SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION
October Minutes
October 5, 2026
REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.
Added and Revised

I. CALL TO ORDER BY Mrs. Ross, PRESIDENT

II. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOTICE

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice and to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Sussex County Educational Services Commission has caused advance notice of this meeting by having the date, time and place published in the NJ Herald, Star Ledger, and at the County of Sussex Clerk's Office. A meeting notice was posted on the door at the Northern Hills Academy.

III. FLAG SALUTE

IV. MISSION STATEMENT

The Sussex County Educational Services Commission is a public agency that seeks to create partnerships with public and nonpublic schools and local communities. The Sussex County ESC develops and provides meaningful programs for young people with unique challenges and their families. Our goals are designed to shape our students into productive independent adults. Sussex County ESC provides opportunities for the professionals in our communities to stay current with their educational practices while supporting districts with both cost effective programs and a wide array of services.

V. OATH OF OFFICE

VI. ROLL CALL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District	Board of Director Member	Present	Absent
ANDOVER	ROBERT KOROSKI	X	
BYRAM	LAUREN PEDERSEN		X
FRANKLIN	KATHLEEN CLOHESSEY		X
HAMBURG	DAVID DREIFUS	X	
HARDYSTON	KELLY STOLL BALGATAS ***Revised***		X
KITTATINNY	DEBRA COOK	X	
LAFAYETTE	SUZANNE ROSS	X	
MONTAGUE	CAITLIN STATKUS	X	
NEWTON	JOANIE FAYE		X
OGDENSBURG	BRENDAN DONEGAN	X	
SPARTA	DR. ROQUE MARTINEZ	X	

STANHOPE	AVERY BADOLATO	X	
VERNON	STEPHANIE VECHARELLO	X	
WALLKILL VALLEY	GINA DESINO		X
WARREN HILLS	LISA MARSHALL		X

Also present for the meeting:
Alyssa Eisner from Green and Kelly Tranes from Hamburg

VII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Avery Badolato, Seconded by Caitlin Statkus, to approve the following minutes:

September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2026 Executive Meeting Minutes

Voice vote: Hamburg and Vernon abstain, all others present voted Aye.

VIII. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

It was a short period of time since the last meeting so there are not many updates.
We are currently still working on the purchase of the new building.
It has been a quiet few weeks for the beginning of the school year.

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

1. October NHA Breakfast Menu
2. October NHA Lunch Menu
3. Project Search Tour Flyer
4. Back to School Night Presentation
5. Back to School Night Speech
6. October Kindness Crew and Culture Calendar
7. October Student Calendar
8. Week of Respect Hand Out
9. Supporting Deaf Students Email
10. Free Webinar Email: Communication for All!
11. Understanding Generation Alpha Webinar Email
12. Job Alike Coffee Chats Email
13. ADHD Across Settings Webinar Email
14. Letter to Parents ***Added***

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive -
Personnel & Negotiations -
Buildings and Grounds / Finance -
Programs and Services / Policy -

XI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

NHA

The month of September and early October have held many activities for students including events with DOT Day, Custodian Day, Homemade Cookie Day, Back to School Night and other in school activities that have set the tone for this school year. As indicated to parents at Back to School Night and with staff at Opening Day our theme for the year is "Be the Space". This means Be the Space that the students need to be successful everyday. That also includes taking the pulse of the day everyday for students. We certainly rely on each other to Be The Space we need as colleagues. Focusing on SEL activities and holding students accountable for their actions has been the focus of the counseling staff. Academics and preparing for the literacy requirements has been the focus of the early elementary grades. Our middle school and high school students are partnering to create opportunities to use daily living skills, executive functions skills and career characteristics to help with jobs around the school. These jobs include attendance monitors, coffee cart assistants, Weekend Bag and Food pantry assistants and finally breakfast and lunch program assistants. Students have also been engaged in clubs and activities throughout their days. Staff have created gardening club, lego club, art club, walking club and social club. In each of these clubs curricular activities take place but the more fundamental skills of getting along, cooperating and team building are being modeled.

