

Otis-Bison Academy

2026-2027



Student Handbook & Planning Guide

2026-2027

Otis-Bison Academy Handbook

Welcome to Otis-Bison Academy. OBA provides a meaningful learning experience by incorporating cutting-edge technology with multiple curriculum vendors while focusing on college and career goals. Our staff takes great pride in joining with parents and students in this online educational experience.

OBA virtual school is here to meet your educational needs and help you become academically successful. The information in this handbook has been prepared to acquaint students, parents, and guardians with Kansas Board of Education regulations and OBA school policies.

Both the student and parent or guardian are responsible for being familiar and aware of the contents of this handbook so their actions conform to the philosophy of the virtual school.

Who is OBA

OBA is a school for 6th - 12 grade and adult students who want a non-traditional approach to learning, one that works collaboratively with students and parents or guardians to create a personalized learning plan.

OBA provides:

- Individualized learning plans adapted to personal interests, skills, and strengths
- Flexible schedules
- Online and virtual learning
- Core curriculum and elective learning opportunities
- Use of technology for teaching and learning
- Learning plans for individuals seeking to complete requirements for a high school diploma

Who Should Consider OBA

“One size fits all” does not apply to learning at **OBA**.

OBA will meet the educational needs for:

- Students who are self-directed learners
- Students who desire a non-traditional approach to learning
- Individuals seeking additional learning opportunities
- Individuals who need a means of completing high school diploma requirements

Our **PURPOSE** is to focus on **YOUR** future.

Our **MISSION** is to facilitate the creation and navigation of each student's individual pathway to success.

Our **APPROACH** is to create individualized, customized academic and career plans that provide meaningful and engaging educational experiences by providing an alternative learning environment

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USD 403 Office: 785-387-2201

Otis-Bison Academy Director: 620-755-8918

OBA Administration

Karen Maier (maierk@usd403.org).....Superintendent
Travis Starr (starrt@usd403.org).....Principal
Cathy Ochs (otisbisonacademy@usd403.org).....Program Director
Jennifer Chapman (chapmanj@usd403.org).....Student Support
Stan Ewy (coachewy@usd403.org).....School Counselor

OBA Board of Education

The USD 403 Board of Education serves as members of the OBA board.

Program Requirements

Students, parents and/or guardians must:

- 1) complete the online student enrollment forms. Students who reside outside USD 403 boundaries must first complete the non-resident application before enrollment. Upon approval, enrollment forms can be completed.
- 2) complete the student transcript release form from the school most recently attended.
- 3) read and sign both the OBA student and parent/guardian contracts. (Found on pages 14-17 below).
- 4) attend the required OBA training/orientation sessions pertaining to access to curriculum, expectations of consistent communication (within 24 hours of initiated contact) and acceptable progression through the course(s).
- 5) Provide proof of residency documentation showing proof of Kansas residency. The address on the proof of residency documentation must match the street, city and zip code address provided for student enrollment and **cannot** be a Post Office (P.O.) Box. Appropriate documentation as proof of Kansas residency includes at least one of the following documents from the student's parent/guardian (for students aged 18 and younger) or from the student if aged 18 and older:

In addition, students must

- 1) attend virtually a minimum of 6 working hours on two academic count days; on a single day on or before September 20 and a single day on or after September 21, but before October 4.
- 2) take a proctored midterm and final exam in person or virtually.
- 3) take proctored Kansas State Assessments in person or virtually.
- 4) When requested, virtually meet with OBA staff for check-ins and assistance with school needs.

FEES

During the new year enrollment period, students located in Kansas can enroll at no cost. Current year enrollment will begin July 20, 2026 and close September 14, 2026. Students outside Kansas or any students not enrolled during this enrollment period can take courses on a tuition basis at \$200 per credit hour (minimum of one credit hour). Please contact Cathy Ochs otisbisonacademy@usd403.org for details.

