

OLD CAPITOL TRAIL ACADEMY, INC.

# Handbook

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## **IN APPRECIATION**

The members of OCTAI thank Ken and Janet Klein for their wisdom, foresight, and generous commitment of time in founding Old Capitol Trail Academy, Inc.

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# Old Capitol Trail Academy, Inc.

## BACKGROUND

Old Capitol Trail Academy, Inc. (OCTAI) was established in the summer of 1989 to serve the educational needs of homeschool families in Delaware. Today each member family acts as a satellite campus of OCTAI. The school is administered by Christian men and women who promote and encourage Christian values and Biblical principles in education. OCTAI is registered as an independent private school with the Delaware State Department of Public Instruction (school code # 830). We welcome families regardless of race, religious persuasion, and reasons and philosophies of home education. We believe that such diversity is in the long-term best-interest of preserving our right to educate our children at home.

We believe Christian parents are given the responsibility and moral authority by God to control and direct the educational and spiritual development of their children; therefore, the ultimate responsibility to determine progress and set educational goals rests with parents. At the same time, to meet legal responsibility to the Department of Public Instruction that all OCTAI students are receiving "regular and thorough instruction," we have an accountability process each family must meet. Accountability criteria can be found in the Membership Agreement (see Table of Contents).

OCTAI's mission is to:

- Provide Delaware home educators with a private school which fulfills legal responsibilities
- Maintain records, provide accountability, and offer support to homeschool families enrolled in OCTAI.
- Promote home education by informing the public and by our example

OCTAI is your school. Ultimate responsibility for educational quality, administration, and management is in your hands. The OCTAI board is an extension of you and your homeschool. Our goal is to maximize the amount of time you have to teach your children and to minimize the time you spend on the necessary tasks of legal documentation and compliance.

All board positions are filled by individuals gracious enough to give their time and talent. Hence, your cooperation, patience, and support are essential. Unresponsiveness, aggressive verbal attacks, and general harassment of any representative of OCTAI will be grounds for immediate revocation of school membership.

**DISCLAIMER:** The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a source of information and guide for families of this school. OCTAI reserves the right to alter, amend, modify, change, or terminate any of the policies in the handbook after providing our families sufficient notification of change. All policy changes will be in effect upon date of issuance, unless otherwise stated.

## OCTAI SERVICES

[1] OCTAI maintains confidential transcripts and records for enrolled students. Records are accessible only to parents or guardians, OCTAI officers, and designated clerical volunteers. Records may be released by written request from parents or guardians of students transferring out of OCTAI or for legal due process after OCTAI has conferred with legal counsel. ALWAYS RETAIN ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR OWN FILES.

[2] OCTAI serves as the official interface between home educators, their respective school boards, and other Delaware state agencies. If a problem develops with any school official or state agency, or if harassment occurs, homeschoolers should insist that all contacts by state representatives be Presented in writing to OCTAI. OCTAI will then serve as the homeschooling family's official representative or intermediary'.

**Executing your responsibilities as a home educator is ultimately up to you. OCTAI expects high standards to be maintained by all families. We reserve the right to deny or discontinue enrollment to any family not conscientiously and responsibly conducting a clearly recognizable program of education. (See Probational Membership).**

[3] OCTAI administers standardized testing in New Castle County at least once a year for all mandatory testing grades. This service *is* contingent on the number of volunteers available to proctor tests. (See Testing Procedures and Volunteer Policy)

## HOME EDUCATION AND DELAWARE LAW

### DELAWARE

**Compulsory Attendance Ages:** “Between 5 years of age [before September 1] and 16 years of age,” unless the local school authorities determine that such a beginning is not “in the best interests of the child.” Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2702(a-b).

**Required Days of Instruction:** None, but homeschools must submit attendance reports annually to the Department of Education.

**Required Subjects:** None, unless the homeschool is coordinated with the local school district, in which case the subjects must be the same as public school. Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2703A

**Home School Statute:** Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2703A.

*Home schools have three options from which to choose:*

**Option 1:** “Single-family homeschool” means the education of one’s own child(ren) primarily by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of such child(ren) mainly in their own residence. Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2703A(2).

**Option 2:** “Multi-family homeschool” means the education of children, primarily by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of such children mainly in one or several residences, or other facilities, when such children are not all related to each other as brother or sister. A person shall act as a liaison to the

Department of Education for reporting enrollment and attendance information for all families involved. Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2703A(1).

**Option 3:** “Single-family homeschool coordinated with the local school district” means the education of child(ren) primarily by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of such child(ren) mainly in their own residence using a curriculum approved by the local superintendent or his/her designee. The local superintendent shall determine in writing that the student is or will be provided with regular and thorough instruction by the student’s parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in the subjects prescribed for the public schools of the State and in a manner suitable to children of the same age and stage of advancement. Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2703A(3).

Under all three options above, homeschools must report attendance information to the Department of Education on or before July 31 each year. Before November 1, homeschools must also submit an annual statement of enrollment as of the last school day in September. Both reports must be on forms prescribed by the Department of Education. Delaware Code Annotated, Title 14, § 2704.

