Florida Disclosure Requirements

Florida Provider Disclosure Statement: Section 1002.45, Florida Statutes, requires the Provider to publish, for the general public, and as part of this application and any subsequent applications or contracts with school districts, the following information:

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Curriculum and Course Content

Source/Origin of Curriculum and Course Content

Optima Academy Online seeks to provide a content-rich curriculum that uses time-tested instructional approaches with proven track records of success. While the classical, or traditional, method of education has been practiced for hundreds of years, a recent resurgence of classical education in America has brought excellent curriculum options to the forefront, including those for explicit phonics and grammar, intensive writing, Singapore math, and the study of classic literature. Numerous successful classical schools, private and public, exist across the country and have informed Optima's scope and sequence in addition to the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards. For example, the Spalding Method forms the foundation for phonetic awareness, decoding and effective writing. Core Knowledge Sequence, distributed by Core Knowledge Foundation, promotes a knowledge-based schooling based on the research and writings of E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Results from the three-year pilot of Core Knowledge Language Arts in 10 New York City public schools show that students in kindergarten through second grade using CKLA outperformed their peers in 10 comparison schools on measures of reading, science, and social studies.[1] Singapore Math provides students with a strong conceptual foundation in basic mathematics, emphasizing concepts, mental math, and number sense while employing physical and graphical illustrations of underlying mathematical rules and phenomena.

The term "innovative learning methods" refers to new, advanced, and original ideas and manners of delivering instruction to students. Innovation is found in the reintroduction of these traditional methods, vertically and horizontally integrated across grades and subjects, combined with modern research-based pedagogy and strategies and the latest technology for education delivery. Several other unique innovations characterize the classical education approach:

1. All students in grades four and five will be introduced to Latin roots during the study of explicit grammar. Formal study of Latin will begin in grade six using the Florida course "Beginning Latin". Latin instruction will continue through Grade 9 and will be offered as a language elective in high school.
2. Upper-level students will study with a focus on primary source documents to foster analytical skills and essential insight into their culture and heritage.
3. All students will be trained in study skills such as time management, organization, and note taking, which are essential for building stamina for further academic pursuits.
4. The program will introduce and seek to instill these pillars of virtue in the lower grades: courage, honesty, perseverance, self-government, service, courtesy, and responsibility. Instruction in the classical virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude) will be

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[1] https://www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CK-Early-Literacy-Pilot-3-12-121.pdf

introduced in the upper grades as a continuance of the elementary character program and a necessary support of the classical curriculum.
5. The classical curriculum will be delivered in a virtual environment.

While schools should always have the worthy goal of improving student learning outcomes and concrete methods of self-evaluation, Optima Academy Online believes that the development of character virtues will lead to strong academic success. This supports a goal of producing students who communicate effectively, are virtuous, possess cultural literacy, and are active and productive members of American society. In order to accomplish this valuable goal, we propose to use time-honored instructional methods that are now considered innovative, since mainstream academia has adopted other methods in lieu of traditional teaching over the past several decades. While many homeschool families and private schools utilize the classical model, only fourteen classical public charter schools exist in Florida currently, of the more than 670 charter schools in operation.

Specific Research/Best Practice Used in Design

In the earliest grades, Optima's curriculum focuses the majority of the day on teaching literacy and numeracy. Both subjects are foundational to a student's academic success, so the resources and methods deployed in each case must be consistent and excellent. We will therefore use the Spalding Method to teach literacy and related skills, and the Singapore Math program to teach numeracy. As students mature in their facility with language, the curriculum directs their time and intellectual energy into more content-based (as opposed to skill-based) aspects of the curriculum. The basis of these subjects through ninth grade is the Core Knowledge Sequence, made available through the Core Knowledge Foundation.

Scientific research supports the Spalding Method (Source: Savage, John F, "Sound it Out! Phonics in a Comprehensive Reading Program, "McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2004.) The Singapore Math curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards at each grade level. The alignment was completed by the Singapore Math Corporation, which offers specific text and workbooks recommended for schools adopting the program. Optima Academy Online has reviewed the minimal differences between the CCSS and the Florida Standards, and will address those differences with supplemental curriculum material, as needed. The Singapore Math curriculum has been utilized in the existing Florida BCSI charter schools and aligns well with the standards, based on the evidence of Florida Standards Assessment results.

The Core Knowledge Sequence is based upon E.D. Hirsch's concept of cultural literacy, which makes it the ideal curriculum for a classical school. This sequence was developed to provide a comprehensive order to K-8 education, with the intention of training students in the art, literature, science, history, math, and language that form their cultural and intellectual inheritance. First

published in 1988, it has been successfully employed and tested in hundreds of schools throughout the United States. Results from the three-year pilot of Core Knowledge Language Arts in 10 New York City public schools show that students in kindergarten through second grade using CKLA outperformed their peers in 10 comparison schools on measures of reading, science, and social studies.[2]

Frequency of Revisions

Optima Academy Online recognizes the need and value of a systematic and on-going program of curriculum review. The organization encourages and supports the professional staff in its efforts to identify and review new curricular ideas, develop, and improve existing programs and evaluate all instructional programs. Changes in academic standards and guidance from the department of education will be reviewed annually to inform curricular changes, in addition to input from instructional faculty based on experiences throughout the school year.

Each year, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE)-reported results of student achievement will be compared with Optima's academic goals and objectives. The comparison and analysis of results will be reported to the administration and subsequently to all stakeholders. The analysis will include a breakdown of actual and expected results by subject, grade level, and various sub-groups, and discussion of success and areas for improvement. This will help to inform goals and objectives for the subsequent year.

