



**CHARTER SCHOOLS GOVERNING BOARD**  
**St. Johns Community Campus and Therapeutic Learning Center**  
**Charter Schools of the St. Johns County School District**

**Minutes - Notes**

**REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

**May 22, 2025**

**Attending:** President Andy Norman; Vice President Ann-Marie Butler; and Treasurer Mike Davis. Board Secretary Jennifer Akin was absent. **Also attending were:** Executive Director Kathy Jackson; CFO Justin Breidenstein; SJCC Director Lynne Funcheon; TLC Director Lauren Brannan; and Development Director/Staff Liaison Neal Benson.

A quorum was announced and the meeting was called to order at 12:15 pm by President Andy Norman.

The minutes of the Special Meeting held on November 21, 2024, having been provided in advance, were approved following a motion by Mike Davis and a second by Ann-Marie Butler.

President Andy Norman called for public comment, and hearing none, addressed the agenda.

Justin Breidenstein presented the financial reports for each the charter schools as of the end of April 2025. Ann-Marie Butler moved for approval of the reports as presented, Mike Davis provided the second, and the reports were approved.

As CFO, Justin Breidenstein asked the board to review proposals for the transfer of cash balances for the charter schools held by TD Bank, to a new financial institution. Proposals were received from Ameris Bank – Qualified Public Depository; Regions Bank – Qualified Public Depository; and SouthState Bank – Commercial Sweep Account. After discussion, Ann-Marie Butler moved to authorize Justin Breidenstein to move the funds to Ameris Bank if they can match the Net Annualized Interest proposed by Regions Bank. After a second by Andy Norman, the motion carried.

Justin presented the proposed annual budgets for each of the charter schools for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2026. Following discussion on the proposed budget for the St. Johns Community Campus, Mike Davis moved for approval, Ann-Marie Butler provided the second, and the budget was approved as presented. Following brief discussion on the budget prosed for the Therapeutic Learning Center, Ann-Marie moved for approval, Mike Davis offered the second, and the motion carried.

Lynne Funcheon, Director of the St. Johns Community Campus, presented her Report of School.

- Lynne reported to the board that 75 students were enrolled for the summer session, and 79 students are registered for classes to begin in August. Concerns for the coming year included providing a seamless transition of services into our adult programs. The agency's new hire, Grace, has done an amazing job of getting on top of this and connecting families with funding sources. One of the school's long-term teachers, Brenda Felder, is retiring and efforts are underway to, hopefully, fill that position by hiring within the agency. Additional students will mean the need for additional vans and additional drivers. The report is made part of these minutes and are retained on file with Neal Benson at The Arc of the St. Johns. Lynne also reported on key accomplishments:

- We have been able to increase our ratios for our most difficult students by including RBT's during school hours. This service is billed through insurance and allows me to increase staffing without putting a drain on my budget.
- There are now Four avenues for staff growth if a staff member chooses to put in the effort (RBT certification (school pays), Para Professional certification (school pays), Job Coach (school pays) and teacher certification (School pays for teaching test and area certifications).
- We are working on getting more staff certified as job coaches so that we can start providing WBLE through our VR contract. This could be a significant revenue stream and allow more students to participate in internships in different businesses.
- Established a Connection with the Boost Program that will allow some of our students that turn 22 to go to FCTC and get certification in several areas. This program will pay the school and transportation costs for the students.

Lauren Brannan, Director of the Therapeutic Learning Center, presented her Report of School.

**Enrollment Growth:** We have more than doubled our enrollment and now maintain a healthy waitlist, highlighting the increasing demand for our services.

**School District Partnership:** TLC is now recognized as a valued and integrated partner in St. Johns County School District's ESE efforts. This partnership has grown through consistent coordination, mutual respect, and collaboration.