**Teacher Qualifications:** None.

**Standardized Tests:** None. *Delaware*

As a multi-family homeschool under option (2), OCTAI is required to:

Submit a statement of enrollment and attendance to the State Board of Education  
Maintain sufficient school records by the homeschooling teacher to demonstrate that all enrolled children are receiving regular and thorough instruction.

In addition, we maintain immunization records for all students as a part of their permanent school record.

Education Climate in Delaware

Home education in Delaware is safeguarded by the vigilance of all. Considering today's changing educational climate and Delaware's status as an equivalency state, private schools must ensure that changes in public education don't impede the rights of homeschoolers to freely educate their children as they see fit. The efforts of homeschoolers have enabled DHEA to play a key role in this effort. As the homeschooling movement grows, homeschoolers need to remain alert to changes.

## **HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (HSLDA)**

HSLDA is a national organization dedicated to the preservation of parents' right to educate their children at home. HSLDA has established the National Center *for* Home Education through which it monitors state and federal legislation and notifies its members of pending actions throughout the country. HSLDA collects data and provides accurate reports concerning the success of home education nationwide.

**HSLDA Membership Benefits** - HSLDA provides free legal counsel and representation in the event of action by a school board, school superintendent or other governmental representative. In addition, HSLDA issues regular email alerts, publications, and contests.

## **OCTAI Policy Regarding HSLDA**

Because of HSLDA's value as a resource to homeschool families and especially *for* the legal protection it affords those getting started, we require that all OCTAI families join HSLDA for their first year. Continued membership is highly recommended, but not required. Please send a copy of your HSLDA acceptance letter to the records administrator in a timely manner to complete OCTAI entrance requirements.

Although Delaware is considered a moderate state regarding home education and confrontations with government officials are rare, HSLDA provides support *for* home educators across the country. A strong effort to protect the rights of homeschoolers in all states ultimately protects the rights of all.

Members of OCTAI are entitled to a 15% group rate discount. Please state that you are a member of OCTAI on your HSLDA application or renewal form. **Be sure to list OCTAI's group #290018 on your HSLDA application.**

## **OCTAI ADMINISTRATION**

The management structure of OCTAI is similar to that of many churches. . Churches often have a board of elders, a board of deacons, and a variety *of* committees directing church affairs. . Likewise, OCTAI has two boards, one an administrative board and one an academic board, as well as committees which manage the academy's affairs. All board and committee members must be OCTAI members in good standing.

### **Administrative Board**

The OCTAI administrative board is responsible for the efficient delivery of quality services. This board consists *of* eight members who hold the following positions:

- 1) President
- 2) Vice President
- 3) Principal
- 4) Secretary
- 5) Treasurer
- 6) Records
- 7) Mail Communications
- 8) Data Management

### **Administrative Board Job Description**

President - The President schedules and presides over Administrative and Joint Board meetings. He/she schedules and presides over the Annual Meeting and any special meetings which need to be called. He/She provides administrative management and assistance as needed.

Vice-President - The Vice President attends all Administrative and Joint Board meetings, the Annual Meeting and any special meetings called by the President. If the President is not able to preside over any of said meetings, the Vice President will preside and will have the same authority as the President.

Treasurer - The Treasurer has custody and responsibility for all funds, securities and accounts of OCTAI. He/she receives all money due OCTAI and has authority to pay all expenditures approved by the Board. He/she must maintain adequate and correct records and deliver a financial report at the Annual Meeting.

Secretary - The Secretary secures the location for all Board meetings, attends both Administrative and Academic Board meetings and sends minutes of those meetings to all Board members.

Principal - Attends Administrative Board Meetings to report on Academic matters. Schedules and presides over Academic Board Meetings and nay training/information meetings needed for Portfolio Leaders. Prepares welcome letter to member families for October mailing and reports to members at the Annual Meeting. The Principal also is responsible for sending any letters of additional requirements, probation or termination to members.

Records - This position maintains records on all OCTAI students (family data sheets, year-end reports, test scores, HSLDA membership, etc.). He/she also distributes the students worksheets at the beginning of the year to Portfolio Leaders. He/she is OCTAI's liaison with the State of Delaware, sending our official number of students and days attended.

Mail - The mail person picks up mail at the Newark Post Office, sorts and directs it to the correct recipient. A log is kept of all incoming mail with date and to whom it was sent. It is also the responsibility of the mail person to check enrollment applications for completeness and to contact families submitting incomplete forms to tell them what is missing. He/she also scans any pertinent information to distribute via email to enrolled families.

Data - The Data position involves maintaining the data base for all families enrolled in OCTAI. New and re-enrolling family information is input and updated yearly, and reports are passed on to Records. He/she is responsible for compiling the State enrollment report, fielding phone calls, providing enrollment information to area resource personnel and portfolio leaders as needed. They are also responsible for updating membership forms, the OCTAI Handbook, the October mailing and re-enrollment packets.