Research Related to Effectiveness of Curriculum

Classical education is time proven with a history of over 2,500 years in the West. It began in ancient Greece, was adopted wholesale by the Romans, faltered after the fall of Rome, made a slow but steady recovery during the Middle Ages, and was revived in the Renaissance. The classical inheritance passed to England and from England to America through colonial settlement. At the time of this nation's founding, classical education was thriving. Jefferson heartily recommended Greek and Latin as the languages of study for early adolescence. Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans was often recommended by men like Jefferson and Franklin, and Hamilton seems to have given it special attention during his military encampment at Valley Forge. Eighteenth-century Americans venerated and trusted George Washington in large part because he reminded them of the Roman patriot Cincinnatus. So important has classical education been in the history of the West that it would only be a slight exaggeration to say that the march of civilization has paralleled the vibrancy of classical schools. Such a long tradition of education continues to be relevant today.

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[2] https://www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CK-Early-Literacy-Pilot-3-12-121.pdf

Classical education, from a research base, is most closely aligned with cognitivist learning theories. These theories postulate that children generate knowledge and meaning through sequential development of an individual's cognitive abilities, such as the mental processes of recognize, recall, analyze, reflect, apply, create, understand, and evaluate. The Cognitivists' (e.g., Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky) learning process is adaptive learning of techniques, procedures, organization, and structure to develop internal cognitive structure that strengthens synapses in the brain. The learner requires assistance to develop prior knowledge and integrate new knowledge. The purpose in education is to develop conceptual knowledge, techniques, procedures, and algorithmic problem-solving using verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences. The learner requires scaffolding to develop schema and adopt knowledge from both people and the environment. The educators' role is pedagogical in that the instructor must develop conceptual knowledge by managing the content of learning activities.

A classical education is more than simply a pattern of learning. Classical education is language-focused; learning is accomplished through words, written and spoken, rather than through images (pictures, videos, and television). This is important to understand because language-learning and image-learning require very different habits of thought. Language requires the mind to work harder; in reading, the brain is forced to translate a symbol (words on the page) into a concept. Images, such as those on videos and television, allow the mind to be passive. In front of a video screen, the brain can "sit back" and relax; faced with the written page, the mind is required to exert energy and work. A classical education, then, has two important aspects. It is language-focused, and it follows a specific three-part pattern: the mind must be first supplied with facts and images, then given the logical tools for the organization of facts, and finally equipped to express conclusions. The Spalding Method integrates systematic and explicit instruction to aid in the reading process by preparing teachers to deliver high quality literacy instruction. The reading process includes phonemic awareness, feature recognition, letter recognition, and sound-symbol relationships. The explicit phonics approach is often used as a remediation technique in non-classical schools when students begin to fall behind in reading. We believe that utilizing explicit phonics with all students from inception will reduce the need for remediation in the future. Accommodations for students with special needs will be implemented throughout various stages of the learning process according to the students' IEPs. For example, a student may need additional time or an alternate technique for memorizing the phonetic sounds.

For grades K-7, math will be taught using the U.S. edition of Singapore Math, an English equivalent to the national mathematics curriculum used in Singapore. Singapore is the world leader in mathematics achievement, according to at least two major longitudinal studies. According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), an international comparative study designed to measure achievement at the fourth and eighth grades, Singapore ranked in the top three countries in both fourth and eighth grades in every year the study was conducted (1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015). The Programme for

International Student Assessment (PISA), a triennial international survey that evaluates OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old-students, has also consistently ranked Singapore highest in mathematics. The PISA survey has ranked Singapore in the top two countries for mathematics in 2009, 2012, and 2015.

Singapore Math was developed in 1981 by the Curriculum Planning and Development Institute of Singapore. Educators in the United States began implementing Singapore Math in 2000. Topics are taught to a mastery level with detail and consistency, and the textbooks are designed to build a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts as opposed to offering simple definitions and formulas. Professional development accompanies Singapore programs so teachers are better prepared to facilitate lessons. Singapore Math has a consistent emphasis on problem solving and model drawing, with a focus on in-depth understanding of the essential math skills recommended in the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Curriculum Focal Points, the National Mathematics Advisory Panel. Students using Singapore Math learn math concepts thoroughly, but they also master essential math skills more quickly, and it has been reported that by the end of sixth grade, students have mastered multiplication and division of fractions and are able to complete difficult multistep word problems comfortably, ensuring they are well prepared to complete Algebra I in middle school (Source: John Hoven and Barry Garelick, "Singapore Math: Simple or Complex?" Educational Leadership 65:3, November 2007).

Evidence that Content/Assessments are Accurate, Free of Bias, Accessible for Students with Disabilities, ELL, NCAA Approval

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Optima Academy Online is committed to identifying and assessing the educational needs of students whose native or home language is other than English. Once identified, the school will provide appropriate programs to address the needs of these students, which may include coordination with the student's assigned school district.

Home Language Assessment

Upon being accepted to the school, each family will submit a home language survey.

Services

The organization will take steps to ensure to the maximum extent practicable that the interests of ESOL students are included in the development and implementation of school programs and services that are offered by the school to and for its student body. The Head of School will ensure

that all legal requirements are adhered to regarding the instruction and services provided to students who qualify as ESOL students.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Acceptance of Students

The organization provides services to public schools that are required to admit all students, based on space availability. The school does not, however, serve the broad array of all exceptional educational needs. Optima provides in-class services and may contract with providers for other therapeutic needs. The need for additional services may be coordinated with the student's assigned school district.

Limitation of Services

The organization strives to meet the needs of all our students. We attempt to provide individualized instruction to all our students. The school will retain the services of an ESE teacher to assist with working with children who have special needs. The organization does not, however, provide the full range of ESE services that are available from other traditional public schools. When a child with special needs is considering enrolling with the organization, the family will be informed of the services provided and the current staffing levels. The student's IEP or 504 plan will be reviewed to determine whether services can be accommodated and will consult with the parent on the results of this analysis.

