



Our Sisters' School

New Bedford
Massachusetts

“SUCCESS looks like this! Our young scientists, mathematicians, artists, historians and writers build a solid educational foundation during their middle school years. Dedicated teachers help our girls think flexibly, discuss broadly, empathize genuinely and share a culture of learning. Students are equipped with Core Value tools and guided to work toward their intellectual promise in an environment that values *excellence, community, citizenship and leadership*. I revel in the challenges and opportunities middle school years can present and believe in my soul that OSS will continually set goals for each student, and then help them navigate their own voyage to success.”

Sarah Herman, Head of School



Sarah Herman with OSS students

OSS Core Values

Excellence

Excellence is achieving mastery, one step at a time.

Community

Community is at the heart of why we're here.

Citizenship

Citizenship is lending a hand to do what needs to be done.

Leadership

Leadership is seeing, showing, and paving a better way.

“OSS opened my eyes to a world beyond New Bedford. It taught me to look with a new set of goggles and truly enjoy learning. I am forever grateful.”

*Irene Luperon '11
St. George's School '15
University of So. California '19*

Our Mission

Since our start in 2008 as an independent, tuition-free, non-sectarian middle school, our mission has been to educate and inspire economically disadvantaged girls from the Greater New Bedford area. By providing a safe, supportive and academically challenging environment, Our Sisters' School empowers girls to step into the future with valuable life skills and a mindset of achievement and excellence.

We are committed to our community partnerships and work closely with an ever-expanding team of organizations. Our students are fortunate to enjoy internships and extended project-based learning opportunities through our growing connections with the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Buttonwood Park Zoo, Community Boating Center, YWCA, Immigrants' Assistance Center and Youth Opportunities Unlimited.

Why Our Sisters' School?

Our school's name honors the bravery and courage of the women known as “sister sailors” who headed out to sea from New Bedford's harbor during the city's whaling days. Like these women, the students of OSS bravely embark on a voyage to engage in a challenging academic environment that is carefully crafted, responsive and integrated to support them as they become thoughtful community members and future leaders.

Our Sisters' School continues the legacy of sister sailors by fostering positive self-identity among girls during critical middle school years, and ensuring that they develop both the confidence and the academic foundation necessary to succeed in high school and beyond. OSS consciously chooses to educate young women, emphasizing public speaking, civic engagement and STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) to address gender achievement gaps in critical areas of society. As social science research and wisdom suggest, “*When you educate a girl you educate a family*” – that is precisely what we are doing.

Our Community Core Values

OSS teaches strategies for social-emotional development and well-being as intentionally as we teach to our common core standards. Head of School Sarah Herman says, “We want our girls to have the academic skills to get a job, the inter-personal skills to keep that job, and a centered, community-minded self to guide all decision making.” That’s why our core values of **Excellence, Community, Citizenship and Leadership** permeate all that we do. As alumna Eva Watts-Pine ’15 said, “Middle school is the best time to teach life-long lessons, and OSS is able to cultivate core values, bring out the best in us and teach us not only how to learn, but how to teach others.”

Preparing for the Future

Each year, 18 students are accepted into the 5th grade with full scholarships. In selecting each new student, OSS makes a thoughtful, long-term investment in that young girl’s future. The mastery of fundamental skills and study habits in grades 5 through 8 greatly enhances our students’ chances of enrollment in Honors and AP classes at public secondary schools, or of earning scholarships to independent secondary schools.



Our Graduates

All our alumnae (100%) have graduated, or are on track to graduate, from secondary school. OSS graduates who go on to independent schools receive scholarships. Applying to, and attending, colleges and universities is the next step for 90% of our graduates. We are proud of all our students, and pleased that our list of schools is always growing:

Independent Secondary Schools:

Bishop Stang High School
 Dana Hall School
 Falmouth Academy
 The Hotchkiss School
 Lincoln School
 Loomis Chaffee School
 Milton Academy
 Noble and Greenough School

Phillips Academy Andover
 St. Andrew's School
 St. George's School
 Tabor Academy
 Westover School
 The Wheeler School

Public Secondary Schools:

Bristol County Agricultural High School

City on a Hill Charter School
 Dartmouth High School
 Fairhaven High School
 Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
 Masters Regional Academy
 New Bedford High School
 Old Rochester Regional High School
 Westport High School

Colleges:

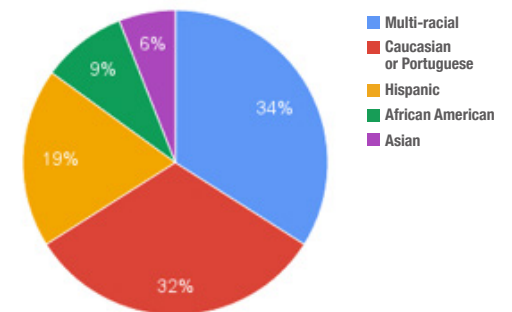
Amherst College
 Bates College
 Bridgewater State University
 Bristol Community College
 California State University, Fullerton
 Curry College
 Emmanuel College
 Fashion Institute of Technology
 Fisher College
 Framingham State University
 Franciscan University
 Salem State University
 Suffolk University
 Texas Christian University
 UMass Amherst
 UMass Boston
 UMass Dartmouth
 University of New Hampshire
 University of Southern California
 Wagner College



