

SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION
March Minutes
March 2, 2026
REGULAR MEETING OF FULL REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY 7:00 P.M.
Revised and Added

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	
GREEN	MARIE BILIK	X	
HAMBURG	ROBERT JONES		X
KITTATINNY	DEBRA COOK	X	
LAFAYETTE	SUZANNE ROSS	X	
NEWTON	JOANIE FAYE	X	
OGDENSBURG	BRENDAN DONEGAN	X	
SPARTA	DR. ROQUE MARTINEZ	X	
STANHOPE	AVERY BADOLATO	X	

SUSSEX/WANTAGE	MIKE GALL	X	
VERNON	STEPHANIE VECHARELLO	X	
WALLKILL VALLEY	MIKE DAVINA	X	
WARREN HILLS	LISA MARSHALL	X	

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

District	Representative Assembly Member	Present	Absent
HAMPTON	DR. CRAIG HUTCHESON		X
HIGH POINT	DANA GALL	X	
HOPATCONG	JAYSON CITTRICH	X	
SUSSEX TECH	GUS MODLA		X
MONTAGUE	CAITLIN STATKUS	X	
FRANKFORD	KEVIN NEWMAN		X
FREDON	ARNE OLSEN	X	
LENAPE VALLEY	MIKE ROSSI	X	
SANDYSTON	MELINDA TANZOLA	X	
NORTH WARREN	TBD		X
HARDYSTON	CLARISSA MAROTTA	X	
FRELINGHUYSEN	KIM NEUFFER	X	

VII. BUDGET

1. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the 2026-2027 budget for submission to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools as follows:

General Fund	\$11,999,653
Special Revenue	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
Total	\$12,039,653

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the workshop, meeting, and travel budget for the 2026-2027 school year as per the attached Document A, and Professional Services budget for the 2026-2027 school year as per the attached Document B.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

MOVE: N/A		2ND: N/A	
Hampton	High Point Y	Hopatcong Y	Sussex Tech
Montague Y	Frankford	Fredon Y	Lenape Valley Y
Sandyston Y	North Warren	Hardyston Y	Frelinghuysen Y

Motion Passed**VIII. AUDIT PRESENTATION**

Matt Wielkotz to present the 2024-2025 audit report.

IX. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Avery Badolato, Seconded by Kathleen Clohessey, to approve the following minutes:

January 12, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2026 Executive Meeting Minutes

Voice vote: 1 Abstain Warren Hills, All other present Aye.

X. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Cancelled February Meeting

Working on budget with and without purchase of a new building.

A lot of work is going on in the background.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

1. February NHA Parent Calendar
2. February NHA Lunch Menu
3. March NHA Parent Calendar
4. March NHA Lunch Menu
5. 100th Day of School Fundraiser
6. Chocolate Fundraiser Flyer
7. Project Search Career Connection Newsletter
8. Innovation Station Flyer
9. Project Search Thank You Letter
10. Egg Hunt Donation Flyer

11. Coaches Corner Flyer ***Added***

XII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive -
Personnel & Negotiations - Met 2/10/2026 at 4PM
Buildings and Grounds / Finance - Met 2/23/2026 at 4PM
Programs and Services / Policy -

XIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

NORTHERN HILLS ACADEMY

February was filled with activities for students. Teachers really know how to spread the love and showcased how random acts of kindness are essential to self esteem while building self confidence.

