

SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION

January Minutes

January 12, 2026

REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

****Added & 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. 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	ROQUE MARTINEZ <i>*Revised*</i>	X	
STANHOPE	AVERY BADOLATO	X	

SUSSEX/WANTAGE	TAYLOR DELY		X
VERNON	STEPHANIE VECHARELLO	X	
WALLKILL VALLEY	BRIAN SILIPENA	X	
WARREN HILLS	LISA MARSHALL		X

VII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Joanie Faye, Seconded by Debra Cook, to approve the following minutes:

- December 1, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- December 1, 2025 Executive Meeting Minutes

Voice vote: All present Aye

VIII. PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS:

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

1. January NHA Parent Calendar
2. January NHA Lunch Menu
3. Breakfast with Santa Flyer
4. December Updates Email
5. Parent Donations Letter
6. School Board Recognition Month Flyer
7. From Measurable Goals to Making Progress Workshop Flyer
8. Preparing for the NJ CAT Assessment & Tips to Ensure DDD Budget Accuracy Webinar Flyer
9. Special Child Health Services Workshop Flyer
10. Meet Us In The Middle Webinar Flyer
11. The Arc of New Jersey Calendar of Events
12. MSFSO January Newsletter
13. Family Resource Network News
14. Planning for Adult Life Intel Report
15. Previous Staff Obituary

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Executive - Met 1/7/2026 at 4:00PM
- Personnel & Negotiations -
- Buildings and Grounds / Finance - Met 1/7/2026 at 4:30PM
- Programs and Services / Policy -

XI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The last two months have been increasingly busy with preparing for the new year and all the required timeframes that go with that. The Superintendent completed evaluations of staff, nurses and the mid-year reviews of all custodians, administrative assistants and administrators. State reports have been completed for all required information. Corrective Action Plan on Attendance has been reviewed and information for 2025-2026 HIB/Restraint and Seclusion have been filed. Currently the Administrative Office is working on the Civil Rights Data Collection Report.

The superintendent met with the NJDOE- Early Childhood Educator staff to ensure that the Preschool Program initiative is being implemented with fidelity and taking into consideration all compliance requirements. They were impressed with our program, our training of the PreSchool Instructional Coaches and the efficiencies we have been able to put in place for our participating school districts. We have been reviewing our programming with the itinerant districts to ensure they are happy with the services we are providing.

The Administrative Team met to review the proposed rates for the 2026-2027 school year after an analysis was completed of other ESC's and competitive special needs schools. Marketing materials have been updated to reflect changes to programs and/or provide clarity to current programs. A letter about the cost saving efforts of utilizing Sussex County ESC in comparison to private special education schools/agencies will be shared with the rate sheet to all districts.

The budget process has begun. Staff are working on building their wishlist items and each committee (technology, curriculum, professional development, safety) as well as each department will submit their proposals to be reviewed.

Northern Hills Academy

During the winter months, students at Northern Hills Academy have been actively engaged in various enriching activities. December was a particularly enjoyable month, highlighted by events such as Grinch Day, Flurries of Fun, and several spirited themed days. Students participated in a range of activities including baking, creating ornaments, and engaging in winter-themed gross motor activities, along with numerous projects.

A key event in December was our Breakfast with Santa, held on Saturday, December 13th. Many staff members generously volunteered their time to prepare breakfast items such as eggs, sausage, and pancakes for students and their families. Students also enjoyed holiday-themed crafts and activities, and had the opportunity to take memorable photos with Santa. The hallways were beautifully decorated with festive decorations, creating a warm and joyful atmosphere throughout the day, which was filled with laughter and joy.

In addition to our weekly food bags, the Sparta Food Pantry generously provided holiday meals to many of our families. The Weekend Backpack program also provided generous donations of food and hygiene products. We concluded December with a visit from Schoolcraft, which offered complimentary school photographs for our students. Ronetco Shoprite once again partnered with our students to provide each family with a \$25.00 gift card.

The students and staff came back refreshed and rejuvenated in January looking forward to a fresh start to the school year. January is a month that everyone resets. Staff works to reset behaviors for students and expectations for students.

The students have set up a coffee cart and are exploring the opportunities of setting up a business. They have ordered all of the supplies to make coffee. They spent several weeks in December ordering supplies, receiving the

supplies, counting the supplies and stocking our shelves. The students have been exploring sanitary concerns about serving coffee. They are wearing aprons and gloves. They are learning about the safety of the equipment and how to make the coffee. So before January, the students served 2 free days of coffee to staff. What a treat as they were training.

Now in January, students are working on the staff ordering the coffee cart selections and collecting the money. Students have set up times to meet with the business office to turn in the collected money and how to continue the business. They are working on a name, uniforms and keeping our business afloat.

We have a scheduled inservice day with Attorney Marc Zitomer to review policy and procedures around new proposed policy and regulations. In addition, the inservice day will include opportunities for staff to collaborate with paras on changes to student programs, academic supports and behavioral data collection.

