

**SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION**  
**December Agenda**  
**December 1, 2025**  
**REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.**

**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	JANE BYRON		
BYRAM	LAUREN PEDERSEN		
FRANKLIN	KATHLEEN CLOHESSEY		
GREEN	MARIE BILIK		
HAMBURG	ROBERT JONES		
KITTATINNY	DEBRA COOK		
LAFAYETTE	SUZANNE ROSS		
NEWTON	JOANIE FAYE		
OGDENSBURG	BRENDAN DONEGAN		
SPARTA	CHAD WOOD		
STANHOPE	AVERY BADOLATO		

SUSSEX/WANTAGE	TAYLOR DELY		
VERNON	STEPHANIE VECHARELLO		
WALLKILL VALLEY	TRACI DRESSNER		
WARREN HILLS	LISA MARSHALL		

## **VII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Motion by \_\_\_\_\_, Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, to approve the following minutes:

November 7, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Voice vote:

## **VIII. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

## **IX. CORRESPONDENCE**

1. December NHA Parent Calendar
2. December NHA Lunch Menu
3. NHA Winter Break Schedule Letter
4. Teacher Introduction Letter
5. Meet the Teacher Flyer
6. Thanksgiving Day Parade and Activities Worksheets
7. 11/20 NHA Winter Letter/December Calendar

## **X. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Executive - Met 12/1/2025 at 6:30PM

Personnel & Negotiations -

Buildings and Grounds / Finance -

Programs and Services / Policy -

## **XI. PRESENTATION OF PROJECT SEARCH SUCCESSES**

### **Project Search: Presentation**

Presentation of Awards for the Newton/Hackettstown Project Search Program

Mr. John O'Hara

Amy Anjum

Graduates of Program

Introduction of Key Personnel from Partner Agencies:

Abilities of NWNJ

Atlantic Health

## **XII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

November was a whirlwind month- so many student activities for different events. We started the month with the NJEA convention for staff and their professional responsibilities. We held an on campus inservice for staff the following week to discuss the role of a BCBA at Northern Hills Academy. Our staff engaged with our BCBA consultant to identify the role, the expectations and what their responsibilities would be to assist and support the BCBA in identifying/managing student behaviors. The key take away from this inservice was that teachers are really looking for more modeling in the classroom and how to analyze the data that is being collected. It was a win-win professional training.

Students created a Voices of Veterans display in the multi-purpose room. Students were tasked with identifying family members who may have served in the military, were asked to acquire as much information about them as possible and then to display the information on site. It was truly amazing to see how proud of their family members both students and parents were to participate in this curricular activity. One of the activities students benefited from was the activity of character traits for service personnel. They identified a list of traits that they felt was essential to protect our nation.

A shift midmonth changed to the focus of Thanksgiving. Students began preparing for our Thanksgiving Feast. It is a celebration of all of the things we are thankful for and allows our entire school the chance to "break bread." This provides us with the opportunity to connect as a community and to share. So many community agencies were involved in supporting this day. Ronetco Shoprite donated 5 turkeys and staff/families contributed side meals. Students baked in preparation of the dessert table.

Many activities went home with students to complete over Thanksgiving Break. Superintendent Romano, along with several key staff members from the Speech Department, created activities around the book, "Balloons over Broadway." Students listened, watched and created their own balloons to fly in the NHA Thanksgiving Eve Day Parade.

The Sparta Food pantry donated meals and the Weekend Backpack program donated both meal and personal hygiene items for students to go home with. Our students are interested in bagging the food through both programs in the future to support the donations.

## **XIII. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

The business office has been hard at work completing the preliminary audit work in anticipation of the 24/25 Comprehensive Annual Financial Audit. I have been in contact with our external auditors and have been sending them the necessary documents to get started. We have kicked off the ACH bill payment process and so far have seen great success with achieving bill payments on time. We will continue to increase ACH usage as well as monitoring processes to ensure accurate results.

On the healthcare front, I have met with our brokers and was informed that while our healthcare company names our plan as NJ Employee Health Plan or NJEHP, we are in fact not members of the state employee health plan. We actually left the state plan in 2014 and entered the Public Employer Trust. This is a very selective group in order to keep costs manageable. Additionally, we are locked into our current rates until June 30, 2026. When July rolls around our brokers are currently looking at a 20% increase in premiums which while significant it is still less than what the projected increases are for the state plan. We are in the best possible position as far as healthcare costs are concerned and the business office will continue to monitor the situation.

