Ocean Academy Charter School
Board of Education

Minutes – Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, Tuesday, August 25, 2026

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
Sharon Hollander
David Corso
Raul Orellana
Gregory Brandis
Aase Hare
Roxanne Martin
Cori Scotti

Valarie Smith (Board Secretary), Lorna Hassel (Head of School), Amy LaBarca (Assistant Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction), Stephen Nichol (High School Principal), David Block (School Business Administrator), Didi Yencer (Whole School Reform), Attorney Ehling, Kathleen M.

Meeting Called to Order @ 6:15 pm - Salute to the Flag

Action Agenda

Public Session:

Old Business

Approval June Meeting Minutes 2026

Motion to Approve Minutes made by Anita Lepelstat
Second: Roxanne Martin
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

New Business

Three Board Position Openings – vote for Board Members, 3 year terms, New Board will commence at the Tuesday, October 13, 2026 meeting

Three Board Members are up for new three year terms: Dave Corso, Anita Lepelstat, and Raul Orellana.
All Three Board Members are interested in serving on the Board again.
No other candidates have expressed interest.

Motion made by Roxanne Martin to nominate, Dave Corso, Anita Lepelstat, and Raul Orellana for a three year term on the Board.
Second: Gregory Brandis.
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Motion made by Roxanne Martin to reappoint Dave Corso, Anita Lepelstat, and Raul Orellana for Board Appointments
Second: Cori Scotti
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Board Officers Vote for SY 26-27

After Discussion, the Board unamiously decided to postpone the vote for President and Vice President to the October 13th meeting.

New Hires – SY 26-27 – Presented by Amy LaBarca

Jake	Nase	HS SPED
Joanne	Tokarski	5-8 ELA/SPED
Hannah	Crudo-Goodson	Teacher
Anthony	Goodfriend	HS Gym
Haylie	Lampert	3-4 Sped
Vanessa	Cassandra	Enrichment

Motion to Accept New Hires: Aase Hare
Seconded by Jim Muzikowski
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Motion to Clarify and Confirm Previously Approved Personnel Action Presented by Stephen Nichol

Motion: To clarify and confirm the personnel action previously approved by the Ocean Academy Charter School Board of Education in **April 2026**, the Board hereby acknowledges that the approved salary increase and position/title change from **Teacher** to **Assistant Principal – Secondary Academic Supervisor** applies specifically to **Elise Dugan.**

This motion is intended to formally identify Ms. Dugan by name in the Board minutes and memorialize the personnel action previously approved by the Board in April 2026. The original effective date and terms of the previously approved action shall remain unchanged.

Motion by made Jim Muzikowski
Second: Dave Corso
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Fire Suppression System Situation – Remediation – Tom McMahon & Valarie Smith

Discussion

Yearly Contract for Auditing Services Presented by David Block

Board approval the appointment of Jump, Perry and Company LLP of Toms River to provide seq., and as a professional service exempt from public bidding under N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(a)(1).

Motion made by Anita Lepelstat
Seconded by Sharon Hollander
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Yearly Contract for Legal Services Presented by Valarie Smith

Board approval of Porzio, Bromberg & Newman, P.C., as the district's legal counsel for the 2026-27 school year, in accordance with the terms outlined in the professional services agreement, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(a)(1) for professional services

Motion made by David Corso
Seconded by Cori Scotti
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Trailer Situation & Resolution – Presented by Valarie Smith

"The Board of Trustees hereby approves the filing of an application with the Lakewood Township Planning Board seeking site plan approval so that the classroom trailer will be considered as a permanent structure in order to receive a final Certificate of Occupancy. The board chair and executive director are delegated full authority to sign and submit all necessary documents to accomplish this."

Motion to Approve the Resolution by Dave Corso
Seconded by Jim Muzikowski
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Starting Salary – Presented by Valarie Smith

Current starting salary at $57,603

Average starting salaries in the state $60,000 - $63,000
Average Ocean County starting salaries: $60,000 - $63,000

Proposing a New starting Salary of $60,500 - Discussion

Motion made by Aase Hare
Seconded by Anita Lepelstat
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Longevity Increase – Presented by Valarie Smith

Currently, OACS has a longevity increase of $1,500 at the 5th year anniversary mark

Proposing to add another increase of $1,500 at the 10th year anniversary mark - Discussion

Motion made by Roxann Martin
Seconded by Aase Hare
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Sick Leave Policy – Presented by David Hespe, Board Attorney

The Board was presented with a sample of a "Sick Leave Bank Policy ". After much discussion, it was decided to table the conversation and address it at a later date.

Motion to Table the Proposed Sick Leave Bank Policy made by Dave Corso
Seconded by Aase Hare
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

End of Year (SY25-26) Attendance Date – Presented by Valarie Smith

Here is our Whole School Data on Attendance for the 2025-2026 School Year (OnCourse/NJSmart)

At least 5 days of Unexcused Absences: 279 students

Excused Absences - at least 5 days: 349 students

Unexcused absences - at least 10 days: 120 students

Excused absences - at least 10 days: 34 students

We had a total of 592 students by the close of the school year (June 30, 2026)

Discussion on How to Improve Student Attendance

FINANCIALS – Presented by David Block

- **Board Secretary's Report on the General Funds**

Motion to Approve the Bill List for the Month of May and the Board Secretary's Report on the General Funds made by Dave Corso
Seconded by Gregory Brandis
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Motion to Adjourn: @ 7:15 PM

Made by Anita Lepelstat
Seconded by Sharon Hollander
Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Minutes Approved by the Board, November 13, 2026