## **Academic Board**

The academic board, comprised of the principal and Portfolio leaders, reviews academic standards and establishes process standards for OCTAI membership. Academic standards cover student performance as reflected in the curricula presented to and the material to be learned by each student. These standards are based on individual student goals, instructic.mal objectives, curricula choices, and assessment measures established and used by each homeschool family. OCTAI believes that setting academic standards is the responsibility of every homeschool parent. OCTAI asserts that the family is the one and only authority (moral *or* otherwise) for determining the content of a child's curriculum, its scope and sequence, and the teaching style



best-suited to each individual child. Ultimately, what a child is learning, as well as how and when he or she learns it, is the responsibility of the parents, not OCTAI.

Process standards, on the other hand, are set by OCTAI to establish common criteria necessary to fulfill the legal responsibility of assuring that "regular and thorough instruction" is occurring for children enrolled in OCTAI. These standards apply to those items listed and agreed to annually by all OCTAI families in the OCTAI Membership Agreement.

### **Academic Board Job Description**

High School Coordinator - The High School Coordinator provides a system of accountability for high school students, answers question regarding requirements, curriculum etc., schedules meetings to review progress, keeps the Principal current on any potential problems and provides documentation to the Board for satisfactory completion of requirements from each student. He/she is responsible for scheduling meetings for freshmen students or students who have transferred in, Mid-Year meetings and End of Year meetings, as well as securing a location. He/she is responsible for keeping OCTAI High School requirements up to date with state standards, rewriting and submitting updated information to the Board for the Handbook, and any forms as needed. He/she also communicates school policies (such as "probationary membership") to high school families not meeting requirements. They collect and check transcripts and note problems requiring action by the Board. They are also responsible for sealing and mailing any requested transcripts for colleges.

Area Resource - Area resource responsibilities include attending Academic Board meetings, responding to inquiries and requests for membership and interviewing new members and assigning them to portfolio groups. Area Resources also communicate school policies (such as "probationary membership") to families not meeting requirements. They collect and check year end reports and note problems requiring action by the Board.

Portfolio Leader - Portfolio Leaders provide a system of accountability for group member families, answer questions regarding membership requirements, curriculum etc., schedule meetings to review progress, keep the Principal current on any potential problems and provide documentation to the Board for satisfactory completion of requirements for each family in their group at the end of the year.

### **Board Membership**

Before the end of each school year, a full slate of board members is appointed by the sitting board and presented to the membership for confirmation.

Individuals invited to serve on the board may be referred by other OCTAI members. In addition, any OCTAI member can volunteer him or herself or refer someone else for board membership by directly contacting any current board member.

All board positions have one-year terms, but there is no limit to the number of terms or the number of years a member may serve. Please feel free to call any board member with any concerns or suggestions.

## **PORTFOLIOS AND PORTFOLIO GROUPS**

### **Portfolio Groups**

The primary function of portfolio groups is to provide a system *of* accountability that enables each family to meet the minimum requirements for membership in OCTAI. Beyond the basic requirements, the groups serve as a valuable resource and support system for member families. This support can be as simple as sharing information and ideas at meetings, or it can be as involved as sharing events, activities, and curricula throughout the year. The level of each group's activities depends on the needs and desires of the group coordinator and group members.

### **Portfolio Group Coordinator**

Each portfolio group coordinator is the primary support person for 5 to 10 homeschool families. Portfolio group coordinators are responsible for providing a system of accountability for group member's families. Coordinators:

- Answer questions concerning portfolio and school membership requirements
- Offer suggestions and support as needed.
- Schedule and lead all group meetings.
- Review portfolios and year-end reports.
- Provide documentation to the board of satisfactory completion of school requirements for each family.
- Activate phone trees as needed.

Portfolio group coordinators must be OCTAI members in good standing and current members of HSLDA.

### **Portfolio Guidelines**

OCTAI requires that a portfolio of each student's work throughout the school year be compiled and reviewed by a family's assigned group coordinator at the end of the year-and possibly more often at the discretion of the coordinator.

At the start of a school year (or by the 4th week for new enrollees), Group coordinators will contact each group member and discuss different methods for keeping students' portfolios. Portfolios will be reviewed at the end of the year as part of the year-end review process. First-year families are expected, and veteran families will likely be required, to review their portfolio progress by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Portfolio Requirements**

The purpose of your student's portfolio is to demonstrate the progress he or she has made in the areas covered during the year. Compiling portfolios is easier if you keep good records and develop a filing system for your child's work. Monthly systems work well, as do systems by subject or by units.

## **Basic portfolio requirements for each student are:**

**1. Attendance record:** A suggested attendance form is found at the end of this section. Make copies as needed.

**2. Lesson plans:** You are required to keep daily or weekly lesson plans. At review meetings you will be required to present lesson plans; these may be kept in a lesson plan book, a spiral notebook, or any other form that is convenient for you. Include a list of all tasks completed by the student. Abbreviations and page numbers are acceptable. You may also include percentage correct on assignments, longer descriptions of children's work progress or problems, special projects, lessons, sports, and volunteer activities. By year-end there must be at least 180 days of plans logged.

