

# SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION

November Minutes

November 3, 2025

REGULAR MEETING 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	JANE BYRON		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	CHAD WOOD		X
STANHOPE	AVERY BADOLATO	X	

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

## VII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

October 6, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Voice vote: Green abstained, 7 voted in favor.

## VIII. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Good start to the school year with hiring, discussed the building purchase status, the appraiser has completed a walkthrough with the architect.

## IX. CORRESPONDENCE

1. November NHA Parent Calendar
2. November NHA Lunch Menu
3. Sparta Community Food Pantry Fundraising Dinner Flyer
4. Transportation Memo
5. Thank you letter to DeGroot Family Farms for the donation of mums for Back to School Night.
6. Thank you letter to Selective Insurance Company for the donation of school supplies
7. Fall Festival Flyer
8. Trunk or Treat Flyer
9. Week of Respect Flyer
10. November Letter From The Superintendent **\*Added\***

## X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive - Met Virtually 10/28/2025  
 Personnel & Negotiations - None  
 Buildings and Grounds / Finance - None  
 Programs and Services / Policy - None

## XI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

At Northern Hills Academy, we dedicated the entire month of October to celebrating the Week of Respect. This initiative involved a series of engaging and meaningful activities. We began the week on Monday with Pajama Day, encouraging students and staff to embrace the theme of respect in a cozy way. Tuesday featured Team Sports Day, where everyone expressed their team spirit.

On Wednesday, we shared plenty of laughter during Wacky Hair Day, followed by Hat Day on Thursday. We concluded the week on Friday with Superhero Day, honoring the heroes among us.

The classrooms have been focusing on academics, social skills, and life skills through participation in a range of engaging activities. Many of our students have been responsible for delivering the morning announcements each day, which include the Pledge of Allegiance, the lunch menu, a lighthearted joke, and a positive message. Furthermore, a number of students are enjoying art class on Tuesdays, working on projects using a variety of materials, including crayons, watercolors, and markers. They exhibit enthusiasm and a strong desire to create artwork that they aspire to present in an upcoming art gallery.

We concluded the month of October with a Halloween celebration and a trunk or treat event. The Speech Team successfully organized this fun-filled day, where staff members and families decorated the trunks of their vehicles and distributed treats to excited students! We had 10 families participate in Trunk or Treat and 22 families showed up for the event. That is one successful family engagement activity!

Students have been taking the FALL NJSLA Tests. Staff has trained on the NJSLA and office staff have been training on NJSLEDS. Other professional development includes district-wide training on October 13th. Staff participated in training on crisis prevention and handle with care. Andover Public School paraprofessional staff participated in the training. Several speech therapists attended the Sussex Warren Speech Association training while CST/School counselors attended the School Counselors training.

For November, our staff is working on activities around Voices for Veterans to celebrate Veteran's Day. We have many members of our students' families that we are honoring that day.

NHA has had 8 student tours in the building.

### **Project Search**

- October is gone-WOW we are moving along fast! The interns finished up their month of "classroom only" and are doing a great job in their internships!
- The interns are continuing with the Project SEARCH curriculum learning about proper workplace behavior and relationships. Our instructor Amy is doing an awesome job!
- We now have Cardiac Rehab and Diabetes Care participating in our program. We have interns that are interested in these fields. This is such a great opportunity for all-we are very excited for this opportunity.
- The interns are separating from their regular school regiment to the workplace regiment and realizing that a full day on the job is exhausting and we call it "a grind".
- Atlantic Health had a Disability Mentor Day on October 22nd. The interns explored some departments that are not available to us at this time with hopes of adding them to our program. As with every year- the interns loved the Helipad and the Medevac - they were able to sit in the helicopter and feel what it would be like as a patient or pilot . A free lunch was provided!
- The interns love running the Rolling Resilience snack cart which helps the interns with hospital navigation, communication skills and makes the program more visible throughout the hospital- the hospital staff absolutely loves seeing our interns!
- I was able to attend Back to School Night at NHA to promote Project SEARCH with our instructor Amy. It was great to meet the parents of the awesome students that attend NHA.
- I participated in a Career Fair at Project Self Sufficiency to help promote NHA and Project SEARCH. There was a good turn out and I was able to see parents from all over Sussex County for future clients.
- I also participated in a Career Fair for SCARC at Sussex County Community College-I was able to meet up with former PS students and parents who attended and catch up with them a bit.
- We have a tour of our program scheduled for Monday November 3rd in the morning.
- We are working on participating with "Soothing Paws" the company who visits the patients with therapy dogs to help with our communication skills.
- We have a new secretary at the front desk in Newton promoting our program all throughout Newton. She gives out our brochure with the QR Code to people she knows and organizations she belongs to. That is GREAT! Marketing efforts also continue through emails, phone calls and word of mouth.

