

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

- 1. Letter of Support – 30th District Legislators**
 Senator Singer, Assemblyman Rible, & Assemblyman Kean
- 2. Letter of Support – St. Anthony Claret Parish of Lakewood**
 Rev. Pedro L. Bou, SVD, Pastor
- 3. Letter of Support – Puerto Rican Civic Association**
 Ken Seda, President
- 4. Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey**
 Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla, President
- 5. All Saints Episcopal Church of Lakewood**
 Rev. Father Juan Angel Monge-Santiago
- 6. Petition Drive of over 1,100 names**



NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OFFICE
30TH DISTRICT

ROBERT W. SINGER
SENATOR
SenSinger@njleg.org

SEAN T. KEAN
ASSEMBLYMAN
AsmSKean@njleg.org

DAVID P. RIBLE
ASSEMBLYMAN
AsmRible@njleg.org

March 21, 2016

David Hesper
Commissioner of Education
Department of Education
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Re: Support Letter for *Ocean Academy Charter School*

Dear Commissioner Hesper:

This letter is to advise the Department of Education that we are in full support of "Ocean Academy Charter School's" application to establish an elementary charter school in Lakewood.

As you are aware, all of Lakewood Public Schools are labeled by the Department of Education as significantly lagging in academic performance. The system has been under the guidance of a state monitor, Michael Azzara, who has veto power over the Board of Education and Superintendent. Other state monitors have been brought in to assist Mr. Azzara. To say this school system is broken would be an understatement.

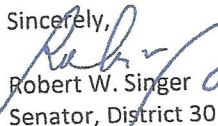
Lakewood's public school community is one of over 80% free & reduced lunch students; thus, tuition based alternatives are not realistic and there are no elementary schools in a reasonable distance participating in the Interdistrict School Choice program.


The Founders behind this charter school have the knowledge, experience, and abilities to start and maintain a high performing school and will ensure accountability to the State and the school constituency.

In addition, the school has the support of many church, civic, and community leaders. The founders have outreached to the constituency at large through many avenues and have gathered more than 1,000 signatures of residents looking for school choice.

We are looking forward to celebrating an alternative choice for Lakewood's public school students in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Singer
Senator, District 30


Dave P. Rible
Assemblyman, District 30


Sean T. Kean
Assemblyman, District 30

RWS/STK/DPR/mp
OCEAN COUNTY OFFICE
1771 MADISON AVENUE • SUITE 202
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PHONE: 732-987-5669
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St. Anthony Claret Parish

780 Ocean Ave., Lakewood, New Jersey 08701
tel. (732) 367-8486 / fax. 732-367-0460

March 22, 2016

David Hesper
Commissioner of Education
NJ Department of Education
500 Riverview Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Support for First Ocean Academy charter School

Dear Commissioner Hesper

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the First Ocean Academy Charter School which is a public elementary school planned for the community of Lakewood, New Jersey.

The parish of St. Anthony Claret boasts the largest amount of parishioners out of the two Catholic Parishes in Lakewood. We have many young families new to the U.S. who want to give their children a good start in life. Unfortunately, the Lakewood Public Schools have been designated as either focus or priority schools.

Currently, Lakewood parents do not have a choice as to where to send their children to school and tuition for any private school is not affordable for most families.

Due to declining enrollment and tuition costs, the local Catholic School, Holy Family, had to close its doors this past June 2015 after having served the Lakewood community for 40 years.

Earlier this year, we opened our doors to the founders of this school and allowed them to collect signatures in petition for the school. In just one weekend, the founders were able to collect over 900 signatures in favor of a charter school. To say that our parishioners are looking for a choice alternative in public schooling would be an understatement.

Thank you for your kind consideration in making First Ocean Academy Charter School a reality for Lakewood students!!

Rev. Pedro L. Bou, SVD, Pastor

Comunidad de San Antonio Ma. Claret



of Central New Jersey
Serving Ocean, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth & Burlington Counties
13 Washington Street, Toms River, NJ 08753
Ken Seda, President
kenseda@hotmail.com 732-731-9597

March 15, 2016

Dave Hespe
Commissioner
NJ Department of Education
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, New Jersey

Re: Ocean Academy Charter School

Dear Commissioner Hespe:

As President of the Puerto Rican Civic Association, I am writing this letter in support of the charter school application for Ocean Academy Charter School for Lakewood, NJ.

For the last two years, our Association has supported the efforts to get a charter school in Lakewood as we believe that the Lakewood Public Schools does not provide an education that is consistent with most schools in the state of New Jersey and lacks the capacity to address the social, emotional, and cultural needs of the Hispanic/Latino community which consists of over 80% of the school population.

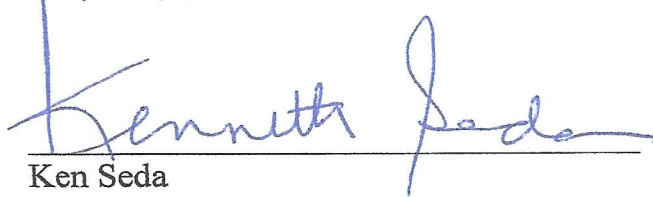
The Lakewood Public School District is dysfunctional as evidenced by the many Asbury Park Press articles regarding financial and educational irregularities.

The Association is grateful to the Department of Education for the State Monitor. Although it appears that the finances are being straightened out, there are still outstanding areas such as governance, operations, and instruction.

Due to the high level of poverty of our community, education alternatives are not available. Due to the demographics of our town, a majority of representatives from the school community cannot be elected to the Board of Education. Due to a monopoly, our children are locked into an incompetent school system that would not be tolerated in any other NJ community.