**3. Year-end report:** You must turn in a typed or word-processed copy of this document to your group coordinator at the year-end review. This report becomes part of your student's permanent school records. This report is explained in more detail below.

**4. Book List:** Include list of the books your child has read or listened to during the year.

**5. Samples of work:** Chosen should be sufficient to demonstrate progress in each subject throughout the school year. Include rough drafts of some writing assignments, as well as final copies. At a minimum, include work from the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

**6. Optional but significant materials to include are:**

- Descriptions of volunteer activities or special projects.
- Pictures, notes, postcards, and brochures from field trips.
- List of periodicals regularly read.
- Pictures from special family times, recitals, holiday observances, special projects, group gatherings, or activities. Pictures add a great deal to portfolios.
- List of teacher in-service type activities, workshops, conferences, classes, and books you have read this year to improve your teaching skills.
- Tape recording of your child reading throughout the year. Make sure to announce the date before each reading so improvement can be noted.
- Remember that a well done essay tells much more about how well a child uses language than a worksheet does.
- Other materials which demonstrate academic, social, and religious growth.

Putting together a portfolio does not have to be a monumental task. Keep up with the job by filing work or by putting it directly into the student's binder as the year goes on. Involve your children in compiling the portfolio; students are excited to see their work, photos, and mementos preserved. Make creating portfolios a shared family activity. Many children enjoy their portfolios year-after-year because the portfolios are a concrete record of their growth and development.

## **YEAR-END REPORT GUIDELINES**

This report is a written review of your student's school year. For each subject or area taught, list the curriculum and/or resources used. List completed books as such. If partial books were used, list units or pages completed. If a grade level is applicable, note it. If you used a unit study format, also list topics covered. Include student's name and grade or school year along with a page number at the top of each page. **These reports must be typed.** Samples can be found at the end of this section. Any further questions can be answered by your portfolio leader.

The format for the year-end report's first page can be found at the end of this section. A sample (writeable) can be provided for you by your portfolio leader upon request. Please make sure you fill in all required areas. The number of school days indicated must be at least 180 days. If you transferred into OCTAI after the start of the school year, count the number of days your student was in the previous school and add them to the days in OCTAI. If your student had many sick days, plan make-up days to achieve a minimum of 170 days.

Make copies of the year-end report for your files, the student's portfolio, and your group coordinator. The group coordinator will review this copy before forwarding it to OCTAI records department for inclusion in the student's permanent file. The completed year-end report is due at your year-end review. Exact dates of year-end reviews are left to the discretion of group coordinators but are usually by the end of May. If revisions are necessary, your portfolio leader will give you a time frame within which to work.

Keep in mind that this paperwork becomes part of the student's permanent records. If he or she transfers to another school, this record follows them. These reports must be well-written: your portfolio leader can give you any assistance you need.

Please be informed that a year-end report is required no matter when you leave the school. If you are leaving mid-year, notify your portfolio leader and submit in writing to the OCTAI Records Dept. where you desire your records to be sent.

We require the year-end report within two weeks of receiving your request for transcript release. If not received within that time, a letter will be placed in your file indicating that your child's records are incomplete. The responsibility is yours for the gap in the records if nothing is received from you.

## **Year - End report checklist**

\_\_\_ Is my report typewritten? Stapled? Please- no report covers!

\_\_\_ Is the writing mechanically and grammatically correct? (i.e. proof for errors in spelling, punctuation, usage, and grammar)

\_\_\_ Is the first page correct and has all required information been included? Are subsequent pages numbered, including student's name and grade or school year?

\_\_\_ Is each subject listed?

\_\_\_ Is the title and author and/or publisher (ex. Abeka mathematics 5) given for textbooks used in each subject? If partial books were used, list units or pages.

\_\_\_ Is the title and author and/or publisher given for additional resources (such as used in unit studies)? If partial books were used, list units or pages completed.

\_\_\_ Is the grade level (if used) given for each academic subject?

\_\_\_ Is there a teacher/ parent assessment of achievement? (i.e. an evaluation of goals and objectives attained, and assessment of strengths and weaknesses, and/or grades from a recognized correspondence school)

Optional:

\_\_\_ List of field trips.

\_\_\_ Awards, certificates, or other achievements.

\_\_\_ Any other information that is an asset to the student's permanent file.

\_\_\_ Other resources (such as maps, videos, magazines, and library books. activities such as demonstrations, lectures, or classes)

Overall:

\_\_\_ Is the student's year-end report an accurate representation of his/her educational experiences this year?

## Sample of Year End Report

Old Capital Trail Academy  
P.O. Box 7707 Newark, DE 19714  
Year End Report  
2000-2001

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Student: Jason Student	Parents: John and Mary Student
Grade: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Birthdate: 00/00/00      Age: 0
Days of Attendance: 180	Days of Enrollment in OCTAI: 180

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### Curriculum and Evaluation

**Reading:** New Friends, Pathway Publishers (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
New Friends Workbook Pathway Publishers (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
More New Friends Pathway Publishers (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
More New Friends Workbook Pathway Publishers (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
Evaluation: Excellent reading and comprehension. He demonstrates a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mastery of reading.

