SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION
November Agenda
November 2, 2026
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	ROBERT KOROSKI		
BYRAM	LAUREN PEDERSEN		
FRANKLIN	KATHLEEN CLOHESSEY		
HAMBURG	DAVID DREIFUS		
HARDYSTON	CLARISSA MAROTTA		
KITTATINNY	DEBRA COOK		
LAFAYETTE	SUZANNE ROSS		
MONTAGUE	CAITLIN STATKUS		
NEWTON	JOANIE FAYE		
OGDENSBURG	BRENDAN DONEGAN		
SPARTA	DR. ROQUE MARTINEZ		

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

VII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by _____, Seconded by _____, to approve the following minutes:

October 5, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2026 Executive Meeting Minutes

Voice vote:

VIII. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

1. November NHA Breakfast Menu
2. November NHA Lunch Menu
3. November Student Calendar
4. Nonpublic Lunch & Learn Flyer
5. Thank you note from parent of student
6. Learning Disability Workshop Webinar Link
7. Yes Your Child Can Work Webinar Flyer
8. NJ Division on Civil Rights Training Offerings
9. Email from Superintendent about the Bend, Oregon tragedy
10. Shoprite Donation Letter
11. New School Funding System for Schools - Parent Survey

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive - Met virtually 10/22/2026
Personnel & Negotiations -
Buildings and Grounds / Finance -
Programs and Services / Policy -

XI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent attended several off campus meetings. CST Directors meeting, Superintendent Roundtable and ESC Council meeting were all meetings that were off site and coverage needed to be found. These meetings are essential to attend so that districts understand that SCESC has a presence and can offer services when needed. The focus of the ESC Council meeting again was to discuss non-public

changes, marketing ESC services across the state collectively and to discuss legislative changes with cooperative purchasing.

The focus of the Superintendent Roundtable included the skyrocketing costs of healthcare and discussing the opportunities that Sussex County schools have identified to mitigate costs. The CST meeting had a representative from Schenk, King, Price to discuss hot topics with special education. We also reviewed accountability of preschool disabled programs which may be an opportunity for SCESC in the building expansion.

October has brought so many activities to all of our programs. At Northern Hills Academy, we had Fall Fest with Virago Music, Red Ribbon Week and our Annual Trunk or Treat. Staff planned activities having to do with pumpkins- cooking, STEM activities, gardening activities, and a variety of science experiments. Field trips included walking to both Dunkin Donuts and the Food Pantry.

Students at Northern Hills Academy are working with the Weekend Backpack program and filling the bags for food and snacks to go home. A student leader is coordinating the activities with the school nurse. Then he works with peer volunteers to set up the dozens of bags that go home with students weekly. The leadership skills that this student is acquiring has been so beneficial to his confidence.

Ms. Carolyn's classroom has instituted two job opportunities on site for students. A volunteer made a mailbox for our program that allows students/staff to write letters to each other and mail on campus. Students are then able to deliver the mail to the classrooms or programs at school.

We had multiple tours of Northern Hills Academy. This has resulted in 1 new student starting. Additional slots will be filled as staff becomes more available.

A visit to 6 Gail Court was made by the new Admin Asst and custodial staff to review what equipment in the building may want to be salvaged before the current tenets move completely out. Mr. Joe Garcia and Mr. Landon Johnson were able to identify and label more equipment.

The first quarter of non-public programming has been completed. Submissions of all non-public reports were provided to each of the districts inclusive of nursing. The fall reports have been provided to the districts and all requirements for the first submission of services for reimbursement has been provided to the business administrators.

Project SEARCH October 2026

● The interns finished up their month of "classroom only" and are doing a great job in their internships- Learning the world of work.
● The first Employment Planning Meeting (EPM) of the year was completed-the interns did a great job.
● We had our first Steering Committee Meeting and were able to discuss the different needs the interns have and a unique opportunity for one of our adult female interns to possibly split time between Hackettstown Hospital and Newton Medical Center with Nursing/Radiology. There is a hiring need in the Radiology Department in Hackettstown.
● Met with the Radiology Department staff at Hackettstown Medical Center to discuss one of our interns future plans for an internship.
● Project SEARCH was well represented at the Warren County Transition Resource Fair Saturday the 3rd. It was a slow crowd but an agency was able to call a parent on the phone and have me explain Project SEARCH to them. So that was a success!
● Project SEARCH attended the Sussex County Community College/SCARC Community Resource Fair at Sussex County Community College. A financial company asked if I could do an info session with people if they needed it!

