

SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION

April Minutes

April 7, 2025

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

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. 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	CHRISTOPHER BILIK	X	
HAMBURG	ROBERT JONES	X	
HARDYSTON	CLARISSA MAROTTA	X	
KITTATINNY	DEBRA COOK	X	
LAFAYETTE	SUZANNE ROSS	X	
NEWTON	JOANIE FAYE	X	
OGDENSBURG	BRENDAN DONEGAN	X	

SPARTA	CHAD WOOD / LEIGH MCMICHAEL	X	
STANHOPE	AVERY BADOLATO	X	
SUSSEX TECH	GUS MODLA		X
VERNON	STEPHANIE VECHARELLO		X
WALKILL VALLEY	TRACI DRESSNER		X

Also in attendance: Kim Gallagher, Principal NHA

VII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Kathleen Clohessey, Seconded by Jane Byron, to approve the following minutes:

March 3, 2025 Regular Meeting of Full Representative Assembly

Voice vote: 9 voted in favor with 1 abstention. Motion is carried.

VIII. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

CBA agreement has been worked out and we are hopeful for approval from the bargaining unit. Thank you to Gil for his assistance and support with the salary guides and a smooth transition. Great collaborative effort and teamwork. Excited for the opportunity to purchase the building next door to the school.

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

1. April Parent Calendar
2. April NHA Lunch Calendar
3. Parent Thank You Letter
4. Flowers For Mothers Day Flyer & Sign up sheet
5. Resource Fair Flyer
6. NHA Annual Autism Walk Flyer
7. Concerned About What's Happening in Special Education Event Invitation
8. NHA Teacher Appreciation Week Email
9. Bricks, Bots, and Beakers Open House Flyer
10. Autism & Law Enforcement Publication
11. Non-Public Newsletter

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel & Negotiations - Next meeting- Virtual April 15, 2025
Buildings and Grounds / Finance - Met virtually 4/3/25
Programs and Services / Policy - Next meeting Virtual April 15, 2025

XI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Northern Hills Academy

The month of March at Northern Hills Academy was all about celebrating our love of reading through Read Across America Week/Month. This year, we were thrilled to see an overwhelming outpouring of support from many members of our community, including local political leaders, parents, law enforcement officers, and a member of the

Department of Education who helped make the event even more memorable for our students. These guest readers read stories to our students, helping to inspire a love for reading! To commemorate the week, we organized a spirit week with the following themed days:

- Monday- Hats Off to a Week of Reading, Wear your favorite hat!
- Tuesday- Exercise Your Mind, Wear workout clothes!
- Wednesday- PAWSitively Wild About Reading, Wear something with animal print!
- Thursday- Ready Across America, Wear RED, WHITE and BLUE!
- Friday- Snuggle Up and Read, Wear Pajamas!

On March 13th, our staff members engaged in a professional development presentation led by Cara Faris, one of our student's parents, who presented on American Sign Language (ASL). The session was both informative and interactive, providing our team with the chance to learn a variety of signs that will enhance our communication with students. With Cara's expertise and enthusiasm, our staff left the presentation feeling empowered and excited to incorporate ASL into their daily interactions, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

Our school community came together to participate in an Autism Walk, celebrating neurodiversity and fostering awareness and inclusion. This event brought together students, staff, and parents, all of whom took part in the walk, alongside engaging in a variety of crafts and sensory activities designed to be both fun and educational. The event highlighted our commitment to creating an inclusive environment where all individuals are celebrated for their unique abilities. Each year the Autism Walk has become a cherished tradition within the Northern Hills community.

Project Search

- The interns finished their 2nd rotation and are a little nervous to start their third rotation in April. The interns continue actively discussing the different tasks that they are responsible for with each other in their internships at both Newton and Hackettstown locations and asking questions while making suggestions for their next internship department.
- All intern evaluations have been completed and the interns have been progressing on target and the observations have been discussed and all are pleased with their observations and understand that they will need to work on a few things in their last rotation. Communication between interns/mentors has gotten better- now it will be interesting to see if they carry this important skill over to their next department with all new staff- all new internships for the third rotation are set.
- The PS instructors continue to post pictures on the Atlantic Health website and the HR department has commented how great they look.
- Our interns in Newton are continuing to serve the Rolling Resilience snack cart to the hospital. The staff loves seeing our interns come to their departments and are very receptive to our interns and engage in conversation with us.
- Sparta student has completed the application for September
- Our Newton instructor continues to work on and send out our monthly Newsletter each month with the "goings on" in Newton and Hackettstown Project SEARCH!
- John O'Hara is working with AHS to conduct training for mentors and any other interested hospital staff in Newton and Hackettstown to better equip them with information and techniques that they may utilize without interns
- An Assessment Day committee meeting was held in Newton to discuss the upcoming Assessment Day for future interns.