PROJECT SEARCH

- The Project SEARCH statewide meeting was held at Newton Hospital. Atlantic Health Team members Tara Larkin, Lisa Santoro and SCESC John O'Hara worked on having all of the hired PS graduates at Newton Hospital recognized for their service to the hospital. One of our graduates, Nick, has a 5 year anniversary this month working in Environmental Services. What a great accomplishment! Nick's mom attended and was "over the moon" excited that her son was recognized for his anniversary and a huge supporter of Project Search. They also recognized the other graduates who are presently employed in the Hospital. Patsy with Patient Services, Andrew with Food Services-couldn't make it, Evan with Environmental Services, Kristen with the Radiology Department and Sam with Environmental Services. All successful graduates of Project Search and now are successfully employed in the community! The current interns were also in attendance and successfully answered questions for the group. President of Atlantic Health Bob Adams spoke to all of the statewide Project Search representatives. This was an amazing opportunity for our program to be showcased.
- The interns are actively discussing the different tasks that they are responsible for with each other in their internships and asking questions while making suggestions for their next internship department. The excitement is building for their next internship coming soon.
- The supervisors/mentors are much more comfortable assigning new tasks to our interns to further their growth and work experience. Materials and Food Services have different tasks regularly which is great.
- All intern evaluations have been completed and the interns have been progressing in their departments. The mentors have become more comfortable giving more "honest" evaluations which is so important for us to be able to work on what is needed and to place the interns in gainful employment after graduation.
- The PS instructor is posting pictures on the Atlantic Health website and the Atlantic Health staff have also posted pictures constantly letting me know how much they love the program.
- Our interns continue to serve the Rolling Resilience snack cart to the hospital staff. This started 2 years ago and it was something the interns didn't feel comfortable doing at first. The interns this year all feel comfortable serving the cart individually! This is great to see that their independence is building more.
- The Nourish and Flourish nursing internship is going well. The staff find it very helpful and the intern really enjoys it.

- The interns are setting up a book cart in different genres (which is awesome) to use in patient services for delivery of books to the different wards. It is a new internship that is opening to us.
- John O'Hara gave a tour of the program to a member of the Mount Olive Child Study team. They have 2 students that are possibly interested in attending the program in September. Mount Olive loves Project SEARCH- they utilize the program every chance they get.
- John O'Hara was able to visit The office of Vocational Rehabilitation in Phillipsburg. They were kind enough to have me present to the staff in person and virtually. I gave them a better understanding of what Project SEARCH entails and was able to answer great questions. This was a success - I really wanted everyone to put a face to all of my emails and phone conversations. I left a stack of flyers that Atlantic Health made with a QR Code for our intern application. It was also nice for me to meet everyone in person. We are working on having me come once a month on a day where they have more foot traffic - to discuss our program with clients in person. If this isn't possible-most visits are virtual- I will join the virtual meeting. Reena George was very accommodating and pleasant to work with.
- As far as marketing the program, Mr. O'Hara is setting up a time to meet with the Sussex County Library. I was able to visit and meet with an assistant and am in the process of setting up an appointment with the manager. I am hoping to set up a table once a week before some classes that are offered- so I can hand out our flyer and explain what Project SEARCH is all about.
- John O'Hara is working to reschedule a visit with the Phillipsburg School District to observe their transition program to see who would be appropriate for our program. We have to reschedule because of the weather.
- A tour was given to the LDTC, BCBA, and a teacher from the Sparta School District. We currently have a student from their district thriving in our program. They wanted to see him in this internship and learn more about PS so they can promote us more to their district. They were amazed at the students' progress and are thinking that they may have a student to send us in September that they feel can greatly benefit from our program. They are also going to see if they have another student for us.
- Finally we held a virtual meeting with the North Warren School District Child Study Team to discuss the program in detail. They were very impressed with what we do here in Newton and are looking for time to come on a tour to view the program.

NON PUBLIC/ITINERANT

Superintendent Andrea Romano has been collaborating with the NJDOE on the changes that are going to happen for Non Public programming at the state level. Ms. Romano has met with the NJDOE Office of Finance and the Office of Non Public Programming. She has also met the ESC Council of Superintendents and the ESC/SSSD's and Jointure Commission representatives of child study to discuss the impact of the new legislation.

Consultation meetings were held with Sparta School District to determine the use of the additional IDEA grant monies. At the request of the Sussex County DOE Office we reviewed how the funds were going to be spent on student services.

Programming continues and paperwork collection distribution occurs as new students join the programs. In this next month we will be making a switch to begin paperwork collection for the 2026-2027 school year.

XIV. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Business Office has been working on the development of the FY 2026–2027 budget, which has been prepared in accordance with guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education and applicable provisions of New Jersey Administrative Code Title 6A. Budget priorities include maintaining fiscal stability, addressing rising salary and benefit costs, supporting program growth to meet member district demand, and planning for capital needs. The Commission is also actively exploring the potential acquisition of an additional facility to accommodate expanding programs and enrollment, and preliminary financial analyses are being conducted to evaluate funding options, long-term sustainability, and operational impact. Additionally, we have been working on reviewing time and attendance tracking systems to help with payroll and employee tracking efficiencies.

Facilities Monthly Update

This month Ray and I have completed the following:

Replacement of faucet assembly in Bears den.

