

Odyssey Middle School

Odyssey is not one of the five Stapleton/Park Hill shared-boundary schools but is the boundary school for Lowry, Montclair, Mayfair, Hale and East Colfax.

School name/contact info	Odyssey School 6550 East 21st Ave. 303.316.3944 www.odysseydenver.org
Principal	Marcia Fulton
Type	K-8 public charter school
Grades in 2014	K-8
Estimated Enrollment in 2014	78 middle school (234 total)
Music	No (There are after school options)
Arts	Yes
Foreign Language	No (Spanish enrichment available)
Tutoring	13 students during math/literacy skill blocks.
STEM focus	No
Project-based learning	Yes, Expeditionary Learning
Focus on values	Habits of a Learner (Responsibility, Revision, Perspective Taking, Inquiry, Collaboration and Leadership, and Service and Stewardship)
SPF overall	Meets
Academic growth	Meets (75.6% growth)
2013 TCAP Overall	Exceeds (80.8% status)
Free or reduced lunch	33%
Diversity	43% Minority
School day/school year	8:10 - 3:15; Aug 20th - June 6th
Homework per night	60-80 minutes
Avg # of kids per class	26
Technology	1 to 1 computer ratio/blended learning approach
Engineering	No
Math	Engage NY
English Language Learner services	N/A
Lunch	Yes
Science	Yes
Before school programming	No
After school programming	Yes
Competitive sports teams	Tennis team
PE	Yes

1. What do (will) you do to ease the transition from elementary to middle school?

The motto of our school is: We are Crew not Passengers. Students begin and end each day in crew meetings in order to get to know one another. The adventure trips at the beginning of the year help all students acclimate to the new grade, the culture of the middle school, the routines and the expectations of how they will engage with one another.

2. What do (will) you do to accommodate students who move at a pace faster or slower than the group?

Instead of whole class instruction, with occasional opportunities for personalized learning, we would like students to enjoy the reverse: significant amounts of personalized learning, with occasional whole-class learning opportunities. A menu-approach to individualization enables students to have the right work in their own hands, at the right time. The reality is that in a skill-heavy discipline like math, some students need more repetitive practice while others need more time to develop the conceptual understandings.

3. How do (will) you deal with issues that go beyond what the teacher can handle in the classroom (homework, discipline, needs for extra personal support)?

We deal with all issues through the lens of a restorative approach. Mistakes are an opportunity to learn. Though strong relationships with students and families, we craft what we all believe are next best steps when dealing with any type of issue or concern.

4. What is (will be) special about your school that makes it a place where kids learn, grow and thrive?

The Odyssey School is an Expeditionary Learning community that fosters each child's unique potential and spirit of adventure. With a small class size, middle school students build close and lasting relationships with peers and teachers at a time when this is critical to academic success and emotional wellbeing. Through fieldwork and adventure, students come to know and value each other in a variety of settings.

5. Are there areas in which you expect change in the future (such as changes or additions to curriculum, resources, before and after school programming)?

We are constantly learning and changing in order to best serve the needs of our students. There is no one perfect curriculum and it is our job, as the adult learners in the building, to continue to understand what our students need to be successful in their ever-changing world.

6. What is your philosophy on teaching your curriculum? What is the balance of teacher-directed and student-directed learning, project-based learning, or other approaches?

Our curriculum is designed around rigorous, purposeful, project-based learning expeditions tied to Colorado State Standards. At Odyssey, students encounter a focus on reading and writing through literature, a rigorous math program, an emphasis on developing research and thinking skills, fine arts, documentation of work through portfolios, regular out-of-school fieldwork and adventure with environmental education.

7. Tell us about yourself (years teaching or administrative, experience in other fields, personal interests/hobbies).

I was born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa. After college I spent several years singing in three-part harmony with my two sisters around the Chicago area. After a tour of the corporate life, I got my Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and taught at Ponderosa Elementary in the Cherry Creek district for nine years before coming to Odyssey as a math consultant. I am excited to be going into my 13th year at Odyssey and into my seventh year as the Executive Director.

A Typical Day at Odyssey Middle School

8:10-9am Crew Meeting: community building/supporting the work of the day
 9-10am 13 students go to math/13 students go to literacy
 10-10:15am Snack and stretch
 10:15-11:15am Specials: Art or PE
 11:15-12:15pm 13 students go to math/13 students go to literacy
 12:150pm Lunch/recess
 1-3pm Expedition workshop-Humanities or science focus
 3-3:15pm Closing circle