Financial Information

- OSS is tuition-free; every student receives 100% scholarship assistance.
- As a single-sex school, OSS is not eligible for state funding. We rely 100% on individuals, foundations, and grants.
- The annual cost per student is approximately \$20,000. This includes an almost 10-hour school day, frequent weekend activities, and extensive summer programming.

Student Racial Demographics





A Day in the Life of an OSS Student

School begins at 7:30 AM and ends at 5:15 PM. Our almost-10-hour program builds arts, academic enrichment, and physical activity into every day. Our week is full and varied; classes and opportunities include but are not limited to advisory, internships, art, clubs and hands-on learning and experiential education opportunities. They are incorporated into the following sample schedule:

Morning Speaker

Twice a week, our students assemble to hear a visiting community member speak about a personal passion or his/her life's work. After hearing a professor from UMass Dartmouth speak about immigration patterns to New Bedford, or an OSS parent speak about overcoming his childhood experiences with homelessness, for example, students can connect the presentations to their own lives by sharing takeaways before heading to their first class.

Humanities

At OSS, all students take Humanities class—a blend of English Language Arts, Social Studies, current events, performance and art. Classes investigate year-long essential questions: *How does literacy help me understand myself? What makes a sustainable community? What are my rights and responsibilities as a global citizen? How does change happen?*

Music

OSS's music program includes instruction in recorder, wind instruments, guitar and keyboard. All students have their own instruments to practice on between weekly music classes.

STEAM Lab (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math)

STEAM Lab is a course focused on teaching 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, and creative and critical thinking. Projects engage students to find solutions for design challenges ranging from exploring forces, renewable energies, animation and visual technologies, to circuitry and computer coding.

Community Meeting

Community is at the heart of what we do here at OSS, so every Monday and Friday we gather together in an all-school meeting, where we prepare for upcoming events, hear from teachers and students, and share our appreciation for members of our community.

Lunch

For 45 minutes every day, the whole school joins together to eat, chat, and play. OSS students are sure to mix up their groups to make new friends in other grade levels.

SSR (Sustained Silent Reading)

Sustained Silent Reading time is sacred. After lunch, students and teachers enjoy the pleasure of independent reading. Teachers and tutors meet with small groups of students for targeted literacy sessions during this time.

Math Teams

Demonstrating a commitment to mastering foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, OSS has instituted the Math Teams program—grouping students across grade levels to work on advanced topics and proficiency. The program complements an academic math class for each grade.

Sister Sailors Sail

In the fall and in the spring, OSS students learn to sail at the Community Boating Center. Out on the water, our students build character, gain familiarity with their environment, and develop leadership and technical skills.

Science

Earth, life and physical science are integrated at each grade level. Our use of cutting-edge technology and hands-on activities allow students to better understand concepts that span fields of science as well as English and math.

Evening Study

OSS offers a safe, focused and supervised space every evening for students to complete their homework, and also to meet and work with their teachers and tutors.

Be Part of OSS:

Volunteer

OSS has a strong culture of volunteerism among our students, families, staff and in our community. Each year:

- Our students volunteer more than 1,000 hours of community service.
- More than 125 volunteers dedicate over 5,000 hours at the school, helping with everything from tutoring and coaching, to cleaning and organizing.
- OSS families contribute more than 1,000 hours of community service, providing essential support in classrooms, on field trips and beyond.

To learn how you can help, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator.

Support

- You can make a donation online (visit www.oursistersschool.org and click “Donate”) or send a gift in the mail.
- In-kind donations of supplies and materials are also deeply appreciated.
- For more information, please contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at 508-994-1255 or ggoulding@oursistersschool.org.

Apply

- Students and families attend an Open House and submit application materials including a basic skills assessment. Interviews are completed before admittance decisions are made.
- Call 508-994-1255 for more information or to schedule a private tour.
- Learn more about Our Sisters’ School at www.oursistersschool.org.



OSS Class of 2017 student

“The long days helped me get ready for Andover...so much hands-on attention and adult mentors looking out for you and helping you along the way.”

Arianna Mello '11, Andover '16, Amherst '20

“The one-on-one learning...the close relationships with her teachers. OSS broadened Arianna’s intellect and pushed her as far as she could go.”

Tina Ford P'11

Our Sisters' School, Inc. admits girls as students to the school regardless of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Our Sisters' School, Inc. employs personnel of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, religion, creed, and sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to personnel at the school.



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