Why Can’t We All Be Friends?:
Creating partnerships with virtual charter schools for success for ALL students

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AGENDA

- Introductions and Purpose
- Overview of Oregon Connections Academy
- Myths and Facts
- Ideas for Partnership
- Questions and Answers
The Connections Academy Model

TEACHERS

PARENTS

CURRICULUM

TECHNOLOGY
How We Are Structured

- Public charter school
- Sponsored by Scio School District
- Grades K-12
- Open to all students in Oregon
- Oregon licensed, HQ teachers
- Online curriculum
- Learning Coaches
- “LiveLessons” (Adobe Connect)
- Loaned computers and Internet subsidies
- Fully accredited (Northwest Accreditation Commission)
Our Curriculum

- Exceptionally comprehensive and flexible
- Meets rigorous state and national standards
- Materials from the best academic publishers
- A rich mix of online and print resources
- Interactive online tools bring concepts to life.
Engaging Electives

- WORLD LANGUAGES
- VISUAL PERFORMING ARTS
- TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING
- STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
- ENGLISH AND SOCIAL STUDIES
- MATH AND SCIENCE
- HEALTH AND P.E.

NEW! CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION
Opportunities for Gifted Students

- Specialized teachers match students to their learning level.

Special Gifted and Talented, Honors, and AP Courses

**GRADES K–2**
- Flexible instruction by student’s ability

**GRADES 3–8**
- Math
- Language Arts
- Science

**GRADES 9–12**
- Honors courses in most subjects
- Advanced Placement courses
Resources for Struggling Students

- Ongoing assessments
- Personalized learning plan according to student needs
- Success and support in challenge areas
- Extensive Advisory team
- Academic Coaching for at-risk students
- Reading and math remediation
- High School credit recovery

“He started caring about and taking responsibility for his own education, wanting to do well in school.”

Connections Academy Parent
Socialization and Extended Learning

Online Clubs and Activities

Volunteer, Service, and Leadership Options

Family Social Events

Numerous Field Trips
ORCA Demographics

Enrollment

- 05/06: 654
- 06/07: 1396
- 07/08: 1771
- 08/09: 2550
- 09/10: 2484
- 10/11: 2472
- 11/12: 2990
- 12/13: 3284
- 13/14: 3356
- 14/15: 3800
Myths and Facts
Myth #1

- ORCA is nothing more than glorified homeschooling.

- Grade level or subject matter teachers for every student.
- Robust interactive curriculum with built in formative and summative assessments
- Cutting edge Education Management System
- Multiple modes of teacher-student communication
- Flipped classroom models
- Mentoring program for Learning Coaches
- Extensive technical support
Myth #2

- ORCA sends state tax dollars out of Oregon for corporate profits.

- ORCA purchases content and services from CE:
  - Payroll
  - CCSS-aligned online curriculum
  - Textbooks (paper and virtual)
  - Technology
  - HR
  - Legal
  - Teacher professional development
  - Help desk
  - Special education
  - Business/Financial
  - State reporting and compliance
  - State relations
  - Etc..........
Myth #3

- ORCA’s overall student performance is worse than most school districts in the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>N Tested</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>State %</th>
<th>Grades ORCA Exceeds</th>
<th>Equiv. Grades</th>
<th>Grades ORCA Behind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>3,4,8,11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>3,4,5,8,11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Myth #4

- ORCA does a poor job of serving special needs students.

- 9 full-time special education teachers
- 5+ district-based sped case managers
- Extensive support from CE
- Tiered intervention model (RTI)
- Specialized services
  - Speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling
- Assistive technology
  - Braille texts, text-to-speech/speech to text, digital tablets, graphing calculators, etc....
- Accommodations and Modifications
  - Extended time, oral response, visual aids, graphic organizers, off-grade level curriculum, alternative activities, etc...
- School psychologist and SLP testing support from LBL ESD
Myth #6

- ORCA steals good students from districts and causes those districts significant financial difficulty.

- State law requires school districts to release no more than 3% of their students to virtual charters
- 72% of ORCA’s enrolling high school students are seriously credit deficient
- ORCA receives a disproportionally high number of highly mobile and at-risk students
- Many families would homeschool or private school if it were not for ORCA
- Families choose ORCA because of safety, bullying, social indoctrination, bad schools, sports, music, flexibility, and other needs
- ORCA works to counsel students into the best fit
- Overall parent satisfaction with ORCA exceeds 90%
Ideas for Partnership
Ideas for Partnership

- Put students and families first
- Work together to find best fit
- Counsel students into and out of ORCA depending on need
- Collaborate with revenue share for local opportunities (sports, music, etc.)
- Share SpEd services when appropriate
- Share Title 1 funding to best serve all students
- Keep lines of communication open
Question and Ideas
Thank You!

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