised bed gardens and an outdoor vertical garden with 50 planters. Students are involved with the planting, care and harvest of root vegetables and leafy greens such as radishes, kale, spinach and lettuce. Odyssey utilizes the Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids HFHK program called Education Cultivation (HFHK-EC), which allows every student in a school (K-5) to engage in hands-on gardening activities through lessons that support the science curriculum. Kindergarten and 1st grades plant the seeds, 2nd grade prepares the soil, cleans the garden, and composts the garden waste. The 3rd grade waters the garden, and 4th and 5th grades harvest the crops. KN-12<sup>th</sup> grades participate in harvest celebrations in the school cafeterias, which features school-garden grown vegetables. Every season, KN-12<sup>th</sup> grade students consume vegetables harvested from the garden. For example, the cafeteria staff prepared a chicken and arugula sandwich, sautéed spinach, and radishes- all from the Odyssey vegetable garden. The produce is also provided to staff who sign up to receive a free, personally delivered share to their office or classroom. The bounty is also shared with the local community, over 1,000 pounds of produce has been donated to local food distribution and support programs.

Part of Odyssey's educational mission is to enrich learning opportunities and to develop a broader world view. The addition of outdoor gardens, green spaces, and outdoor classrooms demonstrates our commitment to these beliefs. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Odyssey Green Team sold reusable tote bags to fundraise for our original chicken coop, run and six hens. We sold nearly 100 tote bags to fund this project. We then secured additional funding from New Castle County Council to expand our chicken coop and we now have ten hens and a rooster. This educational program creates opportunities for our KN-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to discover organic food, to become better stewards of the earth, and to develop social-emotional skills by caring for them. Our chicken program is fully integrated into our KN-12<sup>th</sup> grade, including Food Studies and Environmental Science. High school students feed our chicken scraps from the OCS garden, including radishes, turnips, and lettuce. This helps us reduce food waste on our campus and keep our chickens healthy. Through additional fundraising efforts, the school has been able to create outdoor classrooms with picnic tables and benches. Spontaneous outdoor classrooms can be created by taking advantage of our mobile trail chairs.

Overall, Odyssey wants to promote a healthy lifestyle for our students. This is achieved through the nutritious offerings, social-emotional awareness and the physical activities provided. In our cafeteria, at least 40% of student meals include fresh fruits, vegetables, and freshly made salads. We participate in a Farm to School program with local food supplier Fifer Orchards. We want to ensure these healthy habits last a lifetime. To that end, we purchased an interactive and mobile culinary cart to teach KN-12<sup>th</sup> grade students how to be food citizens. Students enrolled in Food Studies examine why food matters and how we can act to support a healthier food system. High school students in Food Studies participate in weekly cooking labs and 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students take an elective culinary arts course taught through a Greek lens. For example, high school students have made homemade granola bars with flaxseed, oats, and chia seeds while 7th-8th grade students have cooked *spanakorizo*. Ultimately, these projects equip students with the culinary skills necessary to create simple, real food recipes for a lifetime of health and success. Odyssey is a beneficiary of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), a \$67,574.00 federal grant that currently provides healthy snacks (fruits and vegetables) to students in grades KN-5th,

three days a week. The Odyssey Green Team has also hosted two harvest dinners with invitations extended to Odyssey staff, families and the community with food prepared from the Odyssey gardens.

Daily practice of healthy bodies is included in our curriculum. This school year the amount of time for recess was increased to 30 minutes daily. The administration and staff recognize the value of physical movement and exercise to our students, additionally, a ten-minute movement break is scheduled in the middle of each day. Students in KN-6<sup>th</sup> physical education classes spend at least 50% of their time outside. Health and Physical Education teachers integrate health standards and grade cluster expectations into 40% of lessons throughout the year, depending on their grade level expectations and curriculum. At least 50% of our students annually learn about how to prevent skin cancer. Future plans include the installation of a fitness trail that will be available to the school and its visitors.

Each student's medical record is reviewed upon school entry. If a student has a diagnosis of asthma, communication is created between the student, guardian, and registered nurse. The school nurse creates individualized care plans that are shared with the education staff for safe awareness during school. The Department of Education in coordination with Public Health has approved Standing Orders that can be used for any child that carries a diagnosis of asthma that does not have albuterol available during the school day. If a student needs additional resources, the school nurse can reach out to the specific provider or local organization (Nemours, American Lung Association). There is a school nurse on staff during all school hours.