Project SEARCH September/October 2026

- The interns have been in the classroom working on hospital policy and procedures and other Project SEARCH curriculum
- Project SEARCH was well represented at the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce Business to Business breakfast at Perona Farms. This was a great opportunity to discuss Project SEARCH with others in the community for referrals of future interns and possible ways that our graduates can obtain employment in our community
- We were able to get out to Sussex County Day and visit the Atlantic Health Table and secure a nursing opportunity in Hackettstown for our intern interested in nursing. This is also a great opportunity to keep Project SEARCH in view for the future
- Project SEARCH attended the Back to School Resource Fair for High Point and distribute information about our great program
- The Project SEARCH 10th Anniversary was a huge success! It was held at Overlook Medical Center. It was great to see the community heads who support Project SEARCH and the former interns talking about the success they have had since graduating from the program
- Project SEARCH and Abilities now have 5 out of the 7 Interns from last year employees with 3 Interns hired at Atlantic Health! 2 more Interns to go for 100% employed!
- Project SEARCH was present at the High Point High School College and Health Resource fair. The high school students and staff were able to talk at our table and discuss future intern possibilities
- We are looking forward to attending The Community and Resource Expo, Project Self Sufficiency Health and Resource Fair and the Warren County Resource Fair in October- to give information on Project SEARCH in the community
- The interns are all ready to start their internships and have completed their first Employment Planning Meeting

XII. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Business Office continues to maintain a stable financial position while managing routine business operations, budgetary matters, and ongoing compliance requirements. Staff continue to monitor expenditures, revenues, accounts receivable, and purchasing activity to ensure that resources are being managed appropriately. The building acquisition remains a significant focus. Work continues toward closing, with planning underway for necessary renovations, facility improvements, and related capital expenditures. Staff are monitoring Chapter 192/193 and

IDEA-related billing and reimbursements to ensure that services are properly documented and revenue is collected in a timely manner.

Facilities Monthly Update

1. Cleaned out the conference room.
2. Moved all desktop computers not being used to the storage unit.
3. Monthly fire extinguisher inspection.
4. Monthly CO2 detector inspection.
5. Repair 2 classroom door locks.
6. Removed broken glass from the conference room door and requested new glass for replacement.
7. Playground inspection-Passed. Will be using an inspection form for documentation with the next inspection. Acquired form at SAIF school meeting.
8. General outdoor daily inspection, play areas, hand railings, walkways etc.
9. Set up MPR for weekly meetings and any special events as needed.
10. Completed all vector training.
11. Attended SAIF school safety meeting at Perona Farms.
12. Performed all daily building maintenance and cleaning during the day as required.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public present.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Brendan Donegan, **seconded by Caitlin Stakus**, to adopt the following resolution and enter into closed Executive Session, all voiced in favor, at 7:23 p.m.:

WHEREAS, The Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, PL 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Sussex County Educational Services Commission is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Sussex County Educational Services Commission, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey that a closed session will be held on October 5, 2026 for the purpose of ***student concerns.***

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the action of the board with regard to the above entitled subject matter shall be disclosed to the public at a later date and to the extent that the same is not prejudicial to the interests of the parties involved, and would not result in a possible invasion of their right to privacy.

Motion by Avery Badolato, seconded by Caitlin Statkus, to close the Executive Session, all voiced in favor at 7:31 p.m.

XV. BOARD ACTION AGENDA ITEMS:

A. PERSONNEL

1. **RESOLVED,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors accept the resignation of the following staff for the 2025-2026 school year:

NAME	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
VanClief, Kristen	PT Paraprofessional	10/1/2026	See attached email

2. **RESOLVED,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the termination of employment for Employee #32027345 effective 10/21/2026.

3. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the hiring of the following Substitute Teacher, for the **2026-2027 RSY program** not to exceed 28 hours per week:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Schmerber, Keely	Substitute Teacher	5	$25.60 per hour + $.50 for Bachelors and $.35 for Sub Cert = $26.45 per hour plus $5.00 per hour when subbing = $31.45 per hour	8/31/2026 - 6/30/2027	

MOVE: Brendan Donegan		2ND: Dr. Roque Martinez	
Andover Y	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg Y*
Hardyston Y*	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Montague Y
Newton	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Vernon Y*	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

*Abstained from Motion 2.
Motion passed

B. FINANCE

1. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the payment of the following bills:

Sept 30 Payroll $269,652.93

Sept 16-30 & Oct 1-6 (Fund 10) $144,570.60
Sept 16-30 & Oct 1-6 (Fund 20) $2,598.05

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached list of budget transfers for September 2026.

3. **RESOLVED,** that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following budget increase in the amount of $18,000 for September 2026.

4. **RESOLVED,** that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached Agreement with Equalis Group cooperative purchasing organization in partnership with Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission.