● A member and graduate's parent is a member of the Sussex County Disability Service Council and asked if I would be willing to speak to the members at one of their meetings to better spread the Project SEARCH program to the community.
● Project SEARCH and Abilities now have 6 out of the 7 Interns from last year employees with 4 Interns hired at Atlantic Health! 1 more Interns to go for 100% employed-we are so thankful to be partnered with such a great organization like Atlantic Health.
● Project SEARCH was present at the Project Self Sufficiency Community Resource Expo. This is a great event that we attend each year and are able to give out the needed program info to the community
● Atlantic Health had a Disability Mentor Day. The interns explored some departments that are not available to us at this time with hopes of adding them to our program. Due to the rain we were not able to see the helipad - that is usually the highlight of the day but was a good lesson to learn that sometimes the schedule changes. And of course lunch is always a treat!
● We can already see the interns improving since day one working toward independence.
● Our marketing continues through Amy, our instructor sending out our newsletter with great info for all the community to read along with our emails and phone calls to the various school district child study team members.
● We conducted a professional development day for open educators in Sussex, Morris and Warren County. This was a successful session and let the districts that joined us see the complete program instead of just hearing and reading about Project SEARCH

XII. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Business Office continues to oversee routine financial operations, including payroll, accounts payable, purchasing, and district billing, while monitoring budget expenditures and revenues. Planning and coordination related to the acquisition and preparation of the Commission's second school building remain ongoing. PTO accrual reports were distributed to all employees to provide updated leave balances.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by _____, **seconded by** _____, to adopt the following resolution and enter into closed Executive Session, all voiced in favor, at 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 ***matters of personnel and attorney/client privilege.***

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 _____, seconded by _____, to close the Executive Session, all voiced in favor at p.m.

1. **RESOLVED,** the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approves the agreement with David Rubin, Esq. for special counsel services to conduct an independent employment investigation at the hourly rate of $225.00 per hour.

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

Motion pass Yay / Nay

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
Koppenaal, Kim	PT Nonpublic Teacher	10/9/2026	See attached email
Dempsey, Kaitlin	PT Paraprofessional	12/23/2026	See attached email

2. **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 Employees, for the **2026-2027 RSY program** not to exceed 28 hours per week:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Ell, Ashley	PT Speech Therapist	6	$37.25	8/31/2026 - 6/30/2027	Was full time then resigned and came back as a part time employee
Orlikowski, Asher	PT Paraprofessional	1	$20.50	11/2/2026 - 6/30/2027	

3. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the hiring of the following Full-Time Employee for the **2026-2027 RSY program**:

NAME	POSITION	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Johnson, Landon	Admin Assistant to Principal	$53,000 Prorated	10/9/2026 - 6/30/2027	Was PT Paraprofessional and moved to FT Admin Assistant.

4. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the leave of absence for employee number 87741348 from 10/15/2026 - 11/13/2026 using 6 sick days and 1 personal day.

5. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the leave of absence for employee number 19970408 from 10/12/2026 - 11/13/2026 using 4 sick days and 3 personal days.

6. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the leave of absence for employee number 20000419 from 10/12/2026 - 11/13/2026 using 4 sick days.

MOVE:		2ND:	
Andover	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg
Hardyston	Kittatinny	Lafayette	Montague
Newton	Ogdensburg	Sparta	Stanhope
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:

October Payroll	$514,049.40
Oct 7-31 & Nov 1-3 (Fund 10)	$285,230.71
Oct 7-31 & Nov 1-3 (Fund 20)	$9,066.16

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

3. **RESOLVED,** that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following budget increase in the amount of $1,000 for October 2026.

4. **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 2026 as attached.

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

Motion pass Yay / Nay

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
Dawn DiLascio	10/12/26	DEAF 101	Virtual	$0	$0
Kathleen Grenan	10/12/26	Instructional Strategies for K-5: Building Academic Vocabulary	Virtual	$0	$0
Andrea Romano	12/3/26 2/22/27 4/22/27	Restraint and Seclusion Tier 3	NJDOE LRC Trenton, NJ	$0	$0
Kianna Sawicki	12/3/26 2/22/27 4/22/27	Restraint and Seclusion Tier 3	NJDOE LRC Trenton, NJ	$0	TBD
Rachel Vorce	12/3/26 2/22/27 4/22/27	Restraint and Seclusion Tier 3	NJDOE LRC Trenton, NJ	$0	TBD
Andrea Romano	11/20/26	Workshop: Dangerous Students	Council of Special Education	$150	$0
Andrea Romano	12/3/26	Workshop: Special Situations - Special Ed	Council of Special Education	$!50	$0
Andrea Romano	3/10/27-3/13/27	CEC Conference	Columbus., Ohio	$500	Lodging - $422.44
Andrea Romano	10/29/26	Are Our Investments Working? How Outcomes-Based Contracting Connects Spending to Student Results	Virtual Ed Webnet	$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 HIB grade self assessment with a score of 56/78.

3. **Resolved,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following field trips in accordance with Policy 2340.

Teacher Requesting	Date	Location	Rationale	Cost Per Student	Cost Per Staff	Transportation
Tessa Bedkowski	12/8/2026	Newton Shopping Center, Newton, NJ	Community based instruction	TBD	TBD	TBD

4. **RESOLVED,** at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors accept the donation of $1,500 from RoNetco Shoprite.

5. **RESOLVED,** upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve Erika Hathaway, an undergraduate student at Centenary University to complete 4 hours of observation at Northern Hills Academy for course DP-3013-N-Psych High & Low Incid Except.