Section 504 Policies

Section 504 Plans

The organization provides a free and public education to each student who is disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

When a 504 Plan Will Be Considered

The organization will consider a 504 plan for accommodations if the administration feels that the child may have a disability which would meet the criteria for such a plan. This can occur when a teacher identifies a student who is having difficulties, a parent requests a team to consider the needs of a student, or if a medical report has been submitted identifying a student as having a disability.

Meeting to Consider 504 Plan

If the administration recommends a student be considered for a 504 plan, the Head of School or designee will coordinate a meeting among the student's teachers and school specialist. The teacher will also ensure the parents have been notified and invited to the meeting. While at the meeting, the team members will consider whether the student's disabilities qualify them for

accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If so, the team will identify the accommodations necessary to allow the student to be successful within the school environment. The authorizing school district's forms will be used for both determination and the actual 504 Plan.

Eligibility

To determine if a child has a disability that qualifies them for a 504 Plan, the team will utilize the policies of the authorizing school district in regard to eligibility.

NCAA Course Approval

Optima Academy Online offers the following courses approved by NCAA. Additional courses are pending approval.

1200340	Algebra 2 Honors
2000310	Biology 1
2003350	Chemistry 1 Honors
0200305	Computer Science Discoveries
1001310	English 1
0110340	English 2
1206320	Geometry Honors
2100310	U.S.History
2109310	World History
2002400	Integrated Science

School Policies and Procedures

Nonsectarian Policy and Anti-Discrimination Policy

No person shall, on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin (including English language learners), marital status, disability or any legally protected class, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices conducted by this School, except as provided by law.

The School shall comply with all state and federal laws, which prohibit discrimination and are designed to protect the civil rights of applicants, employees, and/or students, or other persons protected by applicable law.

The School shall admit students to programs and classes without regard to race, color, nationality or ethnic origin.

Teacher Responsibilities

Performance/Professional Expectations

Online teachers are expected to Teach:
- Grade work in a timely manner
- Provide detailed feedback on student work
- Monitor student performance and suggest methods for improvement
- Conduct office hours to provide instructional support to students
- Attend faculty and team meetings
- Stay current with educational trends
- Maintain teacher certification

Professional Growth

Teachers are expected to develop two personal goals that connect to the larger mission of classical education and the teaching of virtue online. These goals may be linked to professional development opportunities or connected to their departmental team.

Professional Development

Through internal and external opportunities, Optima teachers are encouraged to strengthen their skills as online teachers through participating in 3 network-wide professional development opportunities per year. Professional development may be from internal and or external opportunities.

Student Centered Communication

Online teachers are expected to:
- Communicate effectively (student-focused) with students, parents, and administration.
- Monitor the tone of communication to be clear and professional.
- Present subject-matter expertise and demonstrate best practices.
- Utilize differentiated methods of communication to reach all types of learners (email, phone, Engage VR platform, Canvas, and Teams).

Student Success

Student learning and academic growth are at the forefront of Optima's priorities. This requires us to have an effective teacher in every classroom and effective leadership within the online school. Teachers' performance will be reviewed on an annual basis using observations and student assessments.

Student Responsibilities

Code of Student Conduct

Unless otherwise spelled out within these organizational policies, the organization will adhere to the school's Code of Student Conduct, incorporated by reference. Copies of the organization's student policies and the school's Code of Student Conduct will be made available to all parents and students on the school's website.

Behavior Foundation

The organization believes that children learn in a variety of ways, and that our teachers provide an environment that meets the needs of our students. Utilizing our approach to education we believe that through student engagement we reduce the number of behavioral concerns within the classroom. However, we realize that when dealing with children, issues may arise which may require the school to address student behavior. In doing so, the school believes behavioral correction should be a learning opportunity, where students are given the opportunity to learn and demonstrate appropriate behavior, and cooperatively accept responsibility and be accountable for their actions. The organization believes we have a unique partnership with like-minded parents who share this philosophy of behavioral management and positive parental role modeling.

Bullying and Harassment

Statement Prohibiting Bullying and Harassment

It is the policy of the organization that all its students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The organization will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying means intentionally and repetitively inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to:

1. Teasing
2. Social exclusion
3. Threat

4. Intimidation
5. Stalking, including cyber stalking as defined herein
6. Physical violence
7. Theft
8. Sexual, religious, racial or gender orientation harassment
9. Public humiliation
10. Destruction of property

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that:
1. Places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying and harassment also encompasses:
● Retaliation against a student or employee by another student or employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
● Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
  ○ Incitement or coercion.
  ○ Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the school.
  ○ Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.
  ○ Cyber stalking, which is defined as engaging in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose. See § 784.048(1)(d), Florida Statutes.

Expected Behavior

The organization expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school equipment.

The organization believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Since students learn by example, school administration, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate harassment or bullying. The organization upholds that bullying of any student or employee is prohibited:

1. During any education program or activity conducted by the school;
2. During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
3. On a school bus; or
4. Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system.

Consequences for an Act of Bullying or Harassment

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or reassignment, as outlined in school's policies. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate. (See State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006, FAC, The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials. Accusations made in good faith, even though subsequently determined to be false, shall not be subject to discipline consequences or remedial action as called for by this section.