**English:** English for Christian Schools 3 Bob Jones University Press  
Evaluation: He demonstrates mastery of the subject material.

**Spelling:** Spelling for Christians Schools 3, Bob Jones University Press  
Evaluation: He demonstrates mastery of the subject material.

**Math:** Saxon Math 3, Saxon Publishers  
Evaluation: He demonstrates mastery of the subject material.

**Social Studies/History:** Heritage Studies for Christian Schools 3, Bob Jones University Press  
Evaluation: He demonstrates mastery of the subject material.

**Science:** Science for Christian Schools 3, Bob Jones University Press  
Evaluation: He demonstrates mastery of the subject material.

**Bible:** AWANA Brave Handbook  
The Holy Bible, NIV Zondervan Bible Publishers  
Evaluation: He completed the Brave Handbook. He continues to use the Bible during morning family devotions

P.E.:  
Gymnastic classes twice a week at Diamond Gymnastics Academy  
Monthly Skating at Christiana Skating Center with Tri-State Homeschool Network  
Swim Classes, Newark Department of Parks and Recreation  
Evaluation: He receives regular physical exercise

**Music:** Resources: Ludwig Van Beethoven, Musical Pioneer by Carol Greene  
“Ludwig Van Beethoven-Greatest Hits” (cd) Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.  
“Wee Sing America” cassette tape  
Evaluation: He can recognize and appreciate some of Beethoven’s more famous works. He also knows the words and tunes to many patriotic songs.

**Art:** Art Adventures at Home, Level 2, by M. Jean Soyke  
Evaluation: He completed 17 basic art lessons satisfactorily

Due to the successful completion of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Jason is promoted to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.



## **OLD CAPITOL TRAIL ACADEMY, INC. HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

OCTAI Options for High School Students:

**1. Home Administered Program** - This is a continuation of the program OCTAI offers for first through eighth grades. The family is responsible for meeting the requirements listed on the OCTAI membership agreement. This high school option requires the standard year-end report. There are no added requirements in the program. The student does not receive a diploma from OCTAI at the end of this program and there are not additional fees

**2. High School Diploma Program** - This program is aligned to meet current state standards, and is for students who are pursuing an OCTAI diploma. Families will need to comply with the membership agreement, they will need to fulfill the credit requirements listed below and explained on the following pages, and to have the student evaluated using either of these three testing options: a standard achievement test in tenth grade, PSAT and the SAT prior to graduation or take the ACT. Please note, there are additional fees for some of this testing.

If there are particular colleges the student is interested in, it is best to contact these schools to find out which test they will recognize, so families can tailor their program to meet these requirements.

Instead of the year end reports submitted by 1st through 8th grade students, the diploma program students submit a \*transcript. Each student in this program is assigned to the High School committee for evaluations twice a year. We strongly encourage high schoolers to attend these meetings. This program does have a yearly fee, as well as a diploma fee. Students will be awarded an OCTAI diploma upon successful completion of this program

\*A sample transcript will be provided upon enrollment into the Diploma program.



## **Old Capitol Trail Academy, Inc. High School Diploma Program**

Welcome to the diploma program of Old Capitol Trail Academy, Inc. The following is the statement of purpose established by those on the diploma committee. While none of us are "experts" in the field of education administration, we all are very committed to providing the best education for our children, as well as enabling the school to maintain its positive reputation with Delaware Department of Education.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of Old Capitol Trail's Diploma Program is to provide a structure of accountability beyond ourselves for, each of its member families while acknowledging the family's right and responsibility to guide their children through high school. Therefore, the program is designed to be somewhat flexible to accommodate for individuality."

Once assigned to the high school group, you will be asked to make the minimum three meetings each year: early in the school year (new enrollees); mid-year, and final review of portfolios and transcripts at year end. Schedule of meeting dates will be sent to families at least two weeks prior to schedules meeting. While your portfolio coordinator will be your main contact, the committee exists to assist the portfolio coordinator, especially when it becomes necessary to review transcripts or make recommendations to the OCTAI Board.

Portfolios/major compositions are to be handed in to the reviewer two weeks prior to actual meeting (mid-year and year-end)

It is to this end, that OCT AI's Diploma Program seeks to provide basic support services.

Sincerely,  
OCTAI's Diploma Committee

## What is a high school credit?

A high school credit is acknowledgment that a student has thoroughly studied a subject, covered a predetermined amount of material, and achieved an average level of competency or better in a given area of study. There are a variety of ways to earn credits. The minimum requirement credits are list below.

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>High School Diploma Program</u>
English	4 credits
Social Studies	3 credits
Math	4 credits
Science	3 credits
Foreign Language	2 credits
Health	½ credit
Physical Education	1 credit
Keyboarding/Computer Literacy	1 credit
Fine Arts/Humanities	2 credits
Electives	3 ½ credits
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED CREDITS</b>	<b>24 credits</b>

For those participating in the Diploma Program, a transcript is required in lieu of a Year End Report. All other membership requirements remain the same (ex. beginning of the year curriculum goals, portfolios, etc.).

