



Current Events

- 2009 Annual Fall Celebration**
 The Alhambra Grand Ballroom located at 2116 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard on Wednesday, November 25, 2009 10am - 1pm
- Athletics**
 Our sports program is off to a good start this year. Our middle school flag football team has won 4 out of their first 5 games, putting them in a tie for first place, with the tie breaker this weekend. We are also in the process of kicking off our JV Boys basketball program, schedules coming soon. Our girls and boys varsity teams are in the gym each night, fine tuning their skills and preparing for another run at the championship titles.
- Extended Day**
 The Extended Day Program began on Monday, October 19th. Some programs being offered include Homework Help, ELA Academy, Journalism Club, Drama Club, Music, Basketball and Student Employment. The Extended Day Program runs from 4:00-6:30 pm, Monday-Thursday.

Enhancing Student Achievement Through the Use of Best Practices: Becoming a Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Teaching has always been seen as a lone profession, a solo sport: teachers earn their degrees, get a job, and create their own worlds inside their classrooms, typically with little interaction with other teachers or administrators. At OCS, collaboration has always been a major tenet of our philosophy: teachers collaborate with teaching assistants, social workers, and behavior managers to better understand their students and how to support them. This year, OCS is embracing the structures of a “professional learning community” as we enhance these current collaborations, and grow teachers’ interactions with their instructional colleagues, through structured team meetings that focus on student learning and best practices. As in the past, all teachers participate in weekly team meetings with others in their content area (and with an additional meeting per week for middle school teachers with others in their grade). However,



this year the meetings are organized around reflection on peer/coaching observations, and collaborative study of best practices in teaching. Weekly “Learning Walks” by administrators, coaches, instructional leaders and teachers provide snapshots of learning which teachers then analyze in their teams and use for sharing of best practices and investigating areas for improvement. The team structure gives us a place to work on and monitor all of the OCS

initiatives (FEI, TCI, PBIS, strong IEP implementation, All Kinds of Minds, etc.), with an eye on the fact that all of these initiatives are part of a common goal: high achievement for our students. OCS is a results-oriented school that encourages experimentation in the never-ending quest to find out “what works” for students whom other schools have given up on. Through cooperation, support and a commitment to growth, we accomplish more together than we could alone.

The School’s Mission

At Opportunity Charter School, we welcome all students in grades 6 through 12, regardless of previous academic success: students who are yearning to learn, students who have fallen behind, students who have been told their aspirations are beyond reach.

Through a positive belief in every student’s promise, we are committed to bringing their potential to life. We provide staff and students with a safe, supportive environment in which to pursue personal development through an individualized plan tailored to their unique needs.

We nurture intellectual and personal growth. Students receive differentiated instruction in every curricular area from our highly-trained staff, with the goal of expanding their higher cognitive functioning.

Our school culture is performance-driven and results-oriented. Students graduate having achieved a clearly demonstrated academic and social foundation, as well as a deep understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Calendar Corner

November 11th
Veterans Day, No School

December 9th and 10th
Wednesday and Thursday
Parent / Teacher Conference

Alphabet Soup

Few of the acronyms you might hear at OCS. . .

OCS	Opportunity Charter School
FEI	Framework for Effective Instruction
CTT	Collaborative Team Teaching
ICT	Integrated Co-Teaching
TCI	Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
ABC	Academic, Behavioral, Clinical
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports
ELA	English Language Arts
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
PLC	Professional Learning Community
CSE	Committee on Special Education
OT	Occupational Therapy
LD	Learning Disability
ELL	English Language Learner
RCT	Regents Competency Test
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
LAC	Learning Across the Curriculum
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills
RTI	Response to Intervention
UBD	Understanding by Design
LS	Learning Specialist
SW	Social Worker
NYSED	New York State Education Department
GLE	Grade Level Equivalent
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
SLANT	Sit up, Lean, Ask Questions, Nod, Track the Talker

This is what a PBIS card looks like!



PBIS STORE

Positive Behavioral Incentive Supports

A highlight of the PBIS implementation is a school store for both middle and high school students. Students are able to use the PBIS cards they earn to purchase items at the store. The store consists of snacks and beverages.

