

Ocean Academy Charter School Board of Education

Minutes – Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, March 11, 2025

In Accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act: Public Notice of this Meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given by the Board Secretary in the Asbury Park Press – Paper of Record. Ocean Academy Charter School, 1650 Massachusetts Avenue, Lakewood, NJ. Attendance by virtual or in person.

Anita Raynes Lepelstat – President
Jim Muzikowski – Vice President
Marshall White
Aase Marie Hare
Sharon Hollander
Roxanne Martin
David Corso
Raul Orellana – Absent
Gregory Brandis

Valarie Smith (Board Secretary), Lorna Hassel (Head of School), Dawn Cobb-Fossnes (Middle School Principal), Stephen Nichol (High School Principal), David Block (School Business Administrator), Didi Yencer (Whole School Reform), and Board Attorney, Dave Hespe.

Meeting Called to Order at 6:15 pm by Board President Anita Lepelstat

Salute to the Flag

“Many caring people in many small places undertaking many modest actions can transform the world”, statement by Board President Anita Lepelstat.

Action Agenda

Public Session:

Old Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes of February 11th, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes of February 11th, 2025 made by David Corso

Seconded by Gregory Brandis

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

New Business

High School Facilities Update – Presented by Tom McMahon

It is estimated that the new high school building may be finished by the end of August.

Elementary Principal's Report Presented by Lorna Hassel

Link-It Reporting on ELA & Math – The School as a whole, according to the Link-It data system, has shown a 6% growth in ELA and a 13% growth in Math.

Police Canine Unit: We had a program for all students by the Lakewood & Toms River Police Departments where they showcased their canine officers. The purpose of this program is to build bridges of understanding between students and law enforcement and to teach the students about what police dogs are used for and why.

NJ Compass Program: (Elementary Level K-5) part of our HIB program, Bullying and Violence Prevention. Presented by Preferred Behavior Health Group.

Middle School Anxiety Lorna report to the Board that the school is finding much anxiety in our middle school grades. Reports of self-harming have been addressed.

Coverage for 4th Grade Class – Didi Yencer will be needed to finish covering for our fourth grade class while the assigned teacher is still out on maternity leave.

Month of February – Staff & Student Attendance

Total Staff - 118
Full Days Taken Off - 115
Half Days Taken Off - 37

Total # of Students - 540
Student Absences - 359

New Employees – One Resignation – Presented by Lorna Hassel

Kelly Maughmer Special Education Replacement \$60,000 starting 4/1/25
Kimberlee Yilmaz Paraprofessional \$38,000 starting 3/17/25
Resignation of **Tina Sevastakis** (paraprofessional)

Motion to Approve New Employees / Resignation made by Anita Lepelstat
Second by Aase Hare
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

Reorganization of I&RS (Intervention and Referral Services) – Presented by Lorna Hassel

Angela McCarty will be heading I&RS with help from Amy LaBarca

Discussion – Questions & Answers

Field Trip – Sculpture Garden – High School – Presented by Stephen Nichol (6/16/25)

Motion to Approve by Sharon Hollander

Second: by Marshall White

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

High School Principal's Report – Presented by Stephen Nichol

- ✚ Preparing Students for NJSLA Testing

- ✚ Earth Day Clean-up by the Lake

- ✚ Technology at the high school moving forward: fire & burglary, wifi, P.A. system, Clock System

Discussion – Questions & Answers

Immigration Day – Presented by Valarie Smith

March 1st, Saturday, OACS partners with Voz Latina in arranging “Immigration Day”

We are having immigration attorneys present on becoming an American Citizen

Discussion – Questions & Answers

Possible Plans for Pre-School & High School Fields – Presented by Valarie Smith

We have been contacted by attorneys representing the Diocese of Trenton in regards to Holy Family School which Lakewood Public Schools has abandoned.

We are looking into working with Diocesan officials and their attorneys in possibly moving forward with a pre-school. We would also be using the school's fields for athletes.

We would have to apply for an expansion.

Discussion – Questions & Answers

NJSLA Scores – Spring '24 – Presented by Valarie Smith

All Board Members were given the NJ DOE's breakdown of OACS's 2024 NJSLA scores from 2024

Discussion – Questions & Answers

Teacher Increase for SY 2025-26

Discussion

Motion to approve a 3 ½ % increase for all teachers for the 2025-26 School Year made by Marshall White

Second: by Anita Lepelstat

Vote: 7 yeas, one abstaining

Financials – Presented by David Block

February Bills List, March Bills List, & Board Secretary's Report

Motion to Approve the Bill's List for FY25 (February & March) & the Board Secretary's Report made by Dave Corso

Second: Roxanne Martin

Vote: unanimously approved

Board Comments: None

Announcements: Next Board Meeting will be Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Motion to Adjourn: Made by Anita Lepelstat at 7:13 pm

Second by Dave Corso

Vote: unanimously approved by the Board