To the best of the diploma committee's knowledge, the information in this section is accurate and up-to-date. All requirements mentioned here are in **addition** to OCTAI's basic membership requirements unless otherwise stated. The resource used in formulating this program comes from the current requirements of the Delaware Department of Education (DEDOE).

The suggested requirements, for the Diploma Program, are designed to prepare the student for college. If there are particular colleges the student is interested in, it is best to contact these schools for a written list of their specific requirements so that the student can tailor his/her program to meet these requirements.

## Credit Descriptions

### ENGLISH

The *minimum* requirements for English are as follows for each year:

- Read 25 books (high school level or above) or read a literature anthology and 15 books or read 10 books of the Bible and 15 books.
- At least 3 of the books read should be considered literary classics.

#### Composition

- Write a minimum of 4 compositions. Each composition should be at least one page long. For each of the compositions, there should be one or more rough drafts showing corrections and re-working before completing a final draft.
- Ninth and Tenth graders should complete one research paper 5-6 pages long.
- Eleventh and Twelfth graders should complete one research paper 8-10 pages long.

All research papers should include the following elements:

- At least five sources other than encyclopedias
- Proper citations
- Work Cited page with bibliographical information

All compositions and research papers are to be typed. The typing specifications are 12 type with 1 inch margins, and double spaced.

- In all compositions and research papers, students should cite everything borrowed from another source unless that information is common knowledge. Paraphrases as well as quotes should be cited. *Consult an up-to-date English handbook for information on the most accepted citation style: MLA and AP A.*

- Work through  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a language grammar textbook or log at least 45 daily entries of work in a language grammar study
- Plan, write out, and give from notes at least one speech during high school (9th-12th grades). You must also have an evaluation completed by an observer of your speech. (You can obtain an evaluation form from OCTAI.)

#### Other Courses

For a full credit per year, the student must do one of the following:

- Complete over  $\frac{2}{3}$  or more of a textbook course including daily work and tests (Driver's Ed. is worth  $\frac{1}{4}$  credit).
- For courses without a textbook, 135 hours of daily entries or log 135 hours of study (according to DPI requirements for public school students in DE) (180 days of 45 minute class periods = 135 hours)
- Complete and pass a college course.
- Passed Advanced Placement Exam (AP) administered by outside source.

**All principal textbooks should be on the high school level or above. If you plan to use a curriculum not easily recognizable as a high school curriculum for a course, please submit a course description and documentation to the high school committee**

**before making final plans (by mid-July). You may then be asked by the committee to substantiate high school level with a written confirmation from the publisher of the material you plan to use.**

- **SOCIAL STUDIES:** Options include American cultures, ancient history, anthropology, civics, economics, geography, history of the United States, and of the home state, modern history, world history, world cultures, political science, psychology, sociology. All diploma students are required to take U.S. history, civics and an introduction to the social sciences (or an equivalent course.) OCTAI recommends that each student have at least 1/2 credit of geography, 1/2 credit of civics, and a world history course in high school.
- **MATHEMATICS:** Options include Algebra 1 & 2, business mathematics, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, computer science, consumer mathematics (many colleges are not accepting consumer mathematics as a math credit), general mathematics. A college preparatory student should take at least Algebra 1 and 2, geometry, and an upper level or advanced math such as calculus, or trigonometry. A math course must be taken in the student's senior year.
- **LABORATORY SCIENCE:** Options include astronomy, biology, and other bio-sciences, chemistry and other chemical sciences, ecology, earth science, environmental science, general science, geology, physical science, and physics. A minimum of 30 hours of lab experience is required for each science course taken, if science curriculum does not include labs.
- **HEALTH:** All students are required to complete a health course in high school This is equal to 1/2 credit.
- **PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** All students are required to complete 1 full credit of Phys. Ed. This may be taken as a 1/4 credit each year.
- **KEYBOARDING:** To fulfill this requirement the student may use a software program such as Typing Tutor™, Mavis Beacon™, or something comparable or a typing program using a typewriter in which the parent times the student. The student must achieve 90% accuracy to receive credit. The student must turn in a printed record of the test taken which reflects the desired results. A parent must witness and sign the final test. Another option is to take a computer class. This may be fulfilled any time during high school. You may choose to simply record as Passed on your transcript or take a grade for this credit by using the following scale:  
A=45-47 wpm, B 42-44 wpm, C=39-41 wpm.
- **FOREIGN LANGUAGE:** All students are required to complete a minimum of 2 credits in Foreign Language.
- **FINE ARTS /CAREER PATHWAY:** Options Fine Arts include art history, Bible, dance, music, music history, music theory, music appreciation, philosophy, practical arts

and crafts, theater, theology, and visual arts. Career Pathway is a course or sequence of courses within your area of interest that connect your career interests from High School through life (ie. business, marketing, engineering, mechanics, food service etc.)