6. **RESOLVED,** that the following appointment be made for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027:
   WHEREAS, there exists a need for an Bilingual School Psychologist Consultant, and,

   WHEREAS, the funds are available for these purposes, and,

   WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 requires that the resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Professional Services" without competitive bids must be publicly advertised.

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

   Stephanie Vitale be appointed to provide School Psychologist Services at a rate $55 an hour for hourly services, $240 for Initial or reevaluation assessment, $150 for annual reviews, $55 for evaluation planning meeting and $160 for additional – per case for case manager (initials and reevaluations only) for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

   This appointment is made without Competitive bidding as "Professional Services" under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5. because such services are recognized professions licenses and regulated by law not allowing for competitive bids.

   Notice of Award of Professional Services

   The Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors have awarded the following FY 2026-2027 contract for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 without competitive bidding for professional services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 at its November 2, 2026 regular meeting:

   Stephanie Vitale - Bilingual School Psychologist

   This contract and board resolution authorizing this professional service is available for public inspection in the Office of the Board Secretary.

7. **RESOLVED,** that the following appointment be made for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027:
WHEREAS, there exists a need for an School Psychologist Consultant, and,

WHEREAS, the funds are available for these purposes, and,

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 requires that the resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Professional Services" without competitive bids must be publicly advertised.

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

Stephanie Vitale be appointed to provide School Psychologist Services at a rate $55 an hour for hourly services, $240 for Initial or reevaluation assessment, $150 for annual reviews, $55 for evaluation planning meeting and $160 for additional – per case for case manager (initials and reevaluations only) for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

This appointment is made without Competitive bidding as "Professional Services" under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5. because such services are recognized professions licenses and regulated by law not allowing for competitive bids.

Notice of Award of Professional Services

The Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors have awarded the following FY 2026-2027 contract for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 without competitive bidding for professional services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 at its November 2, 2026 regular meeting:

Marissa Geary - School Psychologist

This contract and board resolution authorizing this professional service is available for public inspection in the Office of the Board Secretary.

8. **RESOLVED,** that the following appointment be made for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027:
WHEREAS, there exists a need for a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultant, and,

WHEREAS, the funds are available for these purposes, and,

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 requires that the resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Professional Services" without competitive bids must be publicly advertised.

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

Stephanie Vitale be appointed to provide School Psychologist Services at a rate $140 an hour for hourly services, $285 for Initial or reevaluation assessment, $150 for annual reviews, $55 for evaluation planning meeting and $160 for additional – per case for case manager (initials and reevaluations only) for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

This appointment is made without Competitive bidding as "Professional Services" under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5. because such services are recognized professions licenses and regulated by law not allowing for competitive bids.

Notice of Award of Professional Services

The Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors have awarded the following FY 2026-2027 contract for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 without competitive bidding for professional services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 at its November 2, 2026 regular meeting:

Barbara Mehringer - Owner, The Spoken Path LLC - Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

This contract and board resolution authorizing this professional service is available for public inspection in the Office of the Board Secretary.

9. **RESOLVED,** that the following appointment be made for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027:
WHEREAS, there exists a need for a School Psychologist Consultant, and,

WHEREAS, the funds are available for these purposes, and,

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 requires that the resolution authorizing the award of contracts for "Professional Services" without competitive bids must be publicly advertised.

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

Margaret Dubonowich be appointed to provide School Psychologist Services at a rate $55 an hour for hourly services, $285 for Initial or reevaluation assessment, $150 for annual reviews, $55 for evaluation planning meeting and $160 for additional – per case for case manager (initials and reevaluations only) for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000 for the period of November 2, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

This appointment is made without Competitive bidding as "Professional Services" under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5. because such services are recognized professions licenses and regulated by law not allowing for competitive bids.

Notice of Award of Professional Services

The Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors have awarded the following FY 2026-2027 contract for a maximum amount not to exceed $100,000

without competitive bidding for professional services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 at its November 2, 2026 regular meeting:

Margaret Dubanowich - School Psychologist

This contract and board resolution authorizing this professional service is available for public inspection in the Office of the Board Secretary.

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

Motion pass Yay / Nay

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:		2ND:	
Andover	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg
Hardyston	Kittatinny	Lafayette	Montague
Newton	Ogdensburg	Sparta	Stanhope
Vernon	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion pass Yay / Nay

E. Policy

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

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

MOVE:		2ND:	
Andover	Byram	Franklin	Hamburg
Hardyston	Kittatinny	Lafayette	Montague

Newton	Ogdensburg	Sparta	Stanhope
Vernon	Wallkill Valley	Warren Hills	

Motion pass Yay / Nay

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by _____, **seconded by** _____, to adopt the following resolution and enter into closed Executive Session, all voiced in favor, at 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 ***HIB investigation.***

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 _____**, seconded by** _____, to close the Executive Session, all voiced in favor at p.m.

1. **RESOLVED,** that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors votes to affirm, reject, or modify the results of the investigation.

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

Motion pass Yay / Nay

XVII. OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

XVIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

XIX. 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
December 7, 2026
7:00pm
Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871