## **XIV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**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 hiring the following part-time paraprofessionals for the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork.

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Roger DeGraw	Paraprofessional	1	\$20.35	12/2/2025 - 6/30/2026	

2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the correction of step and salary of the following part-time paraprofessional for the **2025-2026 RSY Programs**:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Ellie Pearson	Paraprofessional	7	\$26.35	11/17/2025 - 6/30/2025	+.50 Bachelor's +\$.35 Sub Cert

3. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the correction of step and salary of the following certificated staff for the **2025-2026 RSY Programs**:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Nadine Wilson	Special Education Teacher	14 MA	\$81,700	12/9/2025 - 06/30/2026	Correcting step and salary based on document verification

4. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the hiring of the following part time non public nurses up to 28 hours a week for the **2025-2026 RSY Programs** pending completion of all paperwork.

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Karen Reid	PT NP Nurse	15	\$44.00 per hour	12/2/2025 - 06/30/2026	
Nancy Stiansen	PT NP Nurse	15	\$44.00 per hour	12/2/2025 - 06/30/2026	

5. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the job description for the position of Maintenance Class B Grounds and Equipment as attached.
6. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the hiring of Joe Garcia for the position of Maintenance Class B Grounds and Equipment at a salary of \$63,000 (prorated) for the **2025-2026 School Year** pending completion of all paperwork.
7. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the hiring of the following substitute teachers for the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Elizabeth Pearson	Substitute Teacher	7	\$31.35 per hour	12/2/2025 - 06/30/2026	+\$5.00 Sub Rate
Aidan Gagg	Substitute Teacher	1	\$26.05 per hour	12/2/2025 - 06/30/2026	+\$5.00 Sub Rate

8. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve an unpaid leave of absence for Employee Rec #1533 for the dates of 12/1/2025 to 2/1/2026.
9. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve an unpaid leave of absence for Employee SMID #40405850 for the dates of 12/30/2025 to 2/23/2026.

MOVE:		2ND:	
Andover	Byram	Franklin	Green
Hamburg	Kittatinny	Lafayette	Newton
Ogdensburg	Sparta	Stanhope	Sussex/Wantage
Vernon	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion pass      Yay / Nay

## B. FINANCE

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

November Payroll                      \$475,135.33

Nov 6-30 Dec 1-2 (Fund 10)	\$69,325.63
Nov 6-30 Dec 1-2 (Fund 20)	\$5,132.05

- RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached list of budget transfers for November 2025.
- RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following budget increase in the amount of \$2,003.75 for November 2025.
- RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Board Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report for October 2025 as attached.

MOVE:		2ND:	
Andover	Byram	Franklin	Green
Hamburg	Kittatinny	Lafayette	Newton
Ogdensburg	Sparta	Stanhope	Sussex/Wantage
Vernon	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion pass      Yay / Nay

### C. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- 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
Andrea Romano	11/26/25	Supporting Emotional Regulation in Neurodiverse Children: Considerations and Strategies For Setting Children Up For Success	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Nancy Daly	12/8/25	When Math Begins With Play, Everything Changes	Ed Web Virtual	\$0	\$0
Naome Dunnell	1/29/26	Veteran PIC Meeting	NJDOE Trenton, NJ	\$0	\$85.50
Lindy Powell	11/20/25	Health and Welfare Plan Compliance	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Nancy Daly	12/2/25	Sentence Writing: The Overlooked Element of the Science of Reading_	Ed Web Virtual	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	12/2/25	2025: End of Year HR Checklist	Virtual CDK	\$0	\$0

2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the ancillary agreements for the 2025-2026 school year with the following districts:

Byram Township Public School District

3. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Abilities of Northwest NJ for Project Search 2025-2026 as attached.
4. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the submission of the HIB Grades Self-Assessment for the 2024-2025 school year as attached.
5. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the field trip in accordance with Policy 2340 as indicated below:

Teacher Requesting	Date	Location	Rationale	Cost Per Student	Cost Per Staff	Transportation
Tessa Bedkowski	12/10/25	Newton Shopping Center	CBI trip for Holiday Shopping	0	0	\$338
Stephanie DeFelice Chloe DeLuca	TBD	TBD	CBI trip for Holiday Shopping	0	0	TBD

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Motion pass      Yay / Nay

#### **XV. OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**XVI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting was called to adjourn by \_\_\_\_\_  
and Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, all voiced in favor.

**At P. M.**

**Important dates:**

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

**Regular Meeting**

**January 12, 2026**

**7:00pm**

**Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871**