#### **Significant Community Collaborations and Integration.**

- Formal partnership established with Family Network on Disabilities (FND).
- Active participant in the county's Social Services Resource Collective, engaging across education, healthcare, social work, and advocacy sectors.
- Partnered with the Florida Department of Health and CMS on a five-year health plan for medically complex children; attended the 2025 Florida Family Leadership Summit as part of the Title IV funding initiative.
- Strengthened ties with Early Steps Northeastern and CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disabilities).
- In active planning with CARD to relocate their St. Johns County satellite office to TLC, per their request.
- Reestablished and enhanced partnership with SJCS; Anna represented The Arc on the district's ESE Resource Event planning committee.
- Successfully hosted the inaugural **Family Sensory Fall Festival** with over 200 attendees. The County Utilities Department provided parking support, helping ensure the event's success.
- Built relationships with the SJC Sheriff's Office, Fire Rescue, and Library, resulting in student/family programs and donations (e.g., used board books for classrooms).

#### **Program Enhancements, Innovations in Specialized Support, and Digital Transformation**

- Rebuilt afterschool and summer programs for improved structure, outcomes, and financial sustainability.
- Introduced system wide improvements for greater operational efficiency across departments.
- Recruited expert therapeutic contractors under a collaborative leadership model to elevate interdisciplinary services.
- Purchased 2 smartboards in use in both classrooms, iPads for AAC devices and student use.
- Developed internal capacity to support students with hearing impairments who fall outside FSDB's eligibility.
- Actively recruiting a provider to expand vision services.

- Created a unique dual-sensory support role—an uncommon position that reflects our commitment to inclusivity and student-centered planning.
- Undergoing a full website redesign to serve as a trusted, easy-to-navigate family resource hub.
- Transitioned to a digital enrollment system with ongoing improvements to enhance family access and data integration.

## Ongoing Challenges and Needs at the TLC

- **Provider Shortages.** All students enrolled qualify for speech and language services. Due to a lack of qualified providers, we are currently capped at 24 students, with limited ability to expand despite growing waitlists.
- **Staffing Gaps.** We continue to seek additional relief staff and a certified classroom teacher to support program needs.
- **Limited Access for Younger Children.** There is a gap in early care options for young children awaiting a diagnosis or unable to access traditional childcare. We are addressing this through partnerships with Early Steps and by expanding our ABA program offerings.

## Space Constraints and Facility Improvements Needed

We are operating over capacity.

- There is a lack of pull-out therapy rooms, sensory regulation spaces, and accessible storage for therapeutic equipment.
- The current building layout contributes to sound challenges that can be distressing for children with sensory sensitivities.
- A padded sensory room is urgently needed to minimize staff injury and provide a calming, safe space for students.

To support long-term sustainability and continued program growth, the following facility enhancements are essential:

- **Sound Mitigation**  
Implement acoustic improvements in classrooms and the pavilion to better support students with sensory sensitivities.
- **Therapy and Sensory Spaces**  
Construct purpose-built therapy rooms and a fully padded sensory room to safely meet students' behavioral and sensory regulation needs.
- **Accessible Storage**  
Add secure, accessible storage for therapeutic equipment that must be transported and used throughout the day.
- **Classroom and Program Expansion**
  - Create additional student restrooms and a second teacher office.
  - Design dedicated space for the ABA clinic.
  - Build sensory safe zones accessible directly from each classroom to support de-escalation and individualized needs.
  - Add a third classroom built to accommodate students with intensive behavioral and sensory needs.
- **Dedicated Clinic/Partnership Space**  
Establish a dedicated space with a separate entrance to support partnerships with Early Steps and satellite diagnostic clinics (e.g., Easterseals), allowing families to access early intervention and evaluation services without disrupting core programming.

Of particular concern in her report, Lauren reiterated the dire need for expansion of the facilities at the school. There was significant discussion on the issue and Kathy Jackson and Mike Davis reminded the board of the original plan for the building called for the potential for another classroom pod. With Lauren's report validating the need for the expansion, the board directed Kathy Jackson and Justin Breidenstein to begin planning and design for the construction of the new classroom. Mike Davis, the original general contractor of the TLC building back in 2009-2010, offered to help in that process. Kathy and Justin will bring their recommendations to the board of The Arc of the St. Johns for consideration.

With the primary issues addressed and satisfied, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 PM.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by Neal Benson for Jennifer Akin, Governing Board Secretary.