MOVE: Caitlin Statkus		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg Y
Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Montague Y
Newton	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion passed

C. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. **RESOLVED,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following professional development activities:

Staff Member	Date	Workshop	Location	Cost	Transportation/ Mileage/ Lodging Cost
Ellina Ryzhik	10/12/26	County Inservice for Counselors and CST Members	Sparta	$0	$0
Lindy Powell	9/23/26	Identity Verification Considerations for Employers	Virtual	$0	$0
Kianna Sawicki	9/29/26, 12/1/26, 1/19/27, 3/16/27	Community of Practice- BCBA	LRC East Orange, NJ	$0	64 miles each trip x $.47-= $30.08
Corrie Pisciottano	10/15/26	Special Education SLEDS	Virtual	$0	$0
Corrie Pisciottano	10/7/26	Staff Vacancy Submission	Virtual	$0	$0
Vanessa Bisco	10/12/26	Warren County Speech Association	Allamuchy	$125	TBD
Andrea Romano	10/14/26	Communication for All (Session 1)	Star Autism Virtual	$0	$0

Andrea Romano Lindy Powell	10/27/26	Employment Webinar Series: Policies Employers Must Have	Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	10/8/26	ADHD ACROSS SETTINGS: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HOME & SCHOOL	Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	10/8/26	What Every SPED Leader Should Put in Place Before Scaling AI	CASE Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	10/14/26	The IEP Roadmap: Understanding Your Child's Educational Plan	NJASEPS Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	10/29/26	From Testing to Services: How Evaluations Shape the IEP Basics	NJASEPS Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	12/1/26	When School Becomes a Struggle: Understanding and Helping Children with School Refusal/Avoidance	NJASEPS Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	1/14/27	Barred From the Classroom: Navigating School Clearance Requirements	NJASEPS Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	4/14/27	Tech as Tool, Not Crutch: Building Independence in Special Needs Kids Through Sensory-Based Learning	NJASEPS Virtual	$0	$0
Amanda Goldberg	10/26/26	Building Safe Schools-Strengthening Cardiac Procedures	NJDOE Virtual	$0	$0

2. **RESOLVED,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the submission of the Self Assessment Program to Determine Grades under the Anti Bullying Bill of Rights Act and Statement of Assurances.

3. **RESOLVED,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the submission of the Statement of Assurances for Para Professionals

4. **RESOLVED,** at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve ancillary agreements for the 2026-2027 school year with the following districts:

   Hardyston School District
   Franklin School District
   Newton School District
   Butler School District
   Stanhope School District
   Green School District

5. **RESOLVED,** at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Sparta Police for the 2026-2027 school year, as attached.

6. **RESOLVED,** at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve Memorandum of Understanding with SCCC Reunification for the 2026-2027 school year, as attached.

7. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve Social Worker Lily Passaretti as the HIB Coordinator for the 2026-2027 effective 10/15/26- June 30, 2027. ***Added***

8. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve Rachel Vorce as the Green Team Lead for the 2026-2027 school year effective 10/15/2026 through June 30, 2027. ***Added***

9. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the submission of the Warmth, Care and Hunger Project to Donors Choose in the amount of up to $845.00 as written by Teacher Amy Anjum. ***Added***

10. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors accept the donation in the amount of $842.51 from the Tepper Foundation through Donors Choose for the 2026-2027 school year as written by Teacher Amy Anjum. ***Added***

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MOVE: Caitlin Statkus		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg Y
Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Montague Y
Newton	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion passed

D. Buildings and Grounds

1. **RESOLVED,** that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the winter snow plowing proposals with Greco Landscaping & Lawn Maintenance as attached.

MOVE: Dr. Roque Martinez		2ND: Caitlin Statkus	
Andover Y	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg Y
Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Montague Y

Newton	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion passed

E. Policy

1. **RESOLVED,** that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the first reading of the following policy:

   P 5516 Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices (M)

MOVE: Caitlin Statkus		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg Y
Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Montague Y
Newton	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion passed

XVI. OLD BUSINESS:
None

NEW BUSINESS:
None

XVII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
No public in attendance

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting was called to adjourn by Caitlin Statkus and Seconded by Avery Badolato, all voiced in favor.

At 7:54 P. M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anthony DeFelice
Business Administrator / Board Secretary

Important dates:

NEXT BOARD MEETING
Regular Meeting
November 2, 2026
7:00pm
Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871