

Ocean Academy Charter School Board of Education

Minutes – Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, August 29, 2023

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
Thomas A. D'Ambola - Absent
Aase Marie Hare
Sharon Hollander
Roxanne Martin
Stephen Nichol
Wendy Osorio

Valarie Smith (Board Secretary), Lorna Hassel (Head of School), Dawn Cobb-Fossnes (Middle School Principal), David Block (School Business Administrator), Thomas McMahon (Facilities Consultant), and David Hespe (Board Attorney).

Meeting to be Called to Order by Anita Lepelstat at 6:20 PM
Salute to the Flag by Board President Anita Lepelstat

Action Agenda

Public Session:

Old Business

Approval of Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2023 - Presented by Valarie Smith

Motion to approve made by Marshall White
Second by Stephen Nichol

Vote: Unanimous in favor of approving of the Minutes for the June 13th, 2023 Board Meeting.

Principal's Report Presented by Lorna Hassel

Attendance for the Month of June

Staff Absences/Days Out – 63 full days 22 1/2 days

Student Absence - 212 (non covid related)

HIB incidents - 0

Total Student Enrollment: 439

New Business

Election of Board Members to a Three Year Term

We have three positions up for re-election to Three Year Terms (expiring in 2026)

Wendy Osorio, Tom D’Ambola, Jim Muzikowski

Motion to re-elect Wendy Osorio, Tom D’Ambola, and Jim Muzikowski motioned by Sharon Hollander

Seconded by Roxanne Martin

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Election of Board Officers for One-Year Terms

Motion to re-elect Anita Lepelstat as Board President by Marshall White

Second by Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Motion to re-elect Jim Muzikowski as Board Vice President

Motion by Marshall White

Second by Anita Lepelstat

Vote: Unanimously Approved

New Hires for the 2023-24 School Year – Presented by Lorna Hassel

New Hire Name	Position
Antonietta DiMatteo	Middle School
Katlin Petchers	First Grade
Cassandra Perednia	Music Teacher
Lina DiMatteo	Para
John Manzo	Special Education Teacher
Kristin King	Middle School
Phatima Marotta	Para
Claudia Tejada	Para
Kashonna Wilson	Para
Jeanine Clark	4 th Grade
Cari Gloss	4 th Grade
Brandie Phillips	2 nd Grade
Michelle Meaney	Occupational Therapy
Clara Marin Uvera	Secretarial / Clerical

Motion to Accept New Hires as Presented by Lorna Hassel made by Aase Marie Hare

Second by Jim Muzikowski

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

Payment for Education Advancement & Extra Professional Development Investments – Presented by Valarie

Smith

To get assurances of continued employment from those who have taken advantage of tuition help (50%) or other special professional development opportunities. To secure an understanding that if the employee leaves within a certain amount of years, they would have to repay the tuition subsidies.

Dave Hespe, OACS's solicitor, will write up such an agreement.

Motion to accept an employment agreement in exchange for financial tuition help made by Marshall White
Second by Jim Muzikowski

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

[Presentation of an overview of NJSLA scores](#) Presented by Nancy Guzman & Dawn Cobb-Fossnes

Last Spring's NJSLA scores were presented to the Board. Ocean Academy's NJSLA scores have made excellent positive improvement/progress. Math scores were up by 50%. ELA has also improved. But, we are still on the road to reform/remediation with our Whole School Reform efforts.

[Executive Director Goals 22-23 & 23-24 & Board Review](#)

Reminder of what the Executive Director's 22-23 Goals were:

1. To improve upon test scores (State Assessments)
2. Continue to oversee expansion to 8th Grade
3. To achieve an expansion grant for a High School & explore Facilities

For Board and Executive Director to Agree on Goals for the 23-24 School Year

1. To Continue to Advance with a High School expansion.
2. To be discussed
3. To be discussed

Board Review of Executive Director – Led by Anita Lepelstat

Board President, Anita Lepelstat, made the following recommendations for the Executive Director's 23-24 School Year Goals:

1. To Continue to Advance with a High School expansion
2. To continue to work on improving the NJSLA scores
3. To continue the parent and community outreach as outlined by the Executive Director

Valarie Smith presented on the Parent and Community needs and the type of outreach the school engages. A considerate amount of time is spent daily by office staff in parent outreach.

