

cooperation skills and reduce social, economic, ethnic, and cultural barriers.

### Parent Involvement

Because Odyssey relies heavily on parents to serve as coaches and judges, it provides a mechanism for positive parental involvement and it demonstrates appreciation for creativity and real-world relevance in learning. Furthermore, students draw on the community at large for expert advice, materials and funding; thus they may build friendships and networks in the arenas where many of them will later become creative, contributing citizens.

### A Final Thought

Florida schools are expected to teach skills in reading, writing, social studies, and mathematics, but students must also know how to use their knowledge, and apply it to real-world situations and problems. The not-for-profit Odyssey of the Mind Program is an excellent and proven means for giving students experience in the application of what they learn. It stimulates and rewards creative and cooperative student performance. It can make a difference for *your school* and *your students!*



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## Where Can I Find More Information?

For further information about the *Odyssey* program, and activities in your area, contact the Regional Director assigned to your Florida county. A complete list of Regional Directors, the State Director, a list of regional tournament dates and more can be accessed via the official Florida *Odyssey* web site at:

[www.floridaodyssey.org](http://www.floridaodyssey.org)

**Florida Odyssey of the Mind Assoc.**  
1750 Harbor Oaks Place  
Merritt Island, FL 32952-2901  
321-591-6067

Interested children and adults are also encouraged to attend one of the regional tournaments held throughout the state in February and March. Spectators may also view top teams from the regions as they participate in the state tournament held in April. Seeing teams perform their problem solutions is the best way to discover the excitement of creative problem solving resulting from participation in an *Odyssey of the Mind!*

## Regional Contact Information

*A Remarkable Resource for Achieving  
Goal 3 Standards within Florida's  
Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*



**Florida  
Odyssey of the Mind**

Florida schools are expected to meet comprehensive accountability requirements. Schools have available a remarkable resource for giving students systematic experience in applying what they have learned and demonstrating higher level thinking skills. That resource is the *Odyssey of the Mind* program, a non-profit student activity established in 1978 and currently operating in schools throughout Florida.

**Odyssey of the Mind** (*Odyssey*) is an international competition in which teams of students compete to solve age-appropriate problems by exercising creativity and using their knowledge and skills to reach solutions with "style". The program offers activities that are surprisingly parallel to the standards stated in "Goal Three – Student Performance" of *Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability*. Goal 3 Standards are the foundation of the Next Generation Florida Sunshine State Standards which are assessed by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

## What Is Odyssey of the Mind?

*Odyssey of the Mind* is a combination of technology and artistry, competition and cooperation, risk-taking and research that brings out the best in children from elementary school to college. Student teams are awarded points for solving problems together using creativity and imagination.

Each team selects one of five Long-Term Problems appropriate to the team's age level. *Odyssey* team divisions include: Division I: grades K–5, Division II: grades 6–8, and Division III: grades 9–12. The problem may involve any one of the following:

- (a) *vehicular problems*
- (b) *technical problems*
- (c) *Structural problems* ... that focus on a technical approach and contain a performance component;
- (d) *classics*, involving art, literature, or music
- (e) *theatrical*, involving history or folklore ... problems that focus on a performance approach and contain a technical component

For grades K–2 there is a non-competitive Primary Problem that introduces cooperative learning and team problem solving. Judges provide constructive feedback regarding the team's effort, but do not select winners.

Each Long-Term Problem is standard for regional, state and World level competitions. New problems are developed and are announced each fall, with the *Odyssey* tournament season ending in June with the annual World Finals competition.

Each team must also work cooperatively (while judges observe) to solve a short problem presented to the team for the first time in a highly controlled setting on the day of the tournament. This is called the Spontaneous Problem.

Finally, each team's solution for the **Long-Term Problem** is judged for the creativity and effectiveness of the presentation to the judges and the audience. For this aspect of the solution, Style, judges assign separate points.

### What Do the Goal 3 Standards Include?

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards come from the national Goal 3 Standards which have been adopted by the Florida Department of Education to represent part of that for which schools are held accountable regarding student achievement.

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards address Goal 3 Standards. *Odyssey of the Mind* provides practice for students in assuming the following future roles:

1. Information Managers
2. Effective Communicators
3. Numeric Problem Solvers
4. Creative and Critical Thinkers
5. Responsible and Ethical Workers
6. Resource Managers
7. Systems Managers
8. Cooperative Workers
9. Effective Leaders
10. Multiculturally Sensitive Citizens
11. Parental Involvement



## How Do Odyssey of the Mind Competitions Offer Practice in Gaining Goal 3 Standard Competencies?

### Academics

The final presentation of the team solution usually requires production item(s) such as a speech, an essay, original artwork, charts, or diagrams. These same types of production items are required as part of the FCAT. Therefore, *Odyssey* experiences can serve as excellent age-appropriate preparation for taking tests that are much more inclusive and demanding than merely marking answers to multiple choice questions.

### Student Centered

Since *Odyssey* rules prohibit outside assistance in reaching a solution, the students themselves must assume ownership of the learning experience. The teacher or parent coach is a facilitator, using questions and teaching research techniques to stimulate team members, but the coach may not contribute directly to the solution. Judges are trained to review student input on each aspect of the solution to maintain the integrity of the student-centered process the team has used.

### Teamwork

Schools participating in the *Odyssey* experience are urged to make the program available to any interested student, thus promoting diversity in team makeup. The teamwork aspect of *Odyssey* provides opportunities to sharpen