- **ELECTIVES:** Options may include any of the subjects listed above which exceed the general requirements. Driver's Education (1/4 credit only), home economics, technology education, apprenticeships or mentor programs may also serve as electives.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The suggested requirements for the college-bound diploma are designed to prepare the student for college. If there are particular colleges the student is interested in, it is best to contact these schools for a written list of their specific requirements so that the student can tailor his/her program to meet these requirements.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

In order to have a private school that operates efficiently with reasonable fees and workers who are not burned out, every member family needs to volunteer time to OCTAI. Volunteering allows OCTAI to offer more services to our member families. Without volunteers, OCTAI is limited to services we can offer. Volunteering is also a way to learn more about OCTAI and how it operates.

Family members may serve in a volunteer area or give volunteer hours as needed when requested by a volunteer coordinator. Those who sign up to serve will be involved with the work of that area for the duration of the school year. The number of hours served will vary depending on the need in that area for that year. Anticipated volunteer time for each family is 8-10 hours per year.

OCTAI Volunteer Areas:

**Communications** - picks-up, re-routes, and distributes mail as needed, monitors emails

**Data Management** - maintains database of OCTAI families' records; keeps track of required HSLDA memberships.

**Clerical**- prepares school mailings; maintains all form letters; and revises, updates, and distributes OCTAI handbook; prepares re-enrollment packets in the spring, coordinates OCTAI calendar with Tri-State activities.

**Volunteers** - recruits and manages OCTAI volunteers to support the various OCTAI committees and activities.

**High School** – sets diploma standards and requirements; oversees OCTAI Diploma Program

**Testing** - schedules testing, orders test materials, arranges for testing site, recruits testing personnel. This committee includes test administrators, proctors, and clerical support.

We will do our best to see that you are assigned your highest preferences whenever possible. However, the possibility exists you may be assigned to an area you have not requested, but where we have the greatest need.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

The results of standardized testing provide parents with an independent measure of their student's academic progress and information which may indicate areas of particular strength or weakness. In addition, because homeschool students generally test well, the overall results provide further evidence to the larger community that home education is a viable and effective educational method.

### **Testing Requirements**

Testing is required for the following OCTAI students as a condition of membership:

- 1) *all* 3rd, 6th, and 8th graders
- 2) *all* first-year students in grades 3 through 8

### **Testing Procedures**

OCTAI provides group standardized testing. OCTAI testing services are for those who believe group testing best fits the abilities of their student(s). If a child's needs are not best met in a group environment, parents may discuss other options with the testing coordinator. (See personnel list.)

Group testing for mandatory testing grades, 3rd, 6th and 8th grade, as well as all first year students enrolled in 3rd through 8th grade, (see above), will be held annually in late Spring. Specific test information and test applications are mailed in late January to families of children required to test, as well as to families who express an interest in testing, even though they are not required to test. No applications for testing will be accepted after March 1st. The fees for this service are covered in the January letter, and are due with application submission.

Please be aware that if OCTAI does not receive the necessary number of volunteers to proctor mandatory testing grades, testing will be administered at home by the parents, with the tests submitted by the given date.

Group testing for all other grades is contingent upon the number of volunteers available to proctor tests. If there is a shortage of volunteers, OCTAI will provide the testing materials for those who wish to test at home. Parents would pick up, administer at home and return the testing materials at a set time and location, and OCTAI would send them out to be processed, the same as if they participated in group testing. Information regarding this process will be provided for you once all testing applications are received and processed and the numbers of volunteers are calculated. Please be aware that while OCTAI will try to provide group testing for all our students, we will place a priority on mandatory grades.

OCTAI requires that standardized testing be done in the Spring. \* Please register your child(ren) to test at the grade level in which they are currently enrolled.

## **Other Testing Options**

OCTAI provides its members with one testing option. Families preferring to use an independent administrator for OCTAI's required testing must be sure that the administrator is qualified to administer the test. This should be clarified with any test materials you are thinking of purchasing. Students tested by an unqualified administrator will have to retake tests with a qualified administrator in order to meet school requirements. Test scores for students tested outside of OCTAI must be submitted upon receipt or by the re-enrollment deadline.

## **Testing for High School Students**

For College Bound students enrolled in the Diploma Program, it is strongly recommended that they take the PSAT in the 10th grade (these scores are used to determine scholarships) and take the SAT in the 11th or 12th grade if they choose, but definitely in the 12th grade. All other 10th grade students are required to take a standardized test of their choice in the 10th grade.

## **Standardized test suppliers:**

A current list will be given to you with the testing application. You may contact the Testing Coordinator for further information.



## **MEMBERSHIP INFRACTIONS**

To maintain the educational integrity of OCTAI, board members have established the academic and instructional criteria outlined in the OCTAI membership agreement and further explained in this handbook. When parents sign the membership agreement, they agree to comply with these standards. The Handbook is a resource available to all families to help them meet these criteria.