Marshall White suggested that the Board not commit to the Executive Director's goals as the Board will be addressing Board goals at the October meeting. She thought it best that the Board goals be developed and then the CSA's goals so that they are congruent.

It was generally agreed to address the Executive Director's goals at the next meeting which will be in October when the Board goes over the Board Self-Assessment and establishes new Board goals.

Chief School Administrator's (Executive Director) Recommendations for the 23-24 School Year – Led by Valarie Smith

Recommendation of the Executive Director – Actions for the 2023-24 School Year

The following points are required each year by law, regulation, or policy.

1. Reappoint Valarie M. Smith as Secretary to the Board (one year term)

Motion to Reappoint Valarie Smith as Board Secretary Made by Asa Marie Hare

Second by Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

2. Reappoint Board Attorney, David Hesse, of the firm Porzio, Bromberg, & Newman for the 2023-24 School Year. (Recommended by Valarie Smith)

Motion to reappoint Board Attorney, David Hesse, of the firm Porzio, Bromberg, & Newman for the 2023 – 24 school year made by Anita Lepelstat

Second by Stephen Nichol

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

3. Appoint Auditor, Jump, Perry, & Company, at an annual cost not to exceed \$15,000 for the 23-24 School year (Recommended by David Block)

Motion to appoint Jump, Perry, & Company made by Jim Muzikowski

Second by Anita Lepelstat

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

4. Appointment of the Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O.) David P. Block (David Block)

Motion to appoint David Block P.A.C.O. made by Aase Marie Hare

Second by Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

5. Motion to appoint David P. Block the Districts Qualified purchasing agent, authorization to award contracts up to bid threshold (currently \$44,000 bid threshold) and set quote threshold (\$6,600 quote threshold). Bid & Quote Thresholds are ruled by DCA. (David Block)

Motion to approve made by Jim Muzikowski
Second by Stephen Nichol
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

6. Motion to approve the Board's Critical Policy Manual (as subscribed to NJ School Boards Association).
(Valarie Smith)

Motion to approve the Critical Policy Manual made by Wendy Osorio
Second by Jim Muzikowski
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

7. Motion to approve Ocean Academy's curriculum. (Lorna Hassel & Dawn Cobb-Fossnes)

Motion to approve the curriculum made by Anita Lepelstat
Second by Wendy Osorio
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

8. Motion to approve the annual School Boards Board Self-Assessment Document (Valarie Smith)

Motion to approve made by Jim Muzikowski
Second by Sharon Hollander
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

9. Motion to approve the Chief School administrators Evaluation Form (NJ School Boards)

Motion to approve made by Aase Marie Hare
Second by Jim Muzikowski
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

[Teachers' Contract Approval](#) - Presented by Valarie Smith & David Hespe

This contract will take effect for new hires for the 2024-25 School Year.

Ocean Academy Charter School
CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE CONTRACT:

Our Mission

" to provide elementary students with a high quality and student-centered education in a safe, nurturing, and challenging environment so that all students achieve their highest level of academic success."

This Agreement is made by and between Ocean Academy Charter School, a New Jersey public charter school and non-profit corporation, (hereinafter referred to as the "Employer" and or OACS) and

_____ hereinafter referred to as "Employee") as of the _____ day of _____, 202-.

It is mutually covenanted and agreed by and between the parties hereto as follows:

Offer of Employment:

The Employer hereby engages the employee to perform the services of ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER on a full-time basis and employee hereby accept such employment in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Employment Contract.

Your term of employment shall be July 1, 202- to June 30, 202- for 188 school contact days and 10 extra professional development days pursuant to the school calendar adopted annually by the Board of Trustees.