Each year students at Odyssey learn to protect their heart and brain health, the importance of helping others and being active by skipping rope while raising funds for heart and stroke prevention by participating in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart program. Odyssey successfully raised over \$30,000 for the AHA the last two years. Last year, the American Heart Association helped Odyssey to purchase 20 CPR dummies in order for 6th-12th grade students to learn and practice CPR through their general Health Education curriculum. Mental wellness is equally as important as physical health, Odyssey recognizes a school's role in providing counseling and social-emotional wellbeing. Students at Odyssey in grades KN-8th participate in a social-emotional program, Second Step. Using this curriculum, classroom teachers provide instruction to develop character and practice in handling social situations. Our guidance counselors also work with teachers to identify social groups for students based on their needs and offer a variety of counseling Programs including: Changing Families Support Group, Zones of Regulation Group, Friendship Group, School Community Service/Mindfulness Group, Anxiety/Worries Support Group, and Conflict Resolution Meetings. Odyssey is fortunate to have an in-house Family Crisis Therapist who is available to our students experiencing trauma. The wellness of staff is also a priority. This winter 21 teachers are participating in a paid mindfulness training to increase their ability to connect with students and the challenges they face in the classroom. Teachers in grades 6-12 are currently participating in a year-long professional development course centered on building community with restorative circles. This technique is being implemented in all advisory classes. Past professional development offerings have also included self-care.

Odyssey Charter School continues to seek ways to provide alternative transportation for students that are more environmentally responsible. Odyssey is on an urban campus, removed from nearby housing, students arrive by both bus and car. Upon arrival and dismissal, all vehicles are not permitted to idle for more than five minutes, a well-publicized policy enforced by our staff. Recently, 13 buses were purchased, 8 which use low-sulfur diesel and 5 propane

buses for both the safety of our students and our community. Propane Autogas is safe for children and the environment. It poses no harm to groundwater, surface water, or soil. A survey was sent out in 2019 which identified approximately 20% of staff currently carpool. Overall, the department's mission is to provide safe, efficient routes to all of our students and propane buses help us fulfill that mission.

Our facilities department prioritizes occupant health and safety in all design, construction, renovation, operations, and maintenance of facilities and grounds. Outdoor playground structures, tables, benches and gardening beds are purchased conscientiously and do not contain chromated copper arsenate. Our school does not have any wood playground equipment. To the best of our knowledge, our school does not have any elemental mercury in use and prohibits its purchase. Our school is under contract with a pest control company that monitors indoor and outdoor pests in all buildings. They cover all crawling, stinging, and flying insects. Our school has very limited chemical usage and it is mostly associated with products used by custodial staff. Material safety sheets (MSDS) books are provided in each building along with each nurse's office. Lastly, our school has an ongoing relationship with a State certified environmental services company. This company handles all asbestos related surveys and mold inspections on a bi-annual basis. This company is also contacted to assist with any other health hazards as they may occur.

### **Pillar III. Offering Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

Odyssey Charter School ensures effective environmental and sustainability education through our KN-12th grade curriculum. In all four buildings, on a monthly basis, we display on T.V. monitors information about our Eco-Schools pathways and we decorate bulletin boards to highlight student work. We utilize social media (Twitter and Facebook) and a weekly electronic newsletter to engage our school community in Odyssey Green Team initiatives. We also include a weekly tip for being environmentally friendly in our staff communications. All students have led the pre-and-post audits in all five Eco-Schools pathways: Healthy Living, Energy, Sustainable Foods, Schoolyard Habitat, and Waste and Consumption. We are committed to providing meaningful leadership opportunities for our students as evidenced by our four student-led Green Teams in each building. For example, the KN-2<sup>nd</sup> grade Green Team made bird houses using recycled cans from the cafeteria and then hung them in the school courtyard. We also offer a cooking and gardening club (5th-8th) and a Model United Nations Club (9th-12th). These efforts ensure that students are given many opportunities to learn this content via multiple perspectives and scales.

We annually promote sustainability and environmental education with a school-wide "Green Week" in November. In 2018, 3rd grade students designed posters highlighting "zero waste"; 6th grade students designed posters to promote the use of hand dryers in the bathroom and to communicate facts about paper towel consumption; students in 6th grade environmental science wrote to Delaware legislators urging a ban on single-use plastic straws; students in Greek language classes examined the ecological practices in Greece; art students made a plastic bottle chandelier; and 11th grade students in U.S. History studied World War II on the Homefront and completed a lesson titled "Rationing, Recycling, and Conserving."

We encourage our students to spend as much time as possible outdoors. The 2nd and 5th grade students annually visit the Delaware Solid Waste Authority to learn about single-stream

recycling. Secondary students annually visit Coverdale Farm and Ramey's Farm to study regenerative agriculture, organic farming, and the importance of seasonal eating. In spring 2019, high school students visited Bright Spots urban farm and participated in a workshop about equity, equality, and justice to inform their Geo-Inquiry projects about food insecurity in New Castle County. In April 2020, high school students will participate in a weeklong study tour focusing on STEM and sustainability of Germany and Switzerland to learn about urban farming and sustainability practices. Odyssey students have also conducted field work at Ashland Nature Preserve and advocated for a ban on single-use plastics in Legislative Hall in Dover, Delaware.