Assembled new chair cart for MPR

Repaired several door closers on classroom doors

Applied ice melt Daily as needed

Arraigned for Poust heating to replace 2 thermostats in rooms 101 and 105

Arraigned for Poust heating to repair heat in Bears den and room 113, will be here 2/27 to complete repair

Replaced broken sink faucet in room 116 bathroom

Installed shelves in MPR closet

Replaced door closer on room 116

All daily cleaning and supply inventory, waiting on current order

Replaced door stop in room 115 bathroom

Went next door to acquire several desks, chairs and other items for new incoming students

Cleaned and organized supply room 110

Repaired several student desks

XV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public in attendance

XVI. 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
Téa Fairweather	PT Paraprofessional	1/30/2026	See attached
Aline Schimitz	PT Office Clerk	3/26/2026	See attached
Jackie Homberg	Administrative Assistant to Principal	3/4/2026	See attached
Michelle Pietrodangelo	PT Paraprofessional	3/3/2026	Verbal

Kaylina Luciano	PT Paraprofessional	2/27/2026	See attached
Karen Miller	PT Paraprofessional	2/27/2026	See attached

2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors hiring the following Full-Time Administrative Assistant to the Principal for the remainder of the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
TBD	FT Administrative Assistant to Principal	Not to exceed \$58,000	TBD - 6/30/2026	Prorated

3. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors hiring the following Part-Time Office Clerk for the remainder of the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
TBD	PT Office Clerk	Not to exceed \$25 per hour	TBD - 6/30/2026	

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 Paraprofessionals for the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork.:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Keri Bridgewater	PT Paraprofessional	7	\$25.85 per hour	3/3/2026 - 6/30/2026	Associates Degree + \$.35 per hour
Carlito Jones	PT Paraprofessional	2	\$20.40 per hour	3/3/2026 - 6/30/2026	
Kylin Keene	PT Paraprofessional	1	\$20.35 per hour	5/1/2026 - 6/30/2026	Seasonal
Rosemary Carabello	PT Paraprofessional	2	\$20.40 per hour	3/9/2026 - 6/30/2026	*Added*

5. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the hiring of the following certificated staff for the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Kianna Sawicki	BCBA	MA 5	\$67,900 Prorated	3/3/2026 - 6/30/2026	This position is not identified by the NJDOE

6. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following certificated staff as a Substitute Teacher for the **2025-2026 RSY Program** pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Emily Brennan	Speech Therapist	No additional salary	1/15/2026 - 06/30/2026	

7. **RESOLVED**, the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approved the amendment to motion number 4 to add P/T Paraprofessional Rosemary Carabello.

Motion #7

MOVE: Lisa Marshall		2ND: Joanie Faye	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Newton Y
Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y	Sussex/Wantage Y
Vernon Y	Walkkill Valley Y	Warren Hills Y	

Motion Passed

Personnel

MOVE: Stephanie Vecharello		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Newton Y
Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y	Sussex/Wantage Y

Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley Y	Warren Hills Y	
----------	-------------------	----------------	--

Motion Passed

B. FINANCE

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

Jan & Feb Payroll	\$885,794.24
Jan 13-31 & Feb (Fund 10)	\$74,621.26
Jan 13-31 & Feb (Fund 20)	\$481.99

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached list of budget transfers for January 2026.
3. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following budget increase in the amount of \$10,000 for January 2026.
4. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Board Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report for November and December 2025 as attached.
5. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors has determined that it is in the best interest of the Commission to acquire a building to support current and future programmatic and operational needs; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has identified a property suitable for purchase and occupancy; and

WHEREAS, renovations and improvements are necessary to prepare the facility for Commission use; and

WHEREAS, the Commission maintains available fund balance within the General Fund (Fund 10) that may lawfully be appropriated for capital purposes in accordance with New Jersey Statutes Annotated Title 18A and applicable regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors has determined that utilizing available General Fund balance for the acquisition and renovation of the facility is fiscally prudent and in the long-term financial interest of the Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Sussex County Educational Services Commission, as follows:

1. The Board hereby authorizes the appropriation and transfer of up to \$3,000,000 from unassigned General Fund balance (Fund 10) for the purpose of:

- Purchasing real property and related closing costs; and
 - Funding renovation, alteration, and improvement costs necessary to place the facility into service.
2. The transferred funds shall be recorded in the appropriate capital outlay accounts consistent with the Commission’s approved budget and the Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts for New Jersey school districts and educational services commissions.
 3. The Superintendent and Business Administrator are hereby authorized to take all necessary action to effectuate the transfer, execute contracts, and process payments in accordance with:
 - Public School Contracts Law;
 - Applicable bid threshold requirements; and
 - All regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education.
 4. All expenditures shall remain subject to certification of available funds pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:19-1.
 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.
 6. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors accept the 2024 - 2025 annual audit report and presentation from Wielkotz & Company. ***Added***

MOVE: Brendan Donegan		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Newton Y
Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y	Sussex/Wantage Y
Vernon Y	Walkill Valley Y	Warren Hills Y	

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
Corrie Pisciotano	1/22/26	Course Configurations & Creating Custom Courses in Vector LMS	Webinar/Vector Solutions	\$0	\$0

Corrie Pisciotano Lindy Powell	2/12/26	Background Screening Compliance	Online Accurate Background	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	1/27/26	THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE SERIES: Evaluation	Online NJDCF	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	1/29/26	Data Integration Options for Vector LMS	Webinar/Vector Solutions	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	2/24/2026	Harassment and Discrimination 2026	Online Laddey, Clark and Ryan	\$0	\$0
Chloe DeLuca	3/13/26	8th Annual Innovations in Special Education Technology	12 Centre Dr, Monroe, NJ	\$195	\$71.44
Corrie Pisciotano	3/26/26	ID Management 101: When/How to Merge, Change, Delete in NJ SLEDS	Webinar NJ SLEDS	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	3/27/26	Learning, Leading, and Innovating with AI: How NJ Vanguard Districts Are Shaping AI in Education PSEL Standards 4, 6 and 10	Online NJPSA	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	4/29/26	Stay In Sync: Understanding NJ SLEDS Validations	Online NJ SLEDS	\$0	\$0
Naome Dunnell	3/6/26	2026 NJ Pyramid Model State Leadership Team Annual Conference	Zoom The New Jersey Pyramid Model State Leadership Team	\$0	\$0
Kristen Sibbles Ellina Ryzhik	2/19/26	The Pre-Referral Process: Procedures for Supporting Students with Academic and Behavioral Concerns.	Online Webinar Vanderbilt University	\$0	\$0
Kathleen Grennan	2/19/26	RPI Demystified: Unlocking the Power of the WJ V Proficiency Scores	Online Pearson	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	3/5/26	Part Two: Navigating the Intersection of NJTSS and Students with Special Needs	Online Rutgers	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/17/26	9th Annual Special Education Summit: Capacity Catalysts: Tools	Online FEA	\$195	\$0
Nick Short *Revised* Rachel Vorce *Added*	3/6/26	Overview of Disabilities and Behavior Management & Paraprofessional Roles and Responsibilities and Promoting Student Independence	North Warren	\$0	TBD TBD
Rebecca Nitka	5/12/26	Treatment of Childhood Apraxia of Speech	Farmstead Golf & Country Club	\$100	TBD
Cristina D'Amico	4/6/26	2026 NJ Pyramid Model State Leadership Team Conference	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Cristina D'Amico	3/27/26	Workshop 2: Integrating Related Services into Preschool General Education Classrooms	Virtual	\$0	\$0

2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the internship plan for Social Worker Wade Dendy as attached through June 30, 2026.
3. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the job description of BCBA, Board Certified Behavior Analyst as attached.
4. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the 12 month staff 2026-2027 Holiday Calendar as attached.
5. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the updated Board of Directors/Representative Assembly Meeting Dates to account for the date change for the April Board Meeting from April 6,2026 to April 13, 2026 due to the school being closed for Spring Break as attached. ***Revised***
6. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the joint transportation agreement with Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for field trips for the 2026-2027 school year as attached.

MOVE: Dr. Roque Martinez		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Newton Y
Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y	Sussex/Wantage Y
Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley Y	Warren Hills Y	

Motion Passed

D. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES **Added**

1. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the spring landscaping and lawn maintenance proposal with Greco Landscaping & Lawn Maintenance as attached. ***Added***

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

Motion Passed

XVII. OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Please complete your Ethics Disclosure Forms

XVIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public present

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

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

At 7:50 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony DeFelice
Business Administrator / Board Secretary

Important dates:

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Regular Meeting

April 13, 2026

7:00pm

Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871