The Employer shall pay you an annualized salary of _____. Employee salaries will be paid in 20 equal installments on the 15th and the last day of each month beginning with the first payment on September 15th of that school year and the last payment on the last day of June of that school year. This schedule aligns with the TPAF contribution schedule as outlined by the state. Additional income such as stipends will be paid in accordance with school policy. This salary amount shall cover all hours worked during the term of this contract. The salary listed above shall be prorated for employment beginning after September 1st of any calendar year.

This Employment Contract is subject to your holding a valid instructional certificate in good standing, as stated below, issued by the New Jersey State Board of Education.

CERTIFICATION(S)/DEGREE(S)/CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIRED:

The employee represents and warrants to Employer by signing this contract that he or she is properly licensed and certified to teach in the public schools of the State of New Jersey, and that he or she possesses the particular certifications, endorsements and licenses required by the laws of the State of New Jersey for the particular assignment of the employee at Ocean Academy Charter School. It is the affirmative duty of an employee to advise the school within 24 hours of receipt of any notice received from the state of New Jersey pertaining to a defect, suspension, revocation or termination of their certification or license. It is expressly understood that Ocean Academy Charter School is relying upon the employee's representations pursuant to this provision and that it is the exclusive responsibility of the employee to know and be familiar with the State laws referenced in this provision and governing their employment as public school teacher in the State of New Jersey.

You must present satisfactory completion of background and reference check; provision of complete and accurate employment and educational history; and provision of a completed physical examination, obtained at your own expense, including the test for tuberculosis, rendering you fit for full time employment. Failure to perform these required steps within 30 days after the execution of this Employment Contract, without good cause as determined by the Board of Trustees, may result in immediate rescission of this offer of employment.

In the event you are unable to provide your aforementioned instructional certificate and/ or your certificate is suspended, revoked or withdrawn, this Employment Contract and your employment hereunder shall be terminated immediately. You hereby agree to furnish the appropriate certificate to the Employer, the County Superintendent of Schools, or any other agency designated by the Employer within seven (7) days of the execution of this Employment Contract, and to provide your current certification when such is renewed.

Every employee of Ocean Academy Charter School shall submit to a criminal background check and provide fingerprints in a time frame directed and mandated by the Lead Person of Ocean Academy Charter School. It is expressly understood that by signing this Agreement an employee is representing and warranting to Ocean Academy Charter School that they have no adult convictions for crimes or offenses, or felonies or misdemeanors in the State of New Jersey or any other state of the United States that would disqualify them from school employment. Further it is expressly understood that the obligation for a criminal history background check as contained in this provision is mandated by the laws of the State of New Jersey pertaining to the operation of the public schools. In addition to this mandate, pursuant to the policies of the Board of Ocean Academy Charter School and for the mutual promises and covenants contained in this Agreement, by signing this Agreement the employee undertakes a continuing duty to disclose to The Ocean Academy Charter School any arrest and/or conviction of any crime or offense or felony or misdemeanor (not traffic or local ordinance offenses); and therefore, it is expressly understood by the employee that if at any time after passing the initial criminal history check, the employee is charged or convicted of a crime or offense or felony or misdemeanor of any nature, the employee will immediately disclose the event to the Lead Person of Ocean Academy Charter School. Failure to disclose to the Lead Person shall constitute a basis for immediate termination.