TECHNOLOGY/ORIENTATION

Students are required to attend an orientation session in-person. If the student is a minor, the parent/guardian must also attend. The session will be held prior to the student starting the new school year. If circumstances necessitate an orientation other than in-person attendance on the designated day and time(s), arrangements must be made with the director, Cathy Ochs (otisbisonacademy@usd403.org).

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR STUDENTS 18 AND UNDER

Research shows that students receive the best virtual education through consistent access to online course materials and regular communication with the teacher. Students are required to work on their classes on a consistent basis. Regularly accessing course work promotes good study habits and enhances the learning process.

Parents or guardians are encouraged to supervise student progress on daily course work. All OBA students are expected to access coursework on a

consistent basis. Daily attendance is determined by activity recorded via the learning platform. The school must be notified if the student is not able to follow the calendar prepared by the student and their supervising teacher. *Students or parents must notify the OBA director of absences.*

An OBA student will be identified as truant if two or more of the following conditions are true:

1. The student does not document online instructional attendance for more than 5 consecutive days.
2. The student is behind schedule to complete a course.*
3. The student and/or parent or guardian are **not communicating** weekly with the OBA director.

** The number of online hours/week may affect this condition.*

Procedure to follow if a student is considered truant:

1. The director or teacher will email the student and the parent or guardian informing them of the issues that are occurring (*i.e. failing grades, lack of attendance, lack of communication, not showing consistent progress, etc.*)
2. The student will have one week to improve his or her behavior. No further action will be taken if the student's issues are resolved.
3. If the student does not show improvement after one week, the Academic Probation Process will be started.

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROBATION PROCESS

STEP 1: Student and parent or guardian will meet (either virtually or in person) with the OBA director or teacher to discuss how to improve the student's academic standing.

Possible interventions for the student may include

1. Development of an individual student study schedule
3. Online tutoring

4. Closer parent/guardian supervision of online and offline classwork completed by the student.

****NOTE:** Non compliance to the academic probation process may jeopardize re-enrollment with OBA the following school year.

ADULT LEARNERS/GRADUATION COMPLETION

OBA will enroll students over 19 years old who wish to earn a high school diploma. The student will be required to make a \$200 refundable deposit before enrolling. Upon the successful completion of the first credit, the deposit will be returned to the student.

PERSONAL COUNSELING

Students experiencing academic or personal issues, or those who just need someone to talk to may request contact with the counselor. A single or ongoing web conference can be set up to assist the student. Conferences of this type may also be initiated at the request of the school administration, teaching staff, parent or school counselor.

ACADEMIC GUIDANCE

OBA provides help with transcript review and individual enrollment services. Students, with the help of parents and OBA staff, will create an individual plan of study (IPS) by selecting courses to meet OBA graduation requirements, State of Kansas graduation requirements as well as courses to meet the qualified admission requirements of the Kansas Regent universities. OBA offers educational/academic guidance, educational planning, and college and career services.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM/USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Students engaging in unethical academic practices (copying, cheating, turning in work that is not the student's own), including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will face disciplinary action. If a submitted assignment is

thought to be created dishonestly, the teacher may use various methods to assist in making the determination, including AI or plagiarism checkers. If it is determined the student created an assignment in an improper way, the student and parent will be notified. Consequences will depend upon the severity of the incident, and/or the number of offenses of this type on the part of the student. The student may be given options to edit and re-submit the assignment as a way to provide an alternate way to demonstrate learning or receive no credit.

CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS

High school students will be classified as Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior. OBA will determine student classification on a case-by-case basis. Official transcripts will be used to determine classification placement.

