

# Ocean Academy Charter School Board of Education

## Minutes – Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, March 10, 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 - [Absent](#)  
Jim Muzikowski – Vice President  
Sharon Hollander  
David Corso  
Raul Orellana  
Gregory Brandis  
Aase Hare  
Roxanne Martin

Valarie Smith (Board Secretary), Lorna Hassel (Head of School) Absent, 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 Hesper.

Meeting Called to Order @ 6:15 pm – Led by Jim Muzikowski

Salute to the Flag

### **Action Agenda**

#### **Public Session:**

#### **Old Business**

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2026**

Motion to Approve: Raul Orellana

Second: Roxanne Martin

Vote: Unanimously Approved

#### **New Business**

#### **Board Opening Interview** – Presented by Valarie Smith

Cori Scotti – Applicant for the Board, Discussion

Motion to Appoint Cori Scotti as a Board Member made by Aase Hare

Second: Raul Orellana

**Roll Call Vote:** Roxanne Martin - Yes, Raul Orellana – Yes, Aase Hare – Yes, Jim Muzikowski – Yes, Sharon Hollander – Yes, Gregory Brandis – Yes, David Corso – Yes

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**Principal's Report** – Presented by Valarie Smith

**Month of January 2026 – Staff & Student Attendance**

Total Staff: **136**  
Full Days Taken Off: **110**  
Half Days Taken Off: **41**

Total # of Students: **593**  
Student Absences #: **229**

**Month of February 2026 – Staff & Student Attendance**

Total Staff: **135**  
Full Days Taken Off: **98**  
Half Days Taken Off: **34**

Total # of Students: **592**  
Student Absences #: **275**

**High School Field Trip** – Presented by Stephen Nichol

10th grade Field Trip to Whitesbog Preservation 5/28/26 or thereabouts. The Whitesbog Preservation Trust invites all ages of visitors to learn about the history of cranberry farming, life in a rural South Jersey Company Town and the individuals and culture that supported the farming operations and Elizabeth White's efforts to cultivate the first highbush blueberry.

Motion to Approve Whitesbog Preservation Trust 10th Grade Field Trip on 5/28/2026 made by Sharon Hollander

Second: David Corso

Vote: Unanimously approved by the Board

**SEMI WAIVER** – Presented by David Block

**Resolution to Accept SEMI Notification of Enrollment**

**WHEREAS**, Ocean Academy Charter School has received a Notification of Enrollment from the New Jersey Department of Education regarding participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the SEMI Program allows school districts to receive Medicaid reimbursement for eligible special education and related services provided to Medicaid-eligible students;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Ocean Academy Charter School hereby accepts the Notification of Enrollment for participation in the SEMI Program for the applicable school year; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Business Administrator is authorized to submit all required documentation, certifications, and assurances necessary to implement and maintain participation in the SEMI Program in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations.

Motion to Accept SEMI Waiver Motion by Raul Orellana

Seconded: Roxanne Martin

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**Resolution for Tutoring Grant** – Presented by Didi Yencer

Board of Trustees Resolution in Approving & Confirming the High-Impact Tutoring Grant, Cohort 3 for Ocean Academy. \$50,000

Grant Name: New Jersey Learning Acceleration Program: High-Impact Tutoring Grant – Cohort 3 (26-AB04-H02) Program Term: May 1, 2026 – May 31, 2027

Grant Purpose: The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has announced a grant opportunity to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in accelerating student learning through **high-impact tutoring**. Eligibility is limited to LEAs whose average student proficiency on the *2024-2025 New Jersey Student Learning Assessments in grades 3-8 was less than 50%* in ELA and/or mathematics.

Motion to Approve Resolution made by Aase Hare

Second: Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**Mid-Year Data Report** – Presented by Didi Yencer

Discussion

**Resolution to Change Birth Date for Kindergarten Enrollment** – Presented by Valarie Smith

**Resolution to Amend Kindergarten Enrollment Age Requirement**

WHEREAS, the Board of Education seeks to ensure that district policies regarding kindergarten enrollment are aligned with Lakewood Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, almost all school districts in New Jersey, including the **Lakewood Public Schools**, have established an earlier kindergarten age eligibility date to support student readiness and consistent enrollment standards; and

WHEREAS, aligning the district's kindergarten enrollment age requirement with that of Lakewood Public Schools will promote consistency for families and support appropriate developmental readiness for incoming students;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education hereby amends its kindergarten enrollment eligibility policy so that a child must attain the age of five (5) years on or before **October 1** of the school year in which the child is enrolled in kindergarten.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this change replaces the previous eligibility date of **December 31**, and shall take effect beginning with the 2026-27 enrollment period.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent and district administration are directed to update all policies, registration materials, and public notices to reflect the revised kindergarten age eligibility date.

Motion to Approve Change in Birth Date made by Jim Muzikowski

Seconded by Dave Corso

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**Board Approval for Attending the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools** – Presented by Valarie Smith

Amy LaBarca, Didi Yencer, and Valarie Smith to attend the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools Convention in New Orleans: Wednesday June 24 - Friday June 26, 2026. Permission has already be obtained by the Ocean County Superintendent.

Motion to Approve of Attendance to the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools Convention made by Jim Muzikowski

Second: Roxanne Martin

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**FINANCIALS** – Presented by David Block

**APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Motion by Jim Muzikowski Seconded by Georgory Brandis BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE OCEAN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES, to approve the following –

Bill's List for FY26

Board Secretary's Report – January 31, 2026

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**APPROVAL OF THE OACS 2024-2025 ANNUAL FISCAL AUDIT**

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has been presented the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the Fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 prepared by Jump, Perry and Company, L.L.P. for Ocean Academy Charter School; and

WHEREAS, a corrective action plan addressing the recommendations of the audit is developed;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Academy Charter School, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey that the FY 25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and Corrective Action Plan is approved.

Motion to Approve the 24-25 Annual Fiscal Audit made by Raul Orellana

Seconded: Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**APPROVAL OF REVISED FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET**

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Academy Charter School (hereinafter “Board”) has been presented with the revised FY 26 budget; and

WHEREAS, the budget reflects current enrollment data, federal grant allocations and expenditure figures; and

WHEREAS, the budget reflects allocation of expenses in accordance with Department of Education recommendations, code, statute and approved charter as best as possible under current funding;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Ocean Academy Charter School, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey that the revised FY 25 budget is approved.

Motion to Accept Revised Fiscal Year 2026 Budget made by Jim Muzikowski

Second by Aase Hare

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board

**Announcements:** None

**Motion to Adjourn:**

Made by Raul Orellana

Second: Sharon Hollander

Vote: Unanimously Approved by the Board