JOB DESCRIPTION AND DUTIES

JOB DESCRIPTION: EMPLOYEE HEREBY ACCEPTS SUCH EMPLOYMENT AND AGREES TO FAITHFULLY DO AND PERFORM ALL DUTIES INCLUDING:

1. *Deliver effective, high-quality, rigorous instruction in the content areas that produce high levels of student achievement, both academic and linguistic; as given to you in the school curriculum and planned for in your lesson plans;*
2. *Deliver exceptional aligned and standards-based instruction in assigned content area(s) and grade level(s) that ensure academic growth for all students; as evidenced in your lesson planning from the school curriculum;*
3. *Develop daily and unit lesson plans that are thoughtful, thematic, goal-oriented, and aligned with curriculum, and carefully plan lessons for substitutes when unable to attend school;*
4. *Possess and maintain a mastery of the content knowledge area and skills to successfully teach assigned content area(s) and grade(s);*
5. *Participate actively in curriculum development;*
6. *Be responsible for all school materials that are given to you for school use (computers, curriculum biner, etc.) Lack of care may result in financial penalty;*
7. *Develop relevant materials and adapt existing curricula to meet the needs of students;*
8. *Possess a high level of technological understanding and a willingness to take advantage of professional development opportunities in the area of technology and assessment, as well as immersion education and related areas;*
9. *Maintain adequate records of students' achievement on school's online management system and behavioral performance and complete report card promptly as scheduled; and keep a record of those communications;*
10. *Maintain adequate records of students' achievement on school's online management system and behavioral performance and complete report card promptly as scheduled; and keep a record of those communications;*
11. *Be available for parent/teacher conferences, parent/student orientations, award nights, and Graduations;*
12. *Check homework and assist students in any areas that show a lack of understanding of homework assignments;*
13. *Plan and chaperone field trips;*
14. *Establish a good working relationship with other teaching professionals for integration of best practices into the classroom and the curriculum;*
15. *Implement the school-wide discipline policies in the classroom and throughout the school; and attend disciplinary hearings as needed;*
16. *Maintain a neat, clean classroom environment that enhances learning;*
17. *Attend, as needed, Child Study Team meeting & Intervention & Referral Team Meetings;*
18. *Attend regular faculty meetings, PLC meetings, Departmental meetings and trainings and professional development sessions;*
19. *Differentiate instruction for children of different linguistic, cultural and academic backgrounds, as well as for children with different learning styles including English Language Learners, students with special needs and identified struggling students with the same high expectations you have for all students. Further, you commit to diligently provide them with accommodations and/or modifications outlined in their learning plans, such as an IEP, ELL Plan, and tiered intervention plan. This will ensure the highest level of effective learning for each student you serve; and*
20. *To follow all rules set forth in school policy as well as other communicated directives, both verbal and written, and to carry out all other duties as assigned by the Head of School and Executive Director.*

DUTIES: *You shall perform all duties as outlined in the job description for your position, set forth above. You shall also perform such additional work as may be required by the Lead Person or his/her designee from time to time under the terms and conditions and according to the directions, instructions and control of the Lead Person or his/her designee. Certain duties may include, but are not limited to, attending state testing, cafeteria duties; and any additional school-wide community duties as may be needed.*

CHANGE OF DUTIES: *You acknowledge the right of the Employer to reassign you to a different job assignment consistent with your certification and education, and consistent with the Employer's needs. Your duties may be changed from time to time without having any effect upon any other terms of this Employment Contract.*

EMPLOYER'S RULES & REGULATIONS: You shall strictly adhere to all of the rules and regulations of the Employer which are presently in force, or which may be established hereafter with respect to your conduct as an employee. You shall also strictly follow the directions of the Employer with respect to the methods to be used in performance of your duties. You are responsible for continuing and maintaining the Employer's standards of professionalism, uniformity and quality, with regard to teaching methods.

HOURS OF WORK

This is a 10-month position full time position and Employee is expected to be at work from 7:15—3:45 on Mondays through Fridays except one meeting per week will require attendance until 4:30. Hours may be subject to change according to the operational needs of the school at the discretion of the Administration and Board of Trustees. It is expected that this work will take place on the school site, although certain circumstances (e.g. COVID protocols, field trips, service projects, conferences and outreach activities) will take the employee off-site and may occur during evening or weekend hours.

BENEFITS

Holidays: You are not required to work on holidays as set forth in the school year calendar, and there is no reduction to your salary for the holidays on the school calendar.

