SUCCESS STORY

COMMITTED TO MOTIVATING STUDENTS WITH CREDIT RECOVERY, COURSE EXPANSION & CARE

Odysseyware offers hope to struggling students in a small school making a big impact

No district wants to let students fall through the cracks, but sometimes a public school system just isn't able to accommodate the learning, social, or emotional needs of all their students. Beyond alternative schools, many districts don't have the resources to cope with these struggling students. Fortunately for Pasquotank County Schools in northeastern North Carolina, there is a solution. When students in their district need special attention or credit recovery to ensure timely graduation, Foreshadow Academy is a viable option.

Thanks to the generosity of the school's all-volunteer staff, the private school works closely with Pasquotank County Schools to provide a safe, supportive learning environment for the district's struggling students in grades 6-12.

With access to Odysseyware, Foreshadow Academy is able to offer their full-time students more course options and put their staff's time to best use.

For instance, students work through Odysseyware's Spanish modules to learn language basics.

"Odysseyware adds flexibility and diversity to our curriculum."

—Melanie Owens, Educational Director

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SMARTER ONLINE LEARNING.

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>
> —Melanie Owens, Educational Director

A desire to serve the students with the greatest needs

Foreshadow Academy operates on the property of Weeksville Community Church in Elizabeth City, NC. For many years, the pastor's wife, Melanie Owens, homeschooled her children along with several foster children. As part of their education, Melanie took the children to the public alternative school, H. L. Trigg Community School, to serve as tutors. While at the school, Melanie became good friends with Kevin Sawyer, the district's dropout prevention coordinator. With few options to offer students who still weren't finding success at the alternative school, Kevin started to send some of his most troubled students to Melanie for instruction.

Melanie began to wonder if opening a school might be a good idea. After speaking with friends, fellow church members, and her contacts at H. L. Trigg Community School, Melanie decided to pursue her goal and open a school. During the spring of 2007, she wrote two federal grants, each for one million dollars. Melanie had already identified a modular building to house the school, and with the grant money, Melanie planned to relocate the building to the Weeksville Community Church property, hire staff, and achieve her goal. Unfortunately, the school project was not awarded either grant.

It was clear there was a pressing need for the school within the community, but without the money to hire staff or move the building, Melanie wasn't sure how to proceed. After several months had passed, the city was still unable to move their unwanted building. Finally, Melanie was able to find someone to move it at an affordable cost, and by January 2008, it was in place. Thanks to financing through the church, the new building was brought up to code for the school. Melanie was also able to find a dedicated staff, many with teaching degrees and/or teaching certification, who were willing to work for free in exchange for free tuition for their children.

In April 2008, Foreshadow Academy opened its doors with eight students. The school operates solely on donations and limited revenue from student tuition offered on a sliding scale.

> Initially, the district provided Foreshadow Academy with access to Odysseyware through the district's license. Students could take Odysseyware courses online from home, even during the summer. Since Foreshadow Academy is open year-round, students could call or email a staff member with questions.

Thanks to Melanie's tenacity and Odysseyware's generosity, Foreshadow Academy continues to offer credit recovery to the area's public school students. In the past seven years, approximately 100 students have benefited from this much-needed option.

> Nothing will ever take the place of the academy's caring, dedicated teachers, but Odysseyware's online courses are a critical asset for Foreshadow Academy.

A safe, supportive, and caring learning environment

Word quickly spread about Foreshadow Academy's special approach to teaching. Getting back to the basics, the academic curriculum focuses on the three "R's" of learning to read well, write well, and apply "arithmetic" concepts. Also incorporated into the curriculum are the three "R's" of life lessons: respect, responsibility, and resiliency. Students are taught in clusters, one room for middle school and one for high school. There are no grade designations. Once a student meets all the requirements of middle school, he or she moves into the high school. Each student works at his or her own pace, and the curriculum is tailored to their specific strengths and learning gaps. The high school staff does whatever it takes for students to gain the skills needed to meet state graduation requirements and go on to higher learning.

Credit recovery and so much more

Foreshadow Academy began using Odysseyware to provide credit recovery for Pasquotank County Schools. The public school didn't have a credit recovery program in place, so the district's dropout prevention officer worked with Foreshadow Academy to provide credit recovery oversight and transcripts. Initially, the district provided Foreshadow Academy with access to Odysseyware through the district's license. Students could take Odysseyware courses online from home, even during the summer. Since Foreshadow Academy is open year-round, students could call or email a staff member with questions.

With access to Odysseyware, Foreshadow Academy was also able to offer their full-time students more course options and put their staff's time to best use. For instance, students could work through Odysseyware's Spanish modules to learn language basics. The school's Spanish teacher would then facilitate conversational usage of the skills the students learned in Odysseyware. "Our teachers provided application of what the students learned online," Melanie said.

> "Many of our students come to us with very low confidence," Melanie shared. "They've been bullied or were never successful in the traditional school environment. We meet students where they are and work one-on-one with them to build a foundation and help them achieve." Odysseyware plays a big part in how the small staff at Foreshadow Academy staff is able to achieve this.

Without access to Odysseyware, Foreshadow Academy would no longer be able to offer credit recovery to the local district or electives to Academy students.

A real need for Odysseyware courses results in a generous donation

Unfortunately, in September 2014, with classes already beginning, Foreshadow Academy received word that they would no longer have access to Odysseyware. The district had switched to another online course provider. Without Odysseyware, Foreshadow Academy would have to discontinue offering credit recovery to the local district or electives to Academy students.

As Melanie had done many times throughout the school's history, she picked up the phone and asked for a favor. Melanie called her Odysseyware account manager and explained how losing Odysseyware would harm the school and its students. Through the advocacy of the account manager, Odysseyware offered Foreshadow Academy a scholarship for five licenses for the 2014-15 school year.

Thanks to Melanie's tenacity and Odysseyware's generosity, Foreshadow Academy continues to offer credit recovery to the area's public school students. In the past seven years, approximately 100 students have benefited from this much-needed option. Teachers at Foreshadow Academy use the licenses to support their instruction.

Creative ways for students to achieve their goals and dreams

"Odysseyware adds flexibility and diversity to [the] curriculum," noted Melanie. In one case, the academy had an 18-year-old student who had one year left to meet graduation requirements before he aged out of the school. Unfortunately, his math skills were very poor. Foreshadow Academy's staff decided to work with him one-on-one using a textbook to teach him Algebra I. At the same time, the student took Odysseyware's Algebra II online course in order to complete his math requirements in time for graduation. Using this blended instruction model, the student was able to get Algebra I *and* II on his transcript. Melanie expressed, "Odysseyware helps us get creative with how we teach."

According to Melanie, "Odysseyware expands our curriculum. The benefits are truly phenomenal. We are so grateful to Odysseyware for investing in the lives of the next generation."

Odysseyware is also a motivator for many students. "**We have a student in high school that has wanted to work for the Center for Disease Control since he began high school,**" Melanie said. "**He's a very bright student, but can be disorganized. We told him that if he keeps his grades up and manages his time, he can take the Odysseyware public health course. He's been on track ever since!**"

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