- John O'Hara has attended the Statewide Project Search meeting in Red Bank to keep up with the new trends being implemented by different sites.
- John O'Hara has attended the AHS round table community meeting for the Nursing Department. It was a nice panel of former nurses asking us questions about the nursing staff at AHS- I believe it went very well.
- Assessment Day invites have been sent out and accepted for April 11th.
- Marketing is continuous through email and phone contact.
- John O'Hara has attended and ran a table handing out flyers and business cards at the "Future Fair" - a transition fair, at Mt. Olive High School to promote Project SEARCH on March 27th From 5:30 pm -8:00 pm and will be attending another Transition Fair at the Calais School in April.

Non Public and Public Itinerant

Non Public newsletter has been distributed to all of the parents of students in our non public schools. It is that time of year where the non-public schools are trying to schedule all of their Spring Assessments so that determinations can be made for students eligibility for Fall 2025 eligibility under Chapter 192. Our teachers are working closely with the non public schools to ensure this occurs.

XII. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

As we progress through the 2024-2025 school year I would like to update you on some key areas related to the business operations of the district. Overall expenditures have remained within the expected thresholds. We will continue to monitor spending closely to ensure alignment with our goals for the year. We have recently submitted and received approval of our budget by the County Department of Education and look forward to successful implementation of that budget for the next school year.

As for facilities, we are in the preliminary stages of looking into the possibility of purchasing the building next door to our school with the goal of either expanding or moving to that location. We attended an introductory meeting with the current building owner to express our interest and he seemed very receptive to working with us. The next step would be to schedule a walk through of the property to gain a better understanding of the layout. The business office will keep the board updated as the process progresses.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Board did not enter Executive Session

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 from a part-time position of the following staff: ***Revised***

NAME	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
------	----------	----------------	-------

Stacey Segond	PT Paraprofessional	3/26/25	See attached letter
---------------	---------------------	---------	---------------------

2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors rescind the following part-time para-professionals contracts for the 2024-2025 regular school year program:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Ashley Harper	PT Paraprofessional	9	\$25.50/hr	4/7/25	Never started work

3. **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 up to 28 hours a week, for the 2024-2025 regular school year program pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Kaitlin Dempsey	PT Paraprofessional Non-Public	1	\$20.00/hr	4/8/25 - 6/30/25	As allocated in grant funds

4. **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 2024-2025 regular school year program pending completion of all paperwork at a prorated salary: ***Revised***

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
John Leiby	Social Worker	5MA	\$64,650	4/8/25 - 6/30/25	Position approved in March Meeting
Anna Plysyk	Physical Therapist	15MA +30	\$81,400	4/8/25 - 6/30/25	

5. **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 as a substitute teacher for the 2024-2025 regular school year program:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
------	----------	------	--------	----------------	-------

Kim Rossi	Substitute Teacher	15	Additional \$5.00 per hour	3/24/25- 06/30/25	
-----------	--------------------	----	----------------------------------	-------------------	--

6. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the memorandum of agreement with the Educational Services Employees' Association from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2028, as attached.

MOVE: Kathleen Clohessey		2ND: Joanie Faye	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg Y	Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y
Newton Y	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Sussex Tech	Vernon	Wallkill Valley	

Motion passed

B. FINANCE

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

March Payroll	\$450,784.68
March (5-31) (Fund 10)	\$24,404.83
March (5-31) (Fund 20)	\$591.25

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached list of budget transfers for March 2025.
3. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following budget increase in the amount of \$133,757.02 for March 2025.
4. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the submission of the 2025 Safety Grant application.