Leave: Employee is entitled to three (3) personal days annually, pre-approved by the Principal which expire at the end of each year on June 30th, and to use ten (10) sick days which may be accumulated if not used during the course of the current school year pursuant to law and board policy. All time off must be taken in accordance with school policy. Personal leave requests must be submitted one (1) week in advance, except in an emergency. A request for personal leave may be denied if the Employee's absence on the date specified would hinder school operations. You will also be granted up to two (2) days of absence without loss of salary due to death in your immediate family. Such bereavement days include, if appropriate, holidays and other days when school is closed, but do not include weekends. "Immediate family" shall be defined as spouse, partner in a civil union, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, parent, stepmother, stepfather, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, grandson, granddaughter, grandparent, mother or father of an employee's spouse or partner in a civil union, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

Professional Development: You may be granted up to two (2) days, upon approval by the Administration, for the purpose of professional development during the term of your employment under this Employment Contract. A written report must be provided to the Head of School for any professional development attended by the employee and paid for by the school, summarizing the new knowledge acquired by the employee and what was learned in the professional development can be utilized in the classroom by the employee for the benefit of Ocean Academy Charter School Students.

Health Benefits You and your family members will be eligible for health insurance coverage as provided to eligible staff under terms determined by the Employer. Each employee will have health benefit contributions deducted from his or her paychecks in accordance with NJ Chapter 78.P.L.2011. Employer may modify or cancel its benefit plan(s) at its sole discretion, at any time, with or without notice, consistent with the requirements of state and federal law. Benefit coverage will begin on September 1st for eligible employees hired for day 1 of the school year. Benefit coverage will start on the 1st of the month following the hire date for eligible employees hired after the first day of school. Any discrepancy between the benefits discussion here and the actual plan documents, the plan documents shall prevail.

Pension Employee will be enrolled in the New Jersey teacher pension and annuity fund (TPAF) as outlined by program guidelines. TPAF is administered solely by the state of New Jersey and all decisions about the program are made solely by the state of New Jersey, not Employer. The Ocean Academy Charter School will withhold from the employee's pay and facilitate payments to the New Jersey Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF) in the amounts required by law. An employee will sign an acknowledgement that they have registered with the New Jersey Member Benefit Online System (MBOS) and reviewed the obligations for contributory and non-contributory life insurance prior to commencing duties pursuant to this Agreement.

EQUIPMENT

You are required to return any and all materials, documents, equipment, real property, badges, credentials, keys, products, charge cards, telephones, pagers, computer and any other equipment supplied to you by the Employer. You are responsible for all materials, supplies, and equipment supplied to you and loss of any item will result in a pay deduction to compensate for cost of replacement.

TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION OF EMPLOYMENT – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Employee's employment may be terminated by Employer at any time **for cause** without advance notice. Employee's employment may be terminated by Employer **without cause** upon 30 days written notice. Employee may terminate employment upon providing 60 days written notice. Employer, in its sole discretion, may choose to release Employee from the 60-day notice obligation or require less than 60 days notice, at which point the Employee's pay will also end as of the earlier date.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

You acknowledge that all records belonging to the Employer, including without limitation all student lists, curriculum, Policies and Procedures and business plans and practices (the "Employer Records") (1) are proprietary, (2) are the separate property of the Employer, and (3) may not be transferred by you to any other person or entity, either during the said term of employment or thereafter. Employee is specifically responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of student information and only sharing it with necessary parties as required by Federal and State law. You further agree to surrender all Employer Records in your possession to Employer upon termination of employment.

SEVERABILITY: GOVERNING LAW

If any clause or provision herein shall be adjudged invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction or by operation of any applicable law, it shall not affect the validity of any clause or provision, which shall remain in full force and effect. The contract shall be governed by the laws of New Jersey.