Environmental advocacy is an ongoing initiative at Odyssey. In 2019, Odyssey students played an active role in advocating for House Bill 130, the "Plastic Bag Bill." This bill bans plastic bags from stores with more than 7,000 square feet of retail space and chain stores with three or more locations with at least 3,000 square feet each. They attended Governor Carney's press conference, wrote and met with legislators, and testified in the House and Senate Committees of Natural Resources. One high school student even wore a dress made of 500 plastic bags- the average number of bags consumed by an individual American in a year. HB130 passed both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Carney in July 2019, making Delaware one of the first states to ban single-use plastic bags. Several of our students even attended the formal bill signing. Additionally, 10th grade AP Human Geography students participated in the Alfred M. Greenfield Foundation UNLESS contest to educate their peers about landfill waste. They chose one of the four critically endangered species to be the face of the campaign: Rodrigues Fruit Bats. This was a student-driven and project-based assignment. Students collaborated with 7th grade students to brainstorm solutions for reducing landfill waste. In March 2019, they led a school-wide Zero Waste Fair attended by students in 3rd-11th grades. 1,500 students attended the event, with 300 students pledging to not use single-use plastic bags and 1,400 students completing exit tickets detailing what they learned by attending the fair. They also wrote a blog post for a national audience titled "The Power of Student Voice in Environmental Advocacy." Moreover, our middle school students advocated for reduction in the use of plastic straws in restaurants statewide, resulting in the passage of a House Concurrent Resolution in 2019. In Fall 2019, 5th grade students wrote to legislators and restaurants in Delaware, and juice box manufacturers on the environmental impact of plastic straws, recommending eco-friendly alternatives.

Odyssey implemented a KN-12th garden curriculum in 2018, giving nearly 2,000 students access to the garden every academic school year. In the elementary school garden program aligned with NGSS standards, each grade is exposed to a different aspect of the garden. For example, KN and 1<sup>st</sup> plant seeds (proper depth and spacing) while 2<sup>nd</sup> graders cultivate the soil and engage in composting. All students engage in service-learning by donating 70% of what we grow in our garden. We have donated to Brandywine Food Closet, the Salvation Army, and St. Michael's School in the City of Wilmington. To date, our garden has donated at least 1,000 pounds of fresh produce to people in need. The remaining amount is consumed by students in all four cafeterias and/or provided to teachers as a "staff share." This helps to generate excitement about our garden! Inspired by our gardening program, high school students piloted a National Geographic Geo-Inquiry project focused on food insecurity by identifying and mapping local food deserts in the community, by engaging in research, and by collecting data to understand the significance of the problem. At the spring harvest dinner, these students presented their service-learning project and educational video documentaries about food insecurity, gave a tour of the

garden, and invited the 120 community members to taste a seasonal three-course dinner inspired by our garden.

Our high school recently applied for and received grant funding to purchase seven aeroponic tower garden systems to produce chemical-free fruit, vegetables, herbs, and edible flowers without a traditional soil growing media to complement a new food justice curriculum, including a story-telling project and an after-school mentoring program. Hydroponically growing plants at our school fosters innovation and critical thinking skills, increases conscience around food issues, and provides hands-on learning opportunities for students to be exposed to STEM. We plan to expand this program to the elementary school level in the upcoming school year.

We frequently invite speakers from the local community to present to our students and staff. For example, 2nd grade students attended a presentation about the importance of recycling and reducing the use of single-use plastic bags, including an appearance by the “plastic bag monster.” Cindy Ross, author of *The World is Our Classroom: How One Family Used Nature and Travel to Shape an Extraordinary Education* spoke to our entire staff in June 2019. Moreover, our staff is encouraged to pursue environmental science professional development. Several teachers have completed the National Geographic Certification program and one teacher was selected from a highly competitive applicant pool to travel to the Galapagos to study how micro-plastics affect marine life in this pristine ecosystem.

Odyssey is one of the main partner schools helping to plan the first annual state-wide and student-led Youth Environmental Summit (YES!), collaborative partnership of Delaware non-profit organizations, businesses, students, public, and private schools. YES! Is an opportunity for students to learn about environmental issues and work on tackling these issues. The mission of YES! Is to inspire, encourage, and prepare youth for a life of environmental responsibility, service, and leadership by increasing awareness and knowledge of environmental issues and fostering leadership skills. All YES! participants will engage in hands-on workshops, action-inspiring discussions, network with environmental professionals, government officials, and like-minded peers. The YES! Summit will be held on Friday, February 28th at Del-Tech community college in Dover, Delaware.