

Welcome To Junior High

What to expect at the OI Junior High In 2017-2018?



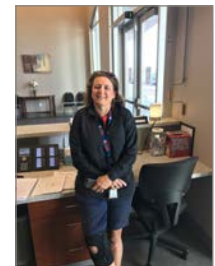
Maggie Ybarra

Dean of Students



Rafaela
Guitierrez

Front Office
Manager



Chris McNelley

Junior High
Athletic
Director

A Letter From the Founders

Greetings,

As many of you know, Odyssey Family of Schools is a K-12 continuum founded by three middle school teachers who expected higher academic and behavioral standards for the West Valley. The Odyssey Family of Schools has evolved and grown into a network of schools whose scope, we never imagined. We evaluate and refine our practice on an ongoing basis throughout the school year and the summer months. Our administrative team utilizes daily classroom data to meticulously prepare for and implement researched based strategies and philosophy during our devoted professional development time every Friday. Believe it or not, the time devoted to professional development is the most important thing we do all week! Providing our teachers with the tools to perfect their practice results in scholar growth and success. This dedicated professional development is targeted to the specific needs at each campus grade level – K-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

Odyssey began as a tiny K-6 campus outfitted in a tiny strip mall in Buckeye. While we never anticipated the growth we see today, we knew that we would be splitting the elementary and junior high scholars onto separate campuses and with that we knew emphatically that we would need a junior high principal that

understood our vision and mission at its very core. We felt that no individual could meet this requirement more than a founder who had a profound influence on how the mission and vision was crafted. Mary Daniels possesses the unique ability to connect with Junior High scholars on so many different levels; it is truly impressive. She understands the Junior High mind at a time while most others struggle to wrap their heads around what Junior High scholars have to go through. Holly Johnson and Megan Olson continue as the



Student Council Election Posters

Co-Directors of Odyssey Family of Schools, but also take a special interest in the success and well being of the Junior High Scholars, as it truly is the most difficult age. Thank you to all stakeholders for your continued support of the Odyssey Family of Schools.

Sincerely,

Holly Johnson
Megan Olson

Co-Directors

Please allow me to formally introduce myself to all the new Odyssey Institute Junior High scholars and their families. My name is Mary Daniels. I have been a Junior High Science teacher, curriculum coordinator and teacher coach, and a Junior High Principal for over 20 years collectively. My heart has always been with Junior High Scholars. They are at a crucial apex in their development and I take that unique challenge of guiding them through those formative years very seriously. Thank you for entrusting your Junior High Scholar to my care. Please know that first and foremost, your scholars well being is truly my passion. I look forward to finishing this year strong and hitting the ground running in 2017-2018!

Sincerely,
Mary Daniels

Meet your Scholar's Junior High Principal



Why is the K-12 Continuum important and what does it look like in the upper grades?

The transition from elementary school to middle school can be challenging for scholars and parents. With the change comes a new campus, new schedule, new administrator, teachers and staff. New social groups and more independence. We realize these changes can be nerve racking for any parent. In Arizona, we are used to a K-8 structure that allows parents to ease into the high school transition by having their scholars on what amounts to an elementary campus for the first nine years of their education.

At Odyssey, that transition comes earlier, while it does make easing into high school easier on the scholars, and in some cases, should a scholar qualify, allows them to take high school classes while still attending the Junior High, it can be met with some trepidation.

The same principles and Core Values that guide the elementary schools guide the Junior High and High School. Love and Logic is seen throughout the school in action every day. Natural consequences are the best way to learn from our mistakes, Odyssey is a safe place to fail; and when the situation warrants, we do everything we can to implement natural consequences to scholars choices, simply put, “you break it you fix it.”

The Core Values are recited every day with a focus on community and personal responsibility. Daily lessons are approached with a rigorous Middle Years Program (MYP) with critical thinking and problem solving being at the forefront. Standards based grading will look slightly different at the Junior High level but the philosophy remains the same; growth is the most important statistic we focus on. It is never “this scholar can’t... it is always, “maybe this scholar can’t, yet, but they will get there.” It is never where they start but where they finish that is key.

From the time your scholar enters kindergarten, the focus at Odyssey is getting scholars through college, not just to college.

The 2015-2016 graduating class was the inaugural year for Odyssey graduates. Out of the 72 graduating scholars (100% graduation rate, as opposed to a state graduation rate of 78%) over 1.2 million dollars in scholarships were awarded.

100% of Odyssey graduates who applied for colleges were accepted.

This year’s graduates (84 scholars) have so far been awarded over 2.4 million dollars in scholarships.

The feedback and testimonials we are receiving from our graduated scholars is that they were more prepared than their peers.

All Odyssey 8th graders participate in the PSAT tests as compared to 5% of the state average. Odyssey scholars, while challenged through rigor, are ready for the real world, and that was the ultimate goal ten years ago when the concept of Odyssey began.

“So What Will My Scholar’s Day Look Like?”

Electives:

Another aspect that sets us apart from a K-8 environment is the ability for scholars to choose electives and a Language Acquisition class. This helps to prepare them for high school sooner. 6th graders can choose to take either band or choir and will select either Spanish or Mandarin as their language acquisition class. 7th and 8th graders are given the ability to choose art as an elective.

Celebrations:

“Accolades” is a monthly assembly where scholars are recognized for outstanding representations of IB profiles, it is the Junior High version of Kudos that you know so well from the elementary schools. Your scholars are recognized and honored!

What Clubs and Extra Curricular Activities are Offered?

We know from research that how scholars feel about their school and their Junior High experience is directly correlated to their participation in extra curricular events. Odyssey Junior High offers a plethora of clubs and sports. A list of these clubs, such as NJHS, Student Council etc.. can be found at: Fun nights and other club-sponsored events are also a large part of building school spirit and a sense of community outside the constraints of the classroom.

Sports:

Odyssey Junior High athletes compete in the Great Hearts League. It is a very competitive league and has offerings for scholars of all abilities. The participation levels are very high at the junior high level, enough that typically there are two competitive teams per sports.

Fall Sports Offerings:**

Tackle Football
Volleyball
Golf
Cross Country
Cheer

Winter Sports

Boys Soccer
Girls Soccer
Baseball
Softball

Spring Sports

Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball
Track

What will be new to Odyssey Junior High Next Year? Leadership, IB Design Cycle, and Service Learning classes built into every scholar’s schedule!

At The Odyssey Institute for Advanced and International Studies – Junior High, we believe that every idea for teaching middle school scholars is only as good as its capacity to meet the needs of young adolescents in a constructive way. We strive to find practical ways to meet the social and emotional needs of our middle level scholars every day. As such, we have developed a dynamic approach to engaging scholars in social competence through our newly created International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) Leadership class. This class, taught daily to all grade levels, will utilize the IB Learner Profile, Approaches to Learning (ATLs), Design Cycle and service learning to develop these skills for life long success.

We are looking for teachers who find this idea of leadership education enticing and exciting. These teachers will bring the skills of communication, adolescent development, leadership experience and community service to develop scholars to become caring, responsible and open-minded members of society.

We know that the Odyssey community is ripe with talented passionate parents who are looking for ways to be involved in their children’s education at the Odyssey Junior High. We are looking for these community members to bring their passion, skills and hobbies and develop them into service learning projects for our junior high scholars.

**These sports start before the first day of school. The athletic director for the Junior High is Mrs. McNelley. She will be sending tryout information with more detailed specifics in July via email. It will also be posted to the Odyssey website and Facebook.