MOVE: Joanie Faye		2ND: Avery Badolato	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg Y	Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y

Newton Y	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Sussex Tech	Vernon	Wallkill Valley	

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 Cost
Andrea Romano	3/13/25	MTSS Interventions for Autistic Students	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	3/18/25	Visual & Performing Arts Course Roster Submission	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	3/18/25	Struggling with Student Behavior: 3 Proactive Strategies to Save your Sanity Confirmation	Virtual Character Strong	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	3/18/25	Gather and Grow: "Pot of Gold Strategies for SPED and Mental Health—Where Every Mind Matters!"	Virtual Character Strong	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	3/20/25	Are Your Services and Supports Becoming Restrictive? Rethinking LRE as Special Education Leaders	Virtual Goalbook	\$0	\$0
Nancy Daly	3/24/25	Fluency in Early Mathematics across the P-3 Continuum	Virtual NJ Dept of Education	\$0	\$0
Nanette Turner	3/28/25	Progress Monitoring and Data Based Decision	TCNJ	\$0	\$76.52
Naome Dunnell	3/28/25	Differentiating Literacy Instruction to Meet the Needs of ALL Learners	Sitnik Theater in the Lakeland Center	\$0	\$0
Chloe DeLuca	3/31/25	Google Educator Certification Program	Virtual	\$225	\$0
Andrea Romano Corrie Pisciotano	4/2/25	Human Intelligence 2025 Events	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Veronica Cruz	4/3/25	2025 ECHO Autism Communities Symposium	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/3/25 5/5/25	The Power of Legal: A 6-Part Series of Practical Issues	Virtual NJASA	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/8/25	What Special Education Administrators Need to Know About the Legal Landscape for Transition Services in 2025 and Beyond	Virtual Goalbook	\$0	\$0

Andrea Romano	4/9/25	SSN Meeting "Implementing Smartphone and Social Media Restrictions: Using the Power of Curiosity And A Collaborative Approach to Engage the Whole School Community"	Virtual School Culture and Climate	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/15/25	The Power of Behavioral Parent Training for ADHD	Virtual ADD	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano Lindy Powell Jennifer Buckalew	4/16/25	Legal One: School Law for Administrative Assistants	Virtual	\$150	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/17/25	Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Best Practices: A Defensible Process, Special Education Considerations, and Emerging Challenges	NJDOE Virtual	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/23/25	Are My Student's ADHD Accommodations in Danger? Fallout from the Department of Education Changes."	Virtual Attitude	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/30/25	"Understanding AuDHD Burnout: How Neurodivergent Masking Sparks Stress, Exhaustion."	Virtual Attitude	\$0	\$0
Kim Gallagher	5/6/25	Confronting Workplace Conflict	Virtual Pryor Plus Learning	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	5/21/25	"Solidifying Gains Through End of Year Reflection: What Administrators, Teachers, and School Mental Health Professionals Can Do"	Virtual School Culture and Climate	\$0	\$0
Anthony DeFelice	6/4/25 - 6/6/25	NJASBO Annual Conference	NJASBO Atlantic City	\$500	\$289
Andrea Romano Kim Gallagher John O'Hara	4/8/25	What Special Education Administrators Need to Know About the Legal Landscape for Transition Services in 2025 and Beyond	Goalbook Virtual	\$0	\$0

2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the revised 2024-2025 School Calendar, as attached.
3. **RESOLVED**, upon recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Peter Siner Google Trainer as a vendor and add to the approved vendors list.

MOVE: Brendan Donegan		2ND: Kathleen Clohessey	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg Y	Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y
Newton Y	Ogdensburg Y	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y
Sussex Tech	Vernon	Wallkill Valley	

Motion passed

D. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- 1. RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the capital improvement plan agreement for a total flat fixed fee of \$6,000 with Parette Somjen Architects, LLC for the 2025-2026 school year, as attached.
- 2. RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve Karl Environmental to complete the Right to Know Survey in the amount of \$795.

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

Motion passed

XVI. OLD BUSINESS:

Reminder to complete the School Ethics Disclosure Forms
Reminder to complete the CSA Evaluation by April 20, 2025

NEW BUSINESS:

Graduation is June 13th

XVII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

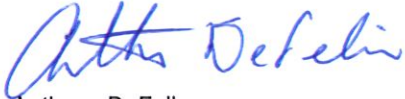
No public participation

XVIII. 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 7:35 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony DeFelice
Business Administrator / Board Secretary

Important dates: NEXT BOARD MEETING

Regular Meeting
May 5, 2025
7:00pm
Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871

REMINDER
Full Representative Assembly Meeting
June 2, 2025
Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871
7:00pm