Consequences for Intentional Misreporting

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or reassignment, as outlined in school's policies. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements. Consequences and

appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Reporting an Act of Bullying or Harassment

The dean of students or designee is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the dean of students or designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in-person to the dean of students or designee. In order to report incidents of bullying, individuals may meet with either the dean of students or designee to make the report. Any report in person should be followed within one day with a written report or a written explanation to the school's administration. Should the dean of students wish, other forms of reporting may be created. The methods of reporting bullying will be prominently publicized to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians, as well as how the report will be acted upon. The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments. Written and oral reports shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Investigation of whether a Reported Act is within the Scope of the School

The dean of students or designee will investigate procedures to initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of the school. The trained designee(s) will provide a report on results of investigation with recommendations for the dean of students to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the district and will act according to the following protocols:

1. If it is within the scope of the school, further investigation will commence in accordance with subsection (Prompt Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment) herein;
2. If it is outside the scope of the school, and determined to be a criminal act, refer to appropriate law enforcement.
3. If it is outside scope of the school, and determined not a criminal act, inform parents/legal guardians of all students involved.

Prompt Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment

The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act.

The procedures for investigating bullying and/or harassment include:

1. The dean of students (or designee employed by the school) will be assigned to initiate the investigation. The designee(s) may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
2. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately.
3. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the relevant facts.
4. A written final report to the dean of students.

Where the victim is a student, according to the severity of the infraction, the dean of students (or designee) shall promptly notify the parent/legal guardian of the victim of any actions being taken to protect the victim. The frequency of notification will depend on the severity of the bullying incident. The maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps.

Determination of Consequences and Due Processes for a Perpetrator

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances, followed by the determination of disciplinary sanctions appropriate to the perpetrator's position within the school.

1. Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who commit acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to suspension, or reassignment as outlined in the organization's policies and school district's Code of Conduct.
2. Consequences and appropriate interventions for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying will be instituted in accordance with school policy. Additionally, egregious acts of bullying by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate (Rule 6B-1.006 F.A.C.).
3. Consequences and appropriate intervention for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
4. These same actions will apply to persons, whether they are students, school employees, or visitors/volunteers/independent contractors, who are found to have made wrongful and intentional accusations of another as a means of bullying.
5. If a complaint of bullying or harassment is made by the alleged victim during or after the commencement of an investigation into employee or student misconduct, it shall not be a defense to the allegations of employee or student misconduct but may be considered as a mitigating factor under school policy, if appropriate.

Providing Immediate Notification to the Parents/Legal Guardians of a Student Victim

The dean of students or designee shall report the occurrence of any incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation determines that an act of bullying has occurred. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

If the bullying incident results in the perpetrator being charged with a crime, the dean of students, or designee, shall inform parents/legal guardian of the victim(s) involved in the bullying incident about the Unsafe School Choice Option (No Child Left Behind, Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532) that states "A student attending a persistently dangerous public elementary school or secondary school, as determined by the state in consultation with a representative sample of local educational agencies, or a student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by state law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary school or secondary school that the student attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school."

Once the investigation has been completed, appropriate local law enforcement agencies will be notified by telephone and/or in writing to determine whether to pursue criminal charges.

The Hope Scholarship Program

Pursuant to section 1002.40, the Hope Scholarship Program allows students who were subjected to an incident of violence or bullying an opportunity to transfer to another school, or to apply for scholarship funds to assist in enrolling and transferring to a private school. The school where the reported incident is responsible for the following:

1. Upon receipt of a report of an incident, the school Head of School, or his or her designee, shall provide a copy of the report to the parent and investigate the incident to determine if the incident must be reported as required by s. 1006.09(6). Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).
2. Within 24 hours after receipt of the report, the Head of School or his or her designee shall provide a copy of the report to the parent of the alleged offender and to the superintendent.
3. Upon conclusion of the investigation or within 15 days after the incident was reported, whichever occurs first, the Head of School or his or her designee shall notify the parent of the Hope Scholarship Program and provide the parent with a completed Hope Scholarship Notification Form. It is important to understand that the incident does not need to be substantiated in order for the school to notify the parent of the Hope

Scholarship Program. The school shall retain a copy of the form in the student records and provide the original document to the parent.

Referral of Victims and Perpetrators of Bullying or Harassment for Counseling

After an investigation has determined that an act of bullying has occurred, as defined herein, the school shall discuss with both the victim's and perpetrator's parents/legal guardians' options available for counseling. This may include referrals to community agencies or partner agencies the school has relationships with.

Providing Instruction Regarding Bullying and/or Harassment

The organization seeks to ensure that schools sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. It is important to change the social climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment including all school staff, parents/legal guardians, students, and school volunteers.

Students, parents/legal guardians, all school staff and, and school volunteers shall be offered instruction at a minimum on an annual basis on the school's Policy and Regulations against bullying and harassment. The instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment, as well as how to effectively identify and respond to bullying.

Damage or Loss of School Property

The Head of School or dean of students shall assess damage or loss of school property.

A student who unintentionally damages or loses school property, including technology items, shall be requested, in writing, to restore or to replace any damaged or lost property in accordance with the value as determined by the Head of School or dean of students, or in extreme circumstances the school board.

A student who willfully damages, loses, or steals school property, including technology items, shall be properly disciplined and his/her parent(s) or legal guardian, if the student is a minor, shall be requested, in writing, to restore or to replace any damaged or missing property in accordance with the value as determined by the Head of School or dean of students, or in extreme circumstances the school's board. The *Code of Student Conduct* shall identify disciplinary procedures for students who abuse school property.

A civil action against the student's parent(s) or legal guardian may be instituted by the school Head of School or dean of students in an appropriate action to recover damages in an amount not to exceed the limit prescribed by Florida statutes if vandalism or theft of school property is known to have been committed by a minor and the parent(s) or legal guardian refuses to restore

or replace the property.