COMPLETE AGREEMENT

This contract supersedes all prior contracts and understandings between you and Employer, and shall not be modified, changed or altered by any promise or statement by whosoever made, until such modification shall have been approved by the Board of Trustees and set forth in writing, signed by the parties hereto. The contract is contingent upon the approval and continuation of a valid charter. You agree that you will comply with all federal and state statutes which may apply to the operation of the school and your employment, together with any and all federal and state regulations and policies of the Board of Trustees.

WAIVER OF BREACH

The waiver by the Employer of a breach of any provision of this contract shall not operate or be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach by the Employer.

**ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT,
INITIALING OF EACH PAGE AND SIGNATURES**

I accept the terms and conditions of employment as contained in this Agreement and in the policies of Ocean Academy Charter School. Further, I warrant and represent that I have initialed each page of this document to signify that I have read and understand each page and each provision of this Agreement, that any and all questions that I have about this Agreement have been answered to my satisfaction, and that I am able to fulfill all of my obligations and responsibilities pursuant to this Agreement.

In Witness Whereof, the undersigned have executed this Employment Contract the date and year above written.

President of the Board of Trustees Date

Employee Signature Date

The Ocean Academy Charter School is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and does not Discriminate based on gender, race, ethnic background, religion, disability, or other protected category.

Motion to accept and Approve the Teacher's Contract made by Jim Muzikowski

Second by Aase Marie Hare

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

Update on School Boards Convention – Presented by Valarie Smith

NJ School Boards 2023 Convention will take place in Atlantic City from October 23 – 26.

Please respond in order to secure rooms for the 2023 Convention.

Update on Awards – Presented by Dawn Cobb-Fossnes

1. Blue Ribbon Award – Whole School

Ocean Academy was able to achieve the Blue Ribbon Program Award for our significant growth in ELA and Math NJSLA scores.

2. Visionary Award for Community Impact – Valarie Smith

Valarie Smith was nominated and won the 2023 Community Visionary Award for Community Impact presented by Classlink.

Financials – Presented by David Block

Motion to Approve Financials made by Jim Muzikowski

Second By Anita Lepelstat

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

Board Comments:

Anita Lepelstat asked about the trailer project and Tom McMahon brought everyone up to date. The trailer, when finished, will be used for a library, storage area, and ancillary services.

Marshall White thanked Dr. Fossnes for creating and implementing the tutoring program we had last spring.

Dr. Fossnes also gave an update on Camp Melody. This session (August 2023) the camp served 35 Ocean Academy students (15 Boys and 20 girls).

Marshall White brought up the YAP Inc program for implementation at Ocean Academy.

Valarie Smith explained that the school is in the middle of a grant application with the State for high impact tutoring. The net worth of the grant for OACS is \$97,000. David Hespe suggested that the Board acknowledge the grant application.

A motion was made that OACS would apply for the State of NJ's Tutoring Grant by Stephen Nichol.
Second by Jim Muzikowski
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

Announcements: None

Motion to Adjourn:

8:28 PM Jim Muzikowski motioned for the meeting to adjourn.
Second by Sharon Hollander
Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

Minutes approved by the Board on October 10, 2023

Addendum to Minutes by Board Approval at the October 10, 2023

Anita Lepelstat has asked that the following summary of the Executive Director's review be posted as an addendum to the August 29, 2023 minutes. She had planned to read it at the meeting but instead gave a short statement of its content with a synopsis of the completion of the three 2022-23 goals.

October 10, 2023 Meeting

Motion to submit Executive Director's summary assessment by Board President as an addendum to the August 29th minutes made by Anita Lepelstat

Second by Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously in Favor by the Board

Ocean Academy Board of Trustees' Review of Executive Director – August 29, 2023

I, Anita Lepelstat, as president of the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Academy Charter School have been tasked with summarizing input from our Board Members' evaluation of the Executive Director's progress toward three stated district goals for the year 2022-23 to improve student performance.