- Renee from DVR came to do a 2 day observation of our program and was very impressed with how the program is run and thrilled with the success and maturity of our former interns who now work for Atlantic Health.
- Our Project Search Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for November. All of our business partners and community agency partners meet with PS Staff and SCESC to discuss the program.

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

Over the past month, the Business Office has continued to focus on maintaining efficient operations across all financial and administrative areas of the Commission. We are currently working on preliminary audit work for the 2024/2025 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and are looking for the auditors to come in to complete the work towards the end of November to early December. We are expecting them to be here for about a week to complete their work.

On the personnel side, our new business office staff member Erin has been a welcome addition. She is learning the processes and will begin taking a more active role with accounts payable. The business office recently had a staff meeting in which we discussed process efficiency and improvements. We also discussed the issues we are having with the USPS and mailing of checks. Our solution is to start implementing an electronic payments process governed under the Board approved policy 6470.01 Electronics Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification. This will ensure that bills are paid in a timely fashion and reduce the risk of losing checks in the mail.

Preliminary revenue projections and expenditure trends are being analyzed to guide administrative recommendations for the future. I am also keeping a close eye on the projected large increase of Chapter 44 healthcare costs. I believe we are in a stable financial position to weather that storm.

## **XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public present

## **XIV. 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
Melissa Cascone	Paraprofessional	10/15/2025	See attached email
McKensie Hughes	Paraprofessional	11/1/2025	See attached email
Christopher Nappa	FT Teacher	10/29/2025	See attached email
Barbara DeLorenzo	Paraprofessional	12/23/25	

2. **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.

Ellie Pearson	Paraprofessional	7	\$25.50	TBD	+\$ .50 Bachelor's
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Kaylina Luciano	Paraprofessional	3	\$20.55	11/3/2025 - 6/30/2026	
Esther Galan	Paraprofessional	4	\$20.70	11/4/2025 - 6/30/2026	
Tabitha Sabol	Paraprofessional	1	\$20.35	11/17/2025 - 6/30/2026	<b>*Added*</b>

3. **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 Programs**:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Nadine Wilson	Special Education Teacher	14 MA +15	\$83,950	12/9/2025 - 06/30/2026	May be able to start earlier pending release from current employer

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

Motion passed

## B. FINANCE

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

October Payroll	\$475,135.33
Oct 8-31, Nov 1-5 (Fund 10)	\$110,446.63 <b>*Revised*</b>
Oct 8-31, Nov 1-5 (Fund 20)	\$1,987.46 <b>*Revised*</b>
2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached list of budget transfers for October 2025.
3. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Board Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Report for July, August, and September 2025 as attached.

MOVE: Avery Badolato		2ND: Kathy Clohessey	
Andover	Byram	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Newton Y
Ogdensburg Y	Sparta	Stanhope Y	Sussex/Wantage
Vernon	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
Lindy Powell	10/21/25	How to Deal with Challenging Employees	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Naome Dunnell	10/22/25	School-University Partnership Powerhouse Conference	William Paterson University	\$0	\$14.90
Naome Dunnell	10/28/25	Small Steps to Learning II: Food, Fitness, and Fun	Sussex Co Fairgrounds	\$0	\$2.97
Jackie Homberg	10/15/25	Assertiveness for Receptionists	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Rebecca Nitka	12/11/2025	AAC Conference: Implementing for Effective Functional Communication	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Stephanie DeFelice	10/13/2025	Whole Child in Action: Learning, Wellness and Belonging	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Jackie Homberg <i>*Added*</i>	11/7/2025	How to Handle Emotionally Charged Workplace Situations	Virtual	\$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:  
Knowlton School District

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

Motion passed

#### D. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

1. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the submission of the Comprehensive Maintenance Plan & M-1, as attached.

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

Motion passed

**XV. OLD BUSINESS:**  
None

**NEW BUSINESS:**  
None

**XVI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**  
No public present

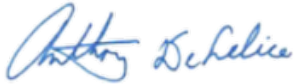
#### **XVII. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**At 7:30 P. M.**

**Important dates:**

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony DeFelice  
Business Administrator / Board Secretary

#### **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

**Regular Meeting**  
**December 1, 2025**  
**7:00pm**

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