Parent Responsibilities

Optima uses the Canvas LMS. Parents should monitor their students' progress in Canvas and use each teachers' published course resources for additional support and guidance throughout the school year. Parents are expected to read the [Family Handbook](#)

I. Student Monitoring - Parents can view the classes their student is enrolled in by logging into the Canvas LMS. Once logged in, they can monitor their student's progress and performance and contact the teacher for each class right from the Dashboard.

II. Communication - Through Canvas parents can email teachers directly with questions at any time. Teachers are there to support both parents and students. They will respond within 24 hours on school days.

III. Parent/Guardian Support - Technical support is available to parents and students at support@optimaed.com.

Academic Accountability

Optima Academy Online will facilitate the monitoring of all student progress. Students and parents will have online access to student grades on a real-time basis. Quarterly report cards, including teacher comments, will be provided to parents. Also, regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences will be offered. Parents will have online access to all graded assignments and teachers will communicate reminders to parents to review assignments on a regular basis. FAST and other standardized assessment results will be provided to parents on a timely basis.

The Head of School and grade level Team Leaders will regularly analyze student performance data and will meet with teachers to review data and create plans and strategies as needed to improve students at all levels of achievement. Teachers, who are daily interacting with students and assessing their performance, are the first line in identifying potential areas of need and are expected to proactively raise concerns so student performance deficits can be mitigated, and remediation maximized. Optima Academy Online also recognizes the importance of sharing assessment results with parents and the general community. The Head of School or designee will be responsible for the effective dissemination of this information to parents.

Academic Integrity

Optima Academy Online will verify authenticity of student work. Central to maintaining the academic integrity of the online program is the interaction between grade-level teachers and students facilitated by the Canvas learning management system (LMS), which is one of the

most advanced, reliable and user-friendly central hubs available. Over the past 10+ years, Canvas has been tested and refined in hundreds of educational environments. Because of its robust design and capabilities, Canvas functions as both an LMS and a content management system (CMS), which simplifies the interface for all users. Canvas contains an incredible array of features that allow the teacher to verify the authenticity of student work and integrate seamlessly with other tools that Optima Academy Online finds essential to delivering a high-quality classical education equivalent to what is provided in established Optima academies. Communication on how to submit assignments will be clear and accessible to all students through Optima's online platform.

Technology applications will be used in addition to Canvas to test for authenticity, including the use of cameras for assessment security and online plagiarism search engines. Academic integrity will be enforced with consequences as explained in the family handbook and code of student conduct.

Student Eligibility

The schools operated by the organization are primarily public charter schools which receive their charters from the local school district, and as such, comply with all applicable requirements of state law and the public-school system as well as their charters. Federal law may also apply if the school is the recipient of federal grant funds. Schools will admit all students based on space availability through use of the lottery process described below.

Student Selection

As per Florida Statute 1002.33, a lottery will be conducted, when applicants exceed available space, using a specialized randomizing student lottery software for each grade level to select students for enrollment. All lotteries will be conducted in a manner that ensures each eligible student receives an equal chance of being selected. Applicants will be selected in random order until all applications have been ordered. In order of selection (with consideration of any applicable preference), applicants will be offered admission until all seats have been filled. The remaining students' names will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which their names were selected.

Enrollment Deadlines

The provider shall develop an enrollment schedule each year to establish the enrollment deadlines. The initial student selection lottery will be conducted at least six months prior to the opening of the school year. The initial application period must be at least 60 days and be advertised on the provider's website and through other methods allowed for within the budget. The initial application period will have a beginning and end date.

After the initial application period, the provider shall establish a regular schedule of application windows for the random selection of applications, and post this along with the enrollment schedule. Each subsequent application period will have a beginning and end date. Registration periods will also be posted on the school website.

The deadlines and processes shall be clearly explained on the provider's website.

Non-Discrimination

Consistent with the school's Non-Discrimination Statement, state and federal statutes, the school will not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin (including English language learners), marital status, disability or any legally protected class.

Publication of the enrollment process will include a non-discrimination statement.

Student Preferences

The following students will be given a priority in the admission process under Florida Statute 1002.33:

- Students who were enrolled with the organization the year before.
- Students whose parents are staff members with the organization.
- Students whose parents are on the governing board of the organization.
- Students who have siblings enrolled with the organization.
- Students who have successfully completed, during the previous year, a voluntary prekindergarten education program under ss. 1002.51-1002.79 provided by the charter school, the charter school's governing board, or a voluntary prekindergarten provider that has a written agreement with the governing board.
- Students who are the children of an active-duty member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces.
- Students who attended or are assigned to failing schools pursuant to s. 1002.38(2).
- Students who are the children of a safe-school officer, as defined in s. 1006.12, at the school.
- Students residing in the school district.
- Students who transfer from a classical school in this state to a charter classical school in this state. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "classical school" means a traditional public school or charter school that implements a classical education model that emphasizes the development of students in the principles of moral character and civic virtue through a well-rounded education in the liberal arts and sciences which is based on the classical trivium stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Selection Process

The selection process will be conducted using third-party software to ensure all students have an equal chance of being selected for enrollment. On the dates specified within the enrollment

schedule, the school shall abide by the following selection process.

All Applicants will be Placed into the Lottery

In the event that more students apply to a specific grade at the school than openings are available, all completed applications received within the enrollment period up until the enrollment deadline will be included in the lottery for the applicable grade.

Determine Openings

The provider will determine the number of openings to be filled within the lottery process. The number of openings will be determined based on the contractual limits of the charter contract, staffing limits, and enrollment limits. The board will approve the capacity of each charter school.

Participation in Florida's Statewide Assessment Program

Students are required to participate in Florida's statewide assessments, including end-of-course exams, in coordination with the students' home district.

As an Online Course Provider, Optima Academy Online does not administer Florida's statewide assessments, but instead works directly with school district partners to ensure that students and parents are provided with information about the testing and testing schedules. Please refer to Optima's website for information on testing requirements for home education students or contact your teacher.

