
ODYSSEY REPORT TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE JUNE 20, 2007

History

1971-72: HAYNES 4TH GRADE IN VERMONT .

Nancy Hanks a teacher at Haynes came up with idea to take kids away for an outdoor experience. Chet Delani, principal supported the idea, and several other teachers (outdoors and nature enthusiast) embraced the idea . Offered to 4th grade (the highest grade in the school.) The site was in Vermont and was very rustic.

1972-89 VERMONT ODYSSEY, HAYNES ONLY

1989-90 NOYES JOINS HAYNES IN ODYSSEY

Sandy Bell hired at Noyes and brings the program to the school. They first piloted the program in 2 classes with Shelley Crowley and Janice Mack, it then went full school. This made Odyssey a town-wide program —Haynes and Noyes only elementary schools.

Move to Farm and Wilderness in 1992 -93 because two schools became too big for Ascutney State Park.

1994 NIXON OPENED AND JOINED OTHER SCHOOLS IN ODYSSEY

Sandy Bell , Amie Abdal -Khabir and Bev Barber move to Nixon and start the program. At this point, the town outgrew the original camp site so moved to a different location in Vermont. Site was wilderness and rustic.

1999 LORING OPENS AND JOINS PROGRAM

Expanded to 2 camp sites at Vermont location, and then expanded to New Hampshire as well.

2002 SADBURY ODYSSEY

Outgrew location and moved to Camp Wicosuta, New Hampshire site . At this time, staff made overt connection of program to the curriculum, changed to bus transportation

Source: The recollections of Sandy Bell, 2007

Odyssey Issues

1. Safety
2. Age appropriateness
3. Maintaining quality of the learning experience
 - a. Clear objective for Odyssey
 - b. Impact on students prior to, during, and after Odyssey
4. Accessibility to all students
 - a. Location of camp
 - b. Supports at camp
5. Appropriate and Sufficient Staffing
 - a. School staff (for trip and in the rest of school)
 - b. Medical
 - c. Parents
 - d. Relationship between staff and chaperones/parents
 - e. Leadership

Odyssey Issues

6. Scheduling

- a. MCAS window
- b. Length of the experience

7. Organizational Issues

- a. Impact on rest of school
- b. Time required to plan by teachers, administrators and nurses
- c. Impact of overnight on staff, students and parents
- d. Time away from classroom to plan and organize the trip
- e. Consistency across schools
- f. Expanded responsibilities and associated liabilities:
- g. Clear delineation and acceptance of roles and expectations of teachers, chaperones, parents
- h. Clear medical protocols and guidelines for teachers, chaperones, parents at-home, students

8. Cost

Information Collected

- a. Meetings with staff (4th grade, 5th grade, others)
- b. Meetings with administrators
- c. Meetings with nurses and medical staff
- d. Survey of area schools
- e. Parent email and calls
- f. Parent questionnaire
- g. Individual conversations
- h. Parent forums
- i. 4th & 5th Grade Student questionnaire & input
- j. 4th grade parent questionnaire (yet to be analyzed)

Other Districts

District	Grade Level	Activity
Freetown	4	Ecology theme, 4 days/3 nights Nature's Classroom Charlton, MA
Lakeville	4	Ecology theme, 4 days/3 nights Nature's Classroom Charlton, MA
Lexington	5	3 days/2 nights Nature's Classroom, Groton, MA (not all schools)
Lincoln	5	2 days/1 night Cape Cod Sea Camp trip (cut down from 2 nights)
Newton	5	2 days/ 1 night (grade 5 in one school) Outdoor Classroom at Camp in Duxbury, MA revised after their Oak Hill Tragedy
Arlington	5	4 days/3 nights Alton Jones science camp in RI in the fall
Wellesley	5	4 days/3 nights at Thompson Island-Environmental Education Unit
Waltham	5	DISCONTINUED. A science trip at an NH camp that was very popular for many years, even with occasional serious parent problems. Cancelled due to too many logistical and planning time demands (and a very long costly bus ride). Increasing safety concerns/
Concord	5	3 days/2 nights trip to Sargent Camp only 2 classes attend
Boxborough	5	Annual trip to Cape Cod in Spring-Leave on Wed., Stop at Plymouth for Pilgrim tour, then head to Cape Cod Sea Camps in Brewster. They return on Friday.
Acton	5	2 night trip to Boston U's Sargent Camp in Hanover NH; only at one school
Weston	5	DISCONTINUED. 4 days/3 nights at Horizon for Youth in Sharon, MA
Concord	6	4 days/3nights Merrowvista in NH in September
Hanscom MS	6	DISCONTINUED. 3 days/2nights at Ferry Beach (Maine)
Lincoln	7	4 days/3 nights Sargent Camp trip
Bedford	8	May trip to D.C.
Lincoln	8	4 days/3 nights (2 nights in DC, 1 night in Gettysburg)
Weston	8	Week long trip to Washington D.C.
Brookline	8	2 nights/3 days trip mostly to NYC or DC
Hanscom MS	8	DISCONTINUED. Trip to DC – No longer in effect due to parents resistance mostly because of expense and travel safety concerns
Brookline	6, 7 8	DISCONTINUED. 3 days/2 nights to Mt. Cardigan- a longstanding tradition that they can no longer approve due to issues of safety.
Arlington	Various	National and International trips for various music groups and others