Freshman:	0 - 6 credits
Sophomore:	6.5 - 12 credits
Junior:	12.5 - 18 credits
Senior:	18.5 - 21 credits

DUAL CREDIT

OBA will honor dual credit courses from Barton Community College for students classified as a Junior or Senior at OBA. If the student wishes to also get high school credit for a college course and the course(s) to appear on the student's high school transcript, the student is responsible for the following:

1. The student must notify the OBA director of the intent to enroll in the dual-credit course before the semester begins so the student's semester schedule can be planned accordingly.
2. The student needs to provide the OBA director with the BCC contact who assisted with their BCC enrollment.
3. The student must provide the OBA director proof of enrollment in the course(s) at the beginning of the semester.
4. The student must notify the OBA director if they withdraw from any college course at any time.
5. The student must provide the OBA director a transcript from BCC after each semester they take classes to update the high school transcript and the IPS.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students graduating from OBA are required to successfully complete a minimum of 21 credits. Students who transfer to OBA from another accredited high school will be given credit for those courses successfully completed and that meet the OBA graduation requirements. If a student wishes to graduate early the student must notify the director to set up their course schedule. The parent and student must also notify in writing the superintendent, Karen Maier (maierk@usd403.org) their request to graduate early. December graduates must notify the superintendent by July 1st prior to desired graduation date and May graduates by December 1 prior to the desired date.

Graduation Requirements up to and including class of 2027:

- 4 units of English language arts, which shall include reading, writing, literature, communication, and grammar.
- 3 units of history and government, which shall include world history, United States history, United States government, including the Constitution of the United States, concepts of economics and geography.
- 3 units of science, which shall include physical, biological, and earth and space science concepts and which shall include at least one unit as a laboratory course.
- 3 units of mathematics, including algebraic and geometric concepts
- 1 unit of physical education, which shall include health and which may include safety, first aid, or physiology
- 1 unit of fine arts, which may include art, music, dance, theater, forensics, and other similar studies
- 6 units of elective courses, to include courses assigned to complete the student's IPS.

Graduation Requirements including and after class of 2028:

- ❖ 4 units of English language arts, which shall include reading, writing, and one-half unit of communications.
- ❖ 3 units of history and government, which shall include world history, United States history, United States government, including the Constitution of the United States, concepts of economics and geography.
- ❖ 3 units of science, which shall include physical, biological, and earth and space science concepts and which shall include at least one unit as a laboratory course.
- ❖ 3 units of mathematics, including algebraic and geometric concepts
- ❖ ½ unit of physical education
- ❖ ½ unit of health which may include safety, first aid, or physiology
- ❖ 1 unit of fine arts, which may include art, music, dance, theater, forensics, & other similar studies
- ❖ ½ unit of financial literacy
- ❖ 1 unit of advanced science, technology, engineering, advanced math (STEM)
- ❖ 4.5 units of elective courses, to include courses assigned to complete the student's IPS.
- ❖ 2 or more post-secondary assets (college or career related)

GRANTING CREDIT FOR INCOMING STUDENTS

The OBA director will contact the prior school for an official transcript upon enrollment. Home school credits or credits from a non accredited school will not be accepted unless the student is able to show a minimum of 60% mastery through knowledge assessments before being enrolled in the subsequent course in the learning platform. Elective credits will be at the discretion of the district. It is the goal of OBA to place the student in the most appropriate academic setting in terms of course selection.

FINAL EXAMS

OBA students are required to have proctored midterm and final exams. Those can be completed online or in-person. Finals will be weighted more to prove mastery of the course content.

GRADING SCALE

Percentage:	Letter Grade	GPA Points
100%-90% =	A	4
89% - 80% =	B	3
79% - 70% =	C	2
69% - 60% =	D	1
59%& Less =	F	0

For students wishing to qualify for college admissions or Kansas scholars program, additional and specialized courses may be required. OBA will provide those options for students who are interested.

EXPULSION

After repeated violations, attempts to correct misbehavior fail, or in extreme serious situations, a student may be expelled from school. In these cases the student receives no credit for unfinished classes for the year in which the expulsion occurs. Like a suspension, the student is not permitted to be online or on school grounds during the period of the expulsion.