Attendance and Participation Requirements

Attendance/Participation Requirements

Optima's secondary education program will adhere to all (district school calendar days for all students enrolled in the District Virtual Instruction Program.) Since our virtual program is available 24/7 secondary students will be allowed to work at any time.

The LMS (Canvas) displays student usage on a weekly basis. Optima Academy Online teachers will have the responsibility of monitoring the students' daily work and recording attendance. Optima Academy Online has policies that call for teachers to closely monitor student attendance and coursework to ensure students are on track and on task.

Through our agreement with any school district, Optima Academy Online will strictly adhere to any district guidelines regarding attendance that the district virtual school administration establishes as district policy. Records can be monitored and will be maintained for the purpose of auditing.

For Student Policies & Student Code of Conduct please refer to the [Family Handbook](#).

Optima Academy Online VIP Attendance Policy

Attendance is an important component of a successful virtual school experience. In order to maximize academic growth, students must remain engaged in their classes. Attendance is measured in two ways:

1. Log Activity recorded in the Learning Management System (LMS).
2. Participation by way of assignment completion.

Log Activity

Students enrolled in live courses must log into their accounts and access their classes each school day. A log in to class, when applicable, and or completed coursework is the equivalent to attending school each day. Some exceptions may apply to the On-Demand courses.

Participation

In order to earn credit for a class, students must complete all course work with a passing grade. A pacing guide is set up for each course listing the assignments to be completed each week by the student. If a student fails to complete any assignments for a class during the week, regardless of whether the student logged in, the student may be considered absent from that class for the week.

Reporting to Home District

Student grades will be entered in the district's SIS.

Truancy

The state of Florida defines truancy as follows:

Florida law defines "habitual truant" as a student who has 15 or more unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the student's parent or guardian, and who is subject to compulsory school attendance.

Students who are determined to be habitual truant, either by not logging into classes each day, or by not participating in each class weekly, will be reported to the home district as truant and removed from the school after consultation with the home district. Warning letters will be sent to the student, parent, and district after 5 unexcused absences, and again after 10 unexcused absences in an attempt to successfully intervene and preserve the student's enrollment.

Certification Status and Physical Location of Staff

Certification status and physical location (state of residence) of all administrative and instructional personnel, to include state certification(s), highly-qualified status, out-of-field,

National Board certified, ESOL-endorsed or similar credential in another state, and reading-endorsed or similar credential in another state.

Employee Last Name	Employee First Name	State of Residence	Area of Certification	FDOE Number	ESOL Endorsement	ESE Endorsement	Gifted Endorsement	Reading Endorsement
Birchum	Porter	UT	Elementary Education K-6	1482721	☑	☐	☐	☐
Brooks	Bethany	OH	Elementary Education K-6	1484767	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ching	Jamie	FL	Elementary Education, K-6, Reading, ESE	1196544	☑	☐	☐	☐
Coburn	Laurie	FL	School Counseling, History, Educational Leadership, School Principal	1247596	☐	☐	☐	☐
Diaz	Janelle	FL	ESE, Math, Elementary Ed.	1212379	☐	☐	☐	☐
Duley	Heather	MS	ESE, Elementary Education, K-6	1466615	☐	☐	☐	☐
Duley	Sarah	MS	English, Art	511390	☐	☐	☐	☐
English	Annette	MD	Elementary Education K-6	1520078	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fitzsimmons	Danielle	FL	Pre-K - 3	1314552	☑	☐	☑	☑
Fitzsimmons	Lyle	FL	Math 5-9, Elementary Ed. K-	1316033	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gill	Savanna	FL	Math 6-12	1470768	☐	☐	☐	☐
Goodwin	Jacob	MS	Math 6-12, Physics 6-12	1475962	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graham	Curby	WI	History, 6-12	1466784	☐	☐	☐	☐
Helgerson	Farah	TX	Latin 6-12	1510155	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lichtenberg	Karen	MS	Spanish, K-12	1502659	☑	☐	☐	☐
Lynch	Jane	VA	Elementary Education, K-6	1502352	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mendez Polanco	Magaly	FL	ESOL, English 6-12	1269555	☑	☐	☐	☐
Raffa	Louise	FL	Elementary Education	1292136	☑	☑	☐	☑
Rosenbaum	John	FL	Social Science, 6-12	1464776	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spaulding	Kortni	IL	School Counseling	1468263	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sullivan	Madison	TN	English, 6-12	1461432	☐	☐	☐	☑
Truncale	Dawn	SC	Art	1512295	☐	☐	☐	☐
Warner	Chandler	FL	Elementary Education, K-6	1354924	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hardy	Hannah	FL	Elementary Education K-6, ESE	1389408	☑	☑	☐	☑
Foster	James	FL	Elementary Education K-6, ESOL, Reading	1337946	☑	☐	☐	☑
Mitchell	Abbey	CT	Elementary Education K-6	1422683	☐	☐	☐	☐
Woods	Corene	FL	Pre-K - 3	1472595	☐	☐	☐	☐
Devereaux	Sarah	FL	Math 6-12	1021991	☐	☐	☐	☐