What's New at OCS?

FEI

Framework for Effective Instruction

Our school is increasing academic expectations and critical thinking skills through the use of the Framework for Effective Instruction (FEI), which is a new instructional school-wide initiative. Through this framework, teachers will be able to become adept and confident in using teaching strategies, implement higher order thinking, reflect on lesson implementation and outcome, and increase student understanding through metacognition. Through detailed, focused, and measurable learning walks conducted by administrative and instructional teams, peer observations, as well as grade and content level professional development, staff will demonstrate deep understanding in four areas:

- Instructional planning— through the evaluation of lesson planning, unit planning, and learning walks
- Literacy Strategies – though the implementation of the workshop model and modeling in the classroom
- Higher Order Thinking – by analyzing student work and classroom observations
- Metacognition – by analyzing student work, student conference anecdotes, and classroom observations

FEI implementation is supported through a part-time FEI Literacy Coach, an FEI administrative consultant, and an FEI organizational consultant.

FSS

The Office of Family and Student Services

The Office of Family and Student Services (**FSS**) offers parents and students additional opportunities that support and help to continue the educational process. FSS hosts Opportunity's Parents for Success which is a forum for all parents. We introduce coping skills and a host of educational and social practices. FSS brings the community on board by increasing their awareness of OCS while giving them a clear understanding of "what we do." We encourage parents to volunteer and participate in all aspects of The Opportunity Charter School's mission.

GUIDANCE

A new addition to Opportunity Charter School this fall is our Guidance Department. The Guidance Department works with students, families, and teachers to provide additional academic support to the many student services we already offer at OCS. Guidance will seek to maintain high standards in meeting students' needs and helping each student succeed in his/her academic, personal, and social life while encouraging each student to reach his/her full potential.

This year the Guidance Department looks forward to continuing student exposure to a variety of career and continuing education options. Most notable is the introduction of the Guidance Elective course offered to high school students. All high school students will be enrolled in one marking period of Guidance to learn about career and college options during their regular school day.



The Opportunity Charter School
has been awarded membership
into the
NYU Urban
Advantage school program.

Student Spotlight

Santiago Minaya



Teachers and behavior managers agree that Santiago has shown tremendous potential from the start. Although, like most children at OCS, Santiago struggled with his academics and conflicts with adults, he learned to resolve them. He understands the importance of education more than ever. He is able to see beyond high school, something he perhaps didn't really envision as a reality ever before. His demonstration of interest and enthusiasm for learning and respect for his teachers has earned him the title of a role model. It has been an opportunity for the administration, teachers and staff to see the success of this senior to be one of our first graduating students.

Meet an OCS Teacher

Anita Joseph



After teaching Math to youth and adults in the Bronx, Ms. Anita Joseph joined Opportunity Charter School this year for a chance to serve underprivileged students. Her interest in special education and the training she received from the administration, TCI with Mr. Cook and Mr. Fazio as well as "exemplary modeling in the classroom," by Mr. Gittleman have made her feel well prepared. In the few months that Ms. Joseph has been teaching, she has noticed that the kids are "intelligent but need motivation. Getting them where you want them is a work in progress."

OCS Expectations

*Be Responsible *Be Respectful *Be Hardworking *Be Cooperative *Be Tolerant

Recent Events

- **Back to School Nights** were held on Wednesday, September 30th "An Evening with the Sciences" (Math and Science) and Thursday, October 1st, "An Evening with the Humanities" (English, and Social Studies)
- **Back to School BBQ**
OCS launched its first "Back to School BBQ" on Saturday September 26th. Activities at the BBQ included free health screenings from Harlem Hospital, face painting, an All-Star basketball tournament and a moonwalk ride. Students were able to use their PBIS cards (see page 2 for an example) to purchase food, including popcorn and cotton candy. Approximately 300 were reported present at the event

Leonard Goldberg
Head of School
212. 866.6137, Extension 4180

Marya Baker
Director of Instruction
212.866.6137, Extension 4063