Thank you to my board colleagues for your prompt and thorough response to completion of your assessments. I greatly appreciate the personal time each of you has given in meeting with me in my home, while traveling in your car, rendezvousing in faraway places, and in several shared phone conversations. My very personal thanks to board attorney David Hespe for his time, guidance, clarification, and support during this process.

Members who completed assessments were Aase Hare, Sharon Hollander, Roxanne Martin, Jim Muzikowski, Stephen Nichol, and Marshall White.

Goal 1: To improve upon state test scores (NJSLA) (approved by the Board-August '22).

The consensus among the seven respondents was that significant progress has been made toward developing processes, instructional strategies, and implementing curriculum aligned with state standards for improvement in students' learning. This was developed and improved upon through consultation with learning specialist Nancy Guzman, school supervisors, school leaders, and faculty in addressing previous state outcomes and anticipated scores.

Improving low score performance has reportedly been and continues to be addressed. We agree that Ms. Smith has recognized the need to implement strategies throughout all grades which align with state educational standards and the anticipated improvement in student learning throughout all grades.

A cross section of comments are as follows:

Ms. Smith is working on multiple platforms to increase and improve student growth and output. Despite numerous covid interruptions to education, the superintendent, with board approval, has forged ahead with the above listed programs (see superintendent's comments) and student achievement appears headed in the right direction as a result.

Goal 2: Continue to oversee the Expansion of the school K-8.

Programming and implementation of instructional strategies to improve student performance in middle school grades have been consistently shared with board members. Of particular note is the implementation of learning activities which have demonstrably been shown to motivate students to work to their potential and beyond. Discipline is consistently and effectively addressed.

The introduction a music and an athletic program have been viewed as outstanding additions to the middle school curricula.

Comments:

Growth seems to be steady and consistent with a kindergarten wait list for school enrollment. A board member questioned the use of the music and stem teachers working with students for in-school suspension and suggested the employment of a paraprofessional(s) instead.

The Executive Director appears well aware of the challenges of this goal and has been vigilant in keeping up with the trends of students, families, and education oversight entities.

Goal 3: To achieve an expansion grant for a High School and explore facilities.

Consensus among board members is that satisfactory progress has been made, in general, toward this goal. It is agreed that the granting of the expansion grant for inception of a High School is dependent on many factors among these the outcome of our measurable performance and learning metrics in K-8 grades to the present time.

Comments:

Ms. Smith is considering and exploring all aspects both positive and negative toward the achievement of this goal. She has gone above and beyond to explore ways to work with all parties toward its achievement. These efforts, needless to say, are ongoing.

Summary

The goal herewith expressed by Mrs. Smith regarding state school test scores is ongoing particularly on improving student performance in language arts and mathematics when compared to last year's performance and Lakewood School District test results. We were excited to learn that the recently reported raw scores in math and language arts reflect improvement. We are awaiting averages among school districts in September and comparisons among Lakewood schools in December. Ms. Smith, as stated, will continue her work to achieve the expansion grant for a High School and continue to explore facilities.

We, as a board, applaud Ms. Smith and her staff and faculty's efforts and success in helping parents with problems and challenges that they are, at times, unable to manage due to their unfamiliarity with the English language. Supporting parents in areas of need benefits our children as parents learn how to navigate through challenges that come their way. (ie completion of applications, understanding small print, etc.) Through providing assistance and addressing presenting needs, we hope to increase parent's understanding of the educational process and ways they can contribute and support their student's learning.

Ms. Smith has had the insight to employ staff who have been resourceful to parents when needs have risen outside the school environment. This is viewed as a valuable tool in helping children learn as their parents learn vis-à-vis our shared, but complex American culture. We would ask that efforts and actions for intervention be reported to the board periodically.

We heartily support Ms. Smith efforts to involve family, community, staff, administrators, and faculty in developing a comprehensive plan for board/community input and outreach. Continuing the partnership between parent, administration, faculty, and staff to navigate the educational landscape clearly presents as an essential ongoing goal.

Anita Lepelstat