Staff Name	Title	State of Residence
Jessica Bergel	VR CREATOR & INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER	FL
Zahira Buchanan	ADMISSIONS MANAGER	FL
Alberto Cardenas	AREA OPERATIONS MANAGER	FL
Sarah Devereaux	VR CONTENT & INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER	FL
Erika Donalds	CEO	FL
Elizabeth Finley	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & ACCOUNT RECEIVABLE SPECIALIST	FL
Aileen Gonzalez	CLIENT SUCCESS MANAGER	FL
Vincent Jordan	CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER	FL
Anna-Marie Kuenzle	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	FL
Adam Mangana	CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER	FL
Alicia McComas	ENROLLMENT SPECIALIST	FL
Fallon McLaughlin	SENIOR OPERATIONS MANAGER	FL
Stephanie Murphy	ENROLLMENT SPECIALIST	FL
Jonathan Olson	VR CONTENT & INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGER	FL
Desiree Pardo	ENROLLMENT MANAGER	FL
Luanel Rocafort	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ACCOUNTING	FL
Susan Turner	DIRECTOR OF COMPLIANCE & GOVERNANCE	FL

Teacher Performance Accountability

All teachers report directly to the Head of School. Teacher performance is reviewed on an annual basis. During these reviews, overall performance in terms of grading-time response and the use of feedback, and student's performance in their courses is examined. This includes

monitoring each teachers' dashboard, reviewing their to-do list and the rate at which the teacher is grading the material and student performance. At least one of the course gradebooks is reviewed to examine student performance and dive into the latest submissions to make sure the teacher is providing good instructional feedback to the students. This approach improves students' success and confirms that teachers are abiding by the Optima instruction policies. Specific issues or accomplishments are recorded during this review.

To accomplish the teacher's review the Head of School utilizes the Optima Teacher and Team Member Evaluation Rubric (OTTER). The tool is designed to work as a communication tool between the instructor and evaluator. Outlined in the tool are requirements Optima emphasizes to drive successful performance for online students. The teacher's overall performance is evaluated according to the following scale:

- Distinguished (Highly Effective)
- Proficient (Effective)
- Basic (Developing)
- Unsatisfactory

All teachers at Optima are required to maintain a Basic to Distinguished rating to continue teaching for Optima.

Domain Elements

A: Instructional Practice
B. Other Indicators of Performance
C. Performance of Students
D. Summative Rating Calculation

Administrative Contact Information

Optime Academy Online
3369 Pine Ridge Road, Suite 204
Naples, FL 34109
Phone: 239-963-8699
Fax: 239-935-8251
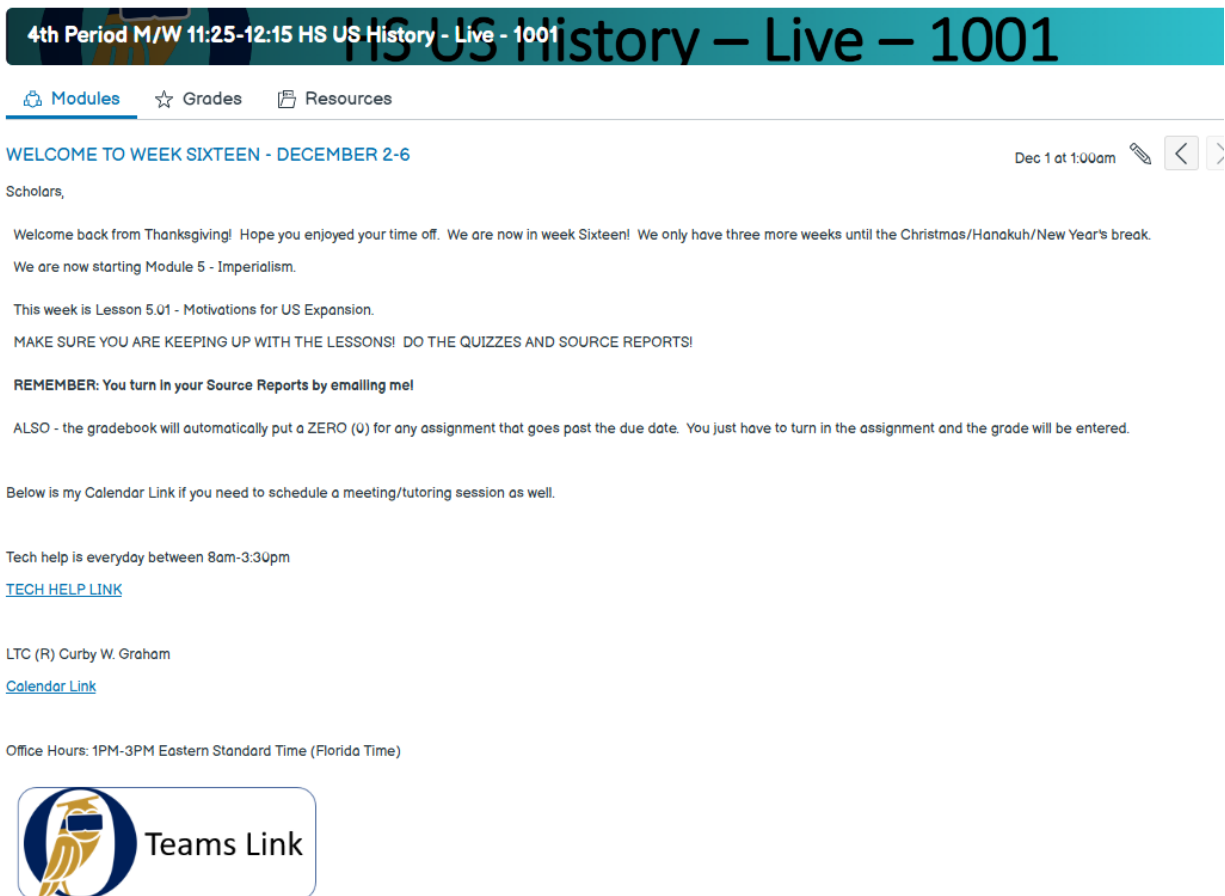Email: OAO-frontoffice@optimaed.com

Technical Support

support@optimaed.com

Contacting Your Instructor

Instructor Email: Found in Canvas Learning Management System
Telephone: Found in Canvas Learning Management System

The image below is an example landing page for a course in Canvas, OptimaEd's Learning Management System, showing teacher and tech support contact information, as well as course resources and reminders.

