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## Ocean Gate school board certified

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The Ocean Gate Board of Education recently earned board certification from the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Certification was granted Oct. 26 at the Atlantic City Convention Center after each of the five board members earned 18 credits, participated in a retreat and conducted a board self-evaluation.

"It just shows that there's a board of education in Ocean Gate that is willing to go the extra mile for the kids and do the right thing as a board of education member," said Superintendent Frank Vanalesti. "They have taken their own time to train themselves and gain expertise as board of education members."

He said the board is hands-on, and Ocean Gate is one of only 216 among more than 600 school districts in the state to obtain certification since 1992.

"It takes a lot of hours of dedication," said Vanalesti. "The board really made it their business to work with the association and get trained in every way possible."

Michael Corbett, who has been board president since December 2005, said that the goal of the board is "really to become better board members and learn more about the process" than obtaining board certification.

The board is comprised of Michael Corbett, Vice President Stephanie Jensen and members Peggi Law, Andrea Sorrentino and James Heeney.

Corbett said the classes that had a strong influence on the board included Board Member Ethics;

Setting Goals, which teaches how to set realistic goals and measure them; and Conducting Efficient Meetings, which teaches how to run a time-conscious meeting.

"It was a great honor," said Corbett about receiving the certification. "We didn't go into it with that in mind, but we're very pleased."

He said the board's recent goal was completing building renovations. The school's roof, heating system and flooring were replaced; and a long-standing goal of building a new playground was accomplished. In addition, he said, standardized test scores increased dramatically from previous years.

Board certification is good for three years before the board needs to be re-certified, according to Michael Yaple, public affairs officer for the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Ocean County school districts with the certification include Barnegat, Island Heights, Lakehurst, Ocean Gate and Ocean Township (Waretown). Monmouth County school districts include Asbury Park, Colts Neck, Fair Haven, Freehold Regional, Highlands, Holmdel, Middletown, Neptune and Spring Lake.

Yaple said board certification is "recognition of training toward a particular goal," and individual board members can earn credits by attending training programs, earning the rank of certificated board member, master board member or certificated board leader.

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