### **Letter- of additional requirements**

Occasionally a situation may arise that is not serious enough to require probational membership but does require some corrective action. The family will be notified in writing of the additional requirements. These may include measures to determine or correct academic problems

### **Probational Membership**

A single failure or deficiency is not cause for probational status; however, when a consistent pattern of deficiencies develops despite attempts by group coordinators to remedy the situation, probation is warranted.

If a family is not meeting requirements, the group coordinator tries to resolve the problem informally by informing the family of the steps required to resolve the problem and the time limit for completing these steps. If the problem is not resolved within the specified time, the group coordinator consults with the area resource, and the family is notified by certified mail of the corrective action required and the dates or time limit for compliance. Once a letter is sent, the family is considered on probation. If the family remedies the situation within the time limit and pays a \$20 reinstatement fee, the board lifts probationary status.

If the family does not complete corrective action within the time limit, the area resource or other OCTAI official will present a recommendation for termination of membership at the next regular board meeting.

### **Termination of Family Membership**

If, after a reviewing a case, the OCTAI Board determines that family membership should be terminated, a certified letter of termination is sent to the family. In the letter, the family is notified that it has two weeks within which to make a written appeal to the board. If an appeal is not made within two weeks or the family does not enroll in another school within four weeks of receipt of the termination notice, OCTAI will forward the student's transcripts by certified mail to the parents.

If an appeal by the family is made and OCTAI accepts the appeal, OCTAI sends the family a written statement of required corrective actions and the time limit for completing these actions. The family remains on probational status until the situation is resolved. The family's membership is reinstated once it has successfully completed corrective action and paid a \$50 reinstatement fee.

Termination of membership will also occur on October 1st for any family who has not re-enrolled from the previous year and who has not submitted transcript release papers. Records will be forwarded to the parents once OCTAI membership has been terminated.

Reinstatement requires OCTAI board approval regardless of the reason for termination.

### **Monetary fines associated with membership infractions**

The following list details monetary fines associated with membership infractions and terminations:

- returned checks- \$40.
- reinstatement from probation-\$75.
- reinstatement following termination -\$75 (in addition to probation fee).
- re-enrollment Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> to Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> -current re-enrollment fee + \$100 late fee
- re-enrollment Sept 16<sup>th</sup> to Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> - . extra \$100 late fee in addition to fees above (\$200 late fee total)
- reinstatement, pending board approval, following late enrollment after Oct. 1st-current enrollment fee + \$100 (in addition to the \$100 fees listed above).

# Old Capitol Trail Academy, Inc.

## Membership Agreement

**As conditions of membership and enrollment In OCTAI, we, as parent/teachers, agree to:**

- 1) Exercise diligence in providing regular and thorough instruction to our children using an organized and clearly recognizable educational curriculum or customized program.
- 2) Organize each student's records in a portfolio to be reviewed by our group coordinator. This portfolio must include:
  - A calendar showing school attendance of 180 days-may include up to 10 sick days
  - lesson plans that identify the assignments completed for each subject
  - The year-end report
  - A list of books the student has read or listened to
  - Samples of the student's work in subject areas covered, including samples from the beginning, middle, and end of the year to demonstrate progress
- 3) Be available to attend review meetings in September (or within 4 weeks of enrollment), January, and May. These reviews are necessary to assure that members are prepared to satisfy minimum school requirements before the year-end review deadline.
- 4) Have new students tested in grades 3-8 and re-enrolling students in grades 3, 6, 8 and 10 using a nationally normed, standardized achievement test (e.g. SAT, ITBS, CAT, CTBS, etc.). If students enroll after January 1st, they will be required to test the following year. Testing is also-required for students enrolled in OCTAI's diploma program. Families having children with special needs may arrange with the testing coordinator to use an alternative method of documenting student progress.
- 5) Notify immediately the OCTAI Principal, Board President, if contacted by any state or federal education or government officials regarding any matters related to your home school.
- 6) Inform OCTAI immediately, in writing, of any change of address and/or phone number or of plans to transfer to/from another school.
- 7) Join HSLDA as required (see handbook) and send a copy of HSLDA application to OCTAI as part of the enrollment application. Send a copy of the HSLDA membership acceptance letter to OCTAI records department" as soon as you receive it. (OCTAI highly recommends, but does not require, HSLDA membership for re-enrolling families.)
- 8) Pay all applicable membership fees/penalties, return all borrowed library materials, and pay for replacement of lost or damaged materials.
- 9) Volunteer 8-10 hours of service to OCTAI as needed.

**Membership enrollment is for one year only and must be renewed annually no later than august 31<sup>st</sup> .**

We have read the handbook and understand the requirements of OCTAI membership and the services OCTAI provides. We affirm by our signatures that, to the best of our knowledge, the information provided in our application is true and accurate.

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Parent's Signature

Date

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Parents Signature

Date

## **OCTAI REFUND POLICY**

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THERE ARE NO REFUNDS.** In addition, due to the fact that our cost to process paperwork stays the same regardless of when you join or leave the school, OCTAI cannot afford to prorate the annual enrollment fee.