Hours and Availability

Hours and availability of instructional personnel.
- Instructional Hours: 8:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. EST, Monday – Friday, following the approved academic calendar
- Office Hours: 2:45 P.M. - 4:30 P.M. or by appointment

Student-Teacher Ratios and Teacher Loads

Average student-teacher ratios and teacher loads are for full-time and part-time teachers by virtual grade-level bands K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 for core courses. Optima Academy Online provides exceptional instruction from highly qualified and state-certified teachers. The instruction is a combination of curriculum with implementation by a certified teacher. Our teacher to student ratios for our program are as follows:
- K-5: 1 teacher: 30 students per core course
- 6-8: 1 teacher: 40 students per core course
- 9-12: 1 teacher: 40 students per core course

Teachers are also available for tutoring after regular school hours or by appointment.

District and State Data Reporting Policy

Optima Academy Online must maintain and provide all the required information to report to applicable districts and to DOE directly through the use of integrated information systems which are part of and compatible with the statewide comprehensive management information system. This information includes, but is not limited to, comprehensive attendance recordkeeping and reporting, standardized testing and student performance outcome reporting, FTE reports, transfer of transcripts, staff certification information and program accountability reporting. These systems incorporate the appropriate state-required data elements, procedures and timelines for state reporting, local recordkeeping, and statewide records transfer as per Rule 6A-1.0014(2), FAC.

Optima Academy Online must provide any contracted school district with the necessary data to meet its reporting requirements and timelines pursuant to Rule 6A-1.0014(2), FAC. With over 10 years of experience working with school compliance, Optima's data reporting leadership team has extensive knowledge and capabilities to meet all comprehensive educational reporting requirements. The learning management system used by Optima Academy Online (Canvas), in conjunction with the SIS (Focus), allows Optima Academy Online to pull any required student usage, performance, or demographic information to provide the district in

compliance with state requirements and timelines.

Student Standardized Assessment Results in Total and By Subgroup

Student standardized assessment results in total and by subgroup* (Florida Assessment of Student Thinking), continued on next page

FAST	Reading	# of Enrolled Students	# of Students who took final diagnostic	% of Students who took final diagnostic	% of students on grade level
Learning Gains Data from 2023-2024 School Year					
		364	9	2%	44%
Learning Gains Data from 2022-2023 School Year					
		244	79	32%	55%

FAST	Math	# of Enrolled Students	# of Students who took final diagnostic	% of Students who took final diagnostic	% of students on grade level
Learning Gains Data from 2023-2024 School Year					
		364	9	2%	44%
Learning Gains Data from 2022-2023 School Year					
		244	76	31%	43%

FAST	EOC	# of Enrolled Students	# of Students who took final diagnostic	% of Students who took final diagnostic	% of students pass on first attempt
Learning Gains Data from 2023-2024 School Year					
		364	7	2%	100%
Learning Gains Data from 2022-2023 School Year					
		244	3	1%	66%

FAST ONLY: 2023-2024

OAO by ELL (score)		
	Current ELL	Not Current ELL
ELA	NA	62
MATH	NA	64

OAO by ESE (Score)		
	Non-SWD	SWD
ELA	62	NA
MATH	64	NA

OAO by Economic Status (score)		
	Eco Disadvantaged	Non-Eco Disadvantaged
ELA	NA	62
MATH	NA	64

OAO by Race		
	ELA	MATH
White	57	75
Black	48	4
Hispanic	2	8
Two or more	NA	NA
Asian	83	71

OAO by Grade		
	ELA	MATH
3	97	97
6	84	71
7	27	49
8	39	39
9	63	NA

iReady Student Performance Data

iReady	Reading	# of Enrolled Students	# of Students who took final diagnostic	% of Students who took final diagnostic	% of students on grade level	Median % progress toward annual typical growth
		Learning Gains Data from 2023-2024 School Year				
		364	258	71%	60%	100%
		Learning Gains Data from 2022-2023 School Year				
		244	129	53%	53%	53%

iReady	Math	# of Enrolled Students	# of Students who took final diagnostic	% of Students who took final diagnostic	% of students on grade level	Median % progress toward annual typical growth
		Learning Gains Data from 2023-2024 School Year				
		364	253	70%	42%	78%
		Learning Gains Data from 2022-2023 School Year				
		244	129	53%	38%	42%

Student Completions

Course Completions				
Subgroups	22-23 Participating	22-23 Completed	23-24 Participating	23-24 Completed
ESE	256	73%	33	91%
African American	454	79%	422	93%
Asian	73	88%	87	87%
Hispanic	488	85%	423	99%
Two or More Races	89	89%	70	100%
White	1965	73%	1590	94%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	79	72%	63	83%

Percent of teacher evaluations based on student performance
We base 34% of our teacher evaluations on student performance.

School grades and AYP, if applicable, other school/program ratings
N/A

Dropout rates
N/A

Graduation rates
N/A

Security Measures

Optima Academy Online will heavily leverage proven education infrastructure – provided by high capacity, trusted partners – to ensure user security and password-protected access. The Optima Academy Online Canvas LMS is hosted by the Instructure team, which has a robust security program guiding development, hosting and ongoing provision. Optima Academy Online leverages Focus student information system (SIS), with its own well-established information security policies and mechanisms. We only allow authorized internal users to access student data and data in transit is secured by HTTP. All servers are located at Tier 3 data centers with appropriate levels of physical access, including biometrics. All servers are protected by load balancers, traditional firewalls, and web application firewalls.