We are asking for the same opportunity that other distressed areas such as Camden and Newark have been given. We are asking for a Charter School that will be directly and fully accountable to the State and will serve our children well.

Very truly yours,



Ken Seda
President

Puerto Rican Civic Association of Central NJ



LATINO LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE OF NEW JERSEY

100 Jersey Ave. | B104 - Box 15 | New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901
Telephone: 732.249.0400 - Fax: 732.249.0206 www.llanj.org

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Chris Christie
Office of the Governor – State House
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Support of Ocean Academy Charter School

Dear Governor Christie,

I write to express the strong support of the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey (LLANJ) for the approval of charter application being submitted by **Ocean Academy Charter School**. LLANJ considers access to high quality educational opportunities the cutting edge civil rights issue of our times. This is because in New Jersey, while there are many outstanding public schools, some of the best in the nation, there are too many failing public schools such as Lakewood.

Within this construct it is also true that Latino and Black children are under-represented in the great schools, and over-represented in the failing schools. For this reason, LLANJ has vigorously advocated for the expansion of choice options for New Jersey Parents, and it has supported the creation of high quality charter schools in New Jersey for over a decade.

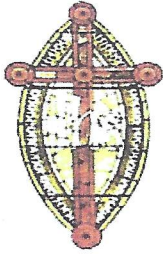
In light of the foregoing, we are very supportive of the creation of a charter school in Lakewood, where the overwhelming majority of children attending the public schools are Latino (over 80%) and over 75% of elementary school students speak Spanish at home. Our review of educational outcome data at the elementary school level in Lakewood reveals that partially proficiency rates are trending greater, rather than shrinking, and the percentage of partial proficiency in Language Arts in the 3rd to 6th grade is horrifically high, well exceeding 50%.

Educational outcomes are the ultimate barometer of success in public education, and we know from our constituent Latino families that they have high expectation or our children's' educational success. The creation of a charter school in Lakewood is an important opportunity that should not be passed up or delayed; time is of the essence for our children when it comes to accessing high quality educational opportunities.

We urge you to approve the application of **Ocean Academy Charter School**. Thank you for your courteous attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Maria Teresa Montilla
President



All Saints Episcopal Church
The Rev. Juan Angel Monge Santiago
E-Mail – allstslakewood@optonline.net

March 12, 2016

Chris Christie
Office of Governor – State of New Jersey
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Charter School for Lakewood

Dear Governor Christie,

I am the Priest in Charge of All Saints Episcopal Church in Lakewood and am fully aware of the challenging issues confronting Lakewood Public Schools. Many of our parishioners have children attending the local public schools and the anomalous circumstances of this school system are a daily discussion at our parish. We see hundreds of people on a weekly basis as we have a centrally located, soup kitchen, food center and a thrift store serving the community. We also see many people seeking overnight shelter in inclement weather, for we provide shelter for a limited number of people in our facilities. Overall this community is greatly disadvantaged.

The majority of students attending Lakewood Public Schools are Hispanics/Latinos and a large majority of that group is new immigrants from Mexico who have come to our country for a better way of life for themselves and their children.

We have found that even though the Superintendent, Administrators, & Teachers are trying to provide a good education and environment for students, the district itself is continuously embroiled in governance and financial issues. Sadly, Lakewood Public Schools are not meeting the academic and cultural needs of the students.

Last year, I wrote a letter of support for an application for a new charter school for Lakewood students. Unfortunately, the Department of Education did not approve of the charter.

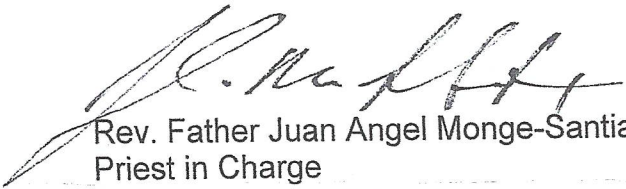
This year our parish is once again in support of establishing a charter school for Lakewood's public school students. We are so dedicated to this endeavor, that I have volunteered to be a member of the charter's founding board!

213 Madison Avenue, Lakewood, New Jersey 08701
Phone: 732-367-0933 Fax: 732-367-5705

I am asking you, as Governor, to take a very close look at what is happening in Lakewood Public Schools and please give our students a chance to a better future by having the Department of Education approve the application of **Ocean Academy Charter School**.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours, in Christ your brother,



Rev. Father Juan Angel Monge-Santiago
Priest in Charge
padrejuan@optimum.net

Ocean Academy Charter School Founders collected over 1,100 signatures in support of the Charter School.



Due to web site capacity limitations, we are including just one page as a sample of the full collection of signatures. Sample of petition is following.

Ocean Academy Charter School Petition

Lakewood, New Jersey

We, the undersigned, support the creation of Ocean Academy Charter School in Lakewood for our children in kindergarten through eighth grade as we believe there needs to be an alternative choice to the Lakewood Public Schools. We petition the NJ Commissioner of Education to approve the application of this school.

We understand that this is a free public school with small class sizes that will provide a high quality education and a culturally sensitive environment for our children.

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	TOWN (PLEASE PRINT)
	
	
JUZIO CESAR SIERRA SOSA	LAKWOOD
ESTHER PONCE	LAKWOOD NJ
CIPARNO RUIZ	LAKWOOD NJ
Maximo Hernandez	LAKWOOD NJ
Consuelo ortega	LAKWOOD NJ
Laudt Hernandez	LAKWOOD NJ
Antoniu LOPEZ	LAKWOOD NJ
Mariana Rafael	LAKWOOD NJ
Maria Valdez	LAKWOOD NJ
Triseo Romero	LAKWOOD NJ
evodia Romero	LAKWOOD NJ
Marcelisa Nieto	LAKWOOD NJ
Margarita Flores	LAKWOOD NJ