SUDBURY ODYSSEY

Goals for its Future

1. Move the trip later in June; out of the MCAS window
2. 3 days, 2 nights
 - ? Possibly completed in one week if 2 schools from Mon -Wed; 2 schools Wed-Fri; or in two week period if smaller venue
3. Venue nearer Sudbury
 - ? Allows all students to attend the day portion without a required overnight
 - ? Staff able to provide program without requirement to spend the night
 - ? Alternative in -the-school experience limited or eliminated
4. Odyssey will remain in 4th grade.
 - ? Trip designed for, and accessible to, all students. A culminating experience in 4th grade and preparation for 5th grade.
 - ? The mission of the trip is experiential learning with a focus on discovery science (including curriculum connections to 5th grade and beyond), plus personal growth, team building, and leadership.

SUDBURY ODYSSEY

Goals for its Future

5. STAFFING ISSUES

- a. Appropriate staffing, medical, administrative and chaperone levels will be determined for all aspects (day, night, special activities) of the experience. This will take into consideration safety, special/unique circumstances, required student accommodations and impact on the school during the trip
- b. No teacher will be required to stay overnight; staff shall be present to provide the day program
- c. **A lead administrator (active or retired) will be designated as the Sudbury Odyssey Coordinator.**
- d. An administrator will be present on site at all time.
- e. Medical staff (without chaperone or other responsibilities) will be required with the level of staff determined by safety, special/unique circumstances, and specific medical needs of the students.
- f. Inability to meet the minimum staffing puts the trip in jeopardy for a given school.
- g. Chaperones will be provided training prior to the trip.

SUDBURY ODYSSEY

Goals for its Future

6. PARENTAL ROLE

- a. A clear and consistent set of parent responsibilities will be determined.
- b. Parents will be discouraged from visiting the camp site during the trip
- c. A school Odyssey Parents Committee will annually assume planning and preparation responsibilities in partnership with the teachers, administrator and the Odyssey Coordinator.
 - ? Objective is to standardize the level of support across schools and from year-to-year.
- d. District wide training for chaperones will be provided as a prerequisite for serving the capacity .

SUDBURY ODYSSEY

Goals for its Future

7. PLANNING

- a. During the summer, 2007, an Odyssey Planning Team (OPT) will develop the program more fully (location, curriculum, activities, guidelines, etc.) with the goal of having a recommendation for School Committee approval in the fall.
- b. Nurses or other medical professionals, familiar with trip will be enlisted to develop a consistent medical protocol to ensure the proper care and service to students.
- c. The OPT will include 4th grade teachers, other teachers as interested and necessary to address curriculum issues, curriculum specialists, school and district administrators, and the Odyssey Coordinator.
- d. A parent advisory committee will be convened (at appropriate time) to support the work of the OPT. Parents will be invited and selected from each elementary school and will hopefully serve on the school's Odyssey parent planning team.

SUDBURY ODYSSEY

Goals for its Future

8. FUTURE/ON -GOING REVIEW

- ? An annual review of the trip shall be completed with a report to the superintendent
 - i. Educational Objective
 - ii. Positive Experience , Participation
 - iii. Safety
 - iv. Staffing
 - v. Parental Involvement
 - vi. Location, Facilities
 - vii. Cost-Benefit