ACCESS TO STUDENT GRADES

OBA students and parents or guardians will access course grades using the online learning platform. Both students and parents will be given a personal login and password. Parents or guardians need to check their child's grades weekly. Transcript grades are updated each semester.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

It is our goal to provide tech support to our students and parents as soon as possible when problems arise. When technology problems are encountered, please work to determine if the problem is with the Internet provider, the curriculum or the laptop. OBA cannot help with problems caused by the internal or external access to the Internet. Please contact the teacher immediately if there is a problem. If it is not possible to send an email due to the technical problem, please call the school at 785-387-9313. Should you experience a problem with the laptop outside of the normal school day, please call and leave a message. The goal of the technology support program is to get the student online and engaged in learning activities as soon as possible.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

OBA students with an existing IEP will continue to receive services. The student's current IEP will be reviewed upon enrollment to determine how OBA can provide the best services for the student. As with all students enrolling in OBA, it is important for those involved to have a clear understanding of the student's needs for success in a virtual learning environment.

OBA STUDENT CONTRACT

As a student enrolled in OBA and USD 403, I agree to the following terms and conditions of enrollment:

1. I understand it is my responsibility to promote academic integrity by using resources honestly, and promise to complete my work using my own effort and abilities. I will not use or provide unethical academic assistance to other students, nor will I accept unethical academic assistance from anyone else while enrolled as a student of OBA. I understand that any violation of academic integrity will result in disciplinary action by the school administration and may be grounds for expulsion from the school. I understand that I may be required to submit hand-written assignments.
2. A USD 403 computer will be issued to me for my studies, I am responsible for all damages that occur while the computer is checked out to me.
3. I understand that I must attend school online on two academic count days; on a single day on or before September 20 and a single day on or after September 21, but before October 4.
4. I understand that as a student of OBA I may be required to take the Kansas State Assessments on specified days.
5. I agree to answer email, text or phone messages from my teacher or the school WITHIN 24 HOURS. I will adhere to the expectations of my teachers/staff in terms of communicating with each of them through the online platform messaging, phone calls, email, and/or Google Meet.
6. I agree to abide by the policies listed in the OBA Student Handbook.
8. I understand that failure to abide by the components of this student contract will result in me being placed on academic probation for the next semester and may result in suspension or expulsion from OBA.
9. Any violation of these rules will result in disciplinary action.

My signature below indicates that I understand the terms of this student contract and its policies concerning communication, academic integrity, attendance, and technology usage as written above, and accept responsibility for adhering to this agreement.

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

OBA PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT

(For students aged 18 and under)

As a parent of a child who is enrolling in OBA, I agree to the terms and conditions of the student contract, and I have read and understand the following parent contract:

1. I understand the importance of supporting my child's effort to maintain academic integrity regarding completing assignments, projects, papers, and exams online. I will not provide unethical academic assistance to my child but will provide learning support by monitoring his or her online efforts to complete assignments, projects, papers, and exams in an honest and ethical manner. I understand that any violation of academic integrity will result in disciplinary action by the school administration and may be grounds for suspension or expulsion from the school. I understand that my student may be required to submit hand-written work on assignments.
2. I understand that our family must identify a legal adult who will assist the student with their online education. This person is responsible for checking student work each day, answering simple questions, verifying that the student has replied to any contact from the teacher or from the school and ensuring that the student is working each day.
3. I understand that it is my responsibility to provide and pay an Internet Service Provider (ISP) for a connection to the Internet for access to online lessons, email and web conferences. I also understand that a DSL or faster connection speed is required to be able to use the video component of web conferencing.
4. I understand the school is not responsible or able to filter content streaming through my home Internet connection.
5. I understand I must maintain an email address for school communication. As the adult/parent; I will communicate WITHIN 24 HOURS on a business day with OBA staff when I am contacted.

7. I understand I must make sure my child attends school online on two academic count days; on a single day on or before September 20 and a single day on or after September 21, but before October 4. Failure to do so may result in paying tuition fees.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the Student Contract and the Parent Contract as written above, and accept responsibility for adhering to them.

Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____