Project Search

The interns have all completed their first rotation at the hospital and their mentors have filled out the 10 week evaluations and all have done a great job! The 2nd Employment Planning Meetings have also been completed. Counselors and parents are very impressed with what the program is doing for their child so far.

Program Director John O'Hara I was able to contact a Project Search graduate and a current intern and had them attend the SCESC Board meeting. The graduate talked about how PS was instrumental in her getting employed in the Radiology department for Atlantic Health and the current intern talked about his internship in Materials and how much he loves it.

Food Services has asked us to do a few different projects for them and were very pleased with the outcome. They were so pleased that they put together a lunch for all of the interns and instructors to say thank you. Our Project Search classroom was chosen again to be the designated room for the hospital's annual holiday luncheon. The hospital utilizes our room as the dessert room. They offer patients, staff and visitors all a free lunch with deserts. Very kind of them to offer this!

Our program continues to expand with locations wanting to participate within the hospital. We have 2 new internships! Cardiac Rehab has opened up their department to us 5 days a week and Patient Volunteer Services has also opened their department to us. The Volunteer Services is going to be a great experience for our interns to develop their communication skills. The interns will be showing patients where to go in the hospital and offering patients books to read from the rolling book cart.

Marketing efforts are being put into high gear for the 2026-2027 intern selection process. The marketing department for Atlantic Health made a new Project Search poster with updated pictures to hang in the hospital. The Project Search instructor and hospital staff continue to post pictures of the interns contributing to the hospital during their internship.

Before the holiday break each department had a little celebration to thank their interns. The hospital is GREAT to us! We had a successful tour in December for a potential adult intern and another planned for January for a potential student intern. We are all set to offer virtual and in-person presentations to inform districts and parents about project Search services.

Finally, the interns have all started in their 2nd internship departments and all are learning new tasks and building on what was learned in their previous internship.

Non Public/Itinerant Programs

Public itinerant continues to expand services and offerings. Some of the requests that SCESC has been unable to help with include speech therapists and BCBA's. These are currently areas that we are exploring for the next budget year. Some other ESC's have shared program expansion opportunities that include Service Dog Services that have gained popularity and are cost effective. Our team of administrators continue to explore additional opportunities under itinerant

Non Public State meetings have begun again in earnest as a Bill is awaiting the Governor's signature to change the structure of billing for services under Non Public. The superintendent has been essential in meeting with the NJDOE -Office of Non Public programs and Non Public Directors across the state to support this change in funding process. The change that is anticipated has no initial funding set up for services to be provided, the funding that will be set up will be on a per service basis rather than a per student allotment and the reimbursement to public school districts will be in a different structure. However, the NJDOE has not shared information with public school districts, has not met to review any of the process changes and has yet to be signed by the Governor for an implementation date of July 1.

PreSchool Programming

A second Preschool Instructional Coach (PIC) began in January. SCESC covers 19 classroom programs for instructional coach and 3 preschool intervention specialist positions in 7 school districts. Both PIC's are working on their schedules and ensuring they are meeting the timelines in each district. The superintendent has met with them and followed up with administrators in the assigned locations so that schedules can be reshaped for the remainder of the year. Training in curricular support for Creative Curriculum Gold, Teaching Strategies, TPOT and the ECERS has begun.

XII. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and happy new year. In the business office we have been working with the auditors and have recently concluded the testing part. We received our draft audit report and I am happy to report that we did not receive any findings or recommendations. That gives me confidence in the direction we are heading as we prepare for budget season. We are now working on closing out the calendar year and all that it entails. We will be working on sending out the appropriate tax documents to our employees. In the upcoming months the business office will be very busy with preparing the budget for the next school year. We will work closely with our vendors as well as the County Office to ensure that the process goes smoothly.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Joanie Faye, **seconded by** Robert Jones, to adopt the following resolution and enter into closed Executive Session, all voiced in favor, at 7:21 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 **January 12th regarding finance.***

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 Suzanne Ross, **seconded by** Joanie Faye, to close the Executive Session, all voiced in favor at 7:43 p.m.

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: ***Added***

NAME	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Amanda Hobough	Paraprofessional	12/23/2025	See attached letter
Christina Apostolou	Paraprofessional	12/30/2025	See attached email

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.

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Syrina Bruno	Paraprofessional	1	\$20.35	1/5/2026 - 6/30/2026	
Gianna Celi	Paraprofessional	1	\$20.35	1/5/2026 - 6/30/2026	Currently seasonal moving to permanent part-time paraprofessional No change to salary

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

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Nadine Wilson	Special Education Teacher	14 MA +15	\$83,950	12/9/2025 - 6/30/2025	

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 custodial assistant for the **2025-2026 RSY Program**:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
Amanda Conklin	Part-Time Custodial Assistant	1	\$21.60 per hour	12/29/2025 - 06/30/2026	

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
Emily Brennan <i>*Added*</i>	Speech Therapist	1 MA	\$63,200	1/15/2026 - 06/30/2026	Will need CCC supervision

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

December Payroll	\$465,727.11
Dec 3-31 Jan 1-12 (Fund 10)	\$291,552.26 <i>*Revised*</i>
Dec 3-31 Jan 1-12 (Fund 20)	\$2,488.69

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the following budget increase in the amount of \$2,500 for December 2025.

3. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the SCESC Program and Tuition rates for the 2026-2027 school year as attached.

4. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors authorize the Superintendent and Business Administrator/Board Secretary to explore and investigate the purchasing of property and building located at 6 Gail Court Sparta, NJ 07871.

MOVE: Lauren Pedersen		2ND: Robert Jones	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin	Green
Hamburg Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y	Newton Y
Ogdensburg	Sparta Y	Stanhope Y	Sussex/Wantage
Vernon Y	Walkill Valley Y	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
Andrea Romano	1/13/2026	<u>Workers Comp Reporting Training and Refresher</u>	Virtual NJSIG	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	1/13/2026	<u>Workers Comp Reporting Training and Refresher</u>	Virtual NJSIG	\$0	\$0
Anthony DeFelice	1/13/2026	<u>Workers Comp Reporting Training and Refresher</u>	Virtual NJSIG	\$0	\$0
Amanda Goldeberg	1/13/2026	<u>Workers Comp Reporting Training and Refresher</u>	Virtual NJSIG	\$0	\$0
Kelly Bansamer	1/13/2026	<u>Workers Comp Reporting Training and Refresher</u>	Virtual NJSIG	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	12/11/25	CDK Personnel: Position Control Roster	Virtual CDK	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	12/18/25	Me, Myself and AI	Virtual ASAP Diversified Communications	\$0	\$0
Dawn DiLascio	12/5/25	Managing Student Learning Experiences Who Suffer Neuropsychiatric Conditions	National Employment 360 Inc Essex Valley School	\$0	\$28.67
Andrea Romano	03/2/26	DLM Training 1	Virtual NJDOE	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	03/10/26	DLM Training 2	Virtual NJDOE	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	03/19/26	DLM Training 3	Virtual NJDOE	\$0	\$0

Andrea Romano	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
Wade Dendy	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
John Leiby	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
Dawn DiLascio	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
Kristen Sibblies	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
Ellina Rhyzik	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
Kathleen Grennan	2/12/26	Conducting FBA's and BIP's	Virtual LRP Webinars	*\$295 one price for all staff	\$0
Cathy Kohansby	1/13-1/15/2026	TEACHERCON: HUMAN INTELLIGENCE	Virtual BREATHE FOR CHANGE	\$0	\$0
Cristina D'Amico	6/2-6/4/2026	TPOT Reliability Training	Virtual	\$375	\$0
Andrea Romano	2/12/26	Help! How Can I Use Assessment to Drive Classroom Instruction?	Virtual CEC	\$0 with membership	\$0
Andrea Romano	2/19/26	Counter Geniuses: See the Able, Not the Label	Virtual CEC	\$0 with membership	\$0
Andrea Romano	1/29/26	Emotionally Healthy Teachers: Strategies to Help You and Your Students	Virtual CEC	\$0 with membership	\$0
Dawn Kuncken	3/13/26	ADHD Across the Lifespan: Evidence, Interventions, and Innovation Through Current and Emergent Trends	Virtual Hackensack Meridian JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute	Not to exceed \$185	\$0
Lia Kondos	3/13/26	ADHD Across the Lifespan: Evidence, Interventions, and Innovation Through Current and Emergent Trends	Virtual Hackensack Meridian JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute	Not to exceed \$185	\$0
Added					
Carolyn Ackerson Chloe Deluca Knighton Laura Steiner Stehanie DeFelice Tessa Bedkowski	03/2/26	DLM Training 1	Virtual NJDOE	\$0	\$0
Carolyn Ackerson Chloe Deluca Knighton Laura Steiner Stehanie DeFelice Tessa Bedkowski	03/10/26	DLM Training 2	Virtual NJDOE	\$0	\$0
Carolyn Ackerson Chloe Deluca Knighton Laura Steiner Stehanie DeFelice Tessa Bedkowski	03/19/26	DLM Training 3	Virtual NJDOE	\$0	\$0

Lindy Powell	1/15/26	CDK	Virtual	\$0	\$0
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2. **RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve Danielle Petrosky, Paraprofessional at NHA, to complete 8 hours of observation of teaching staff through the County College of Morris Teaching Pre-Service Program to be completed by June 30,2026, paperwork attached.

3. **RESOLVED**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the Sussex County Educational Services School calendar for the 2026-2027 school year as attached.

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

Motion passed.

D. POLICY

1. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the first reading of the following revised policies and regulations:
 - P 0142.1 Nepotism (M) (Revised)
 - P 1220 Employment of Chief School Administrator (M) (Revised)
 - P & R 1552 Sexual Harassment – Staff (M) (New)
 - P & R 2530 Resource Materials (Revised)
 - P & R 2535 Library Material (M) (New)
 - P 3362 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
 - R 3362 Sexual Harassment of Teaching Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
 - P 4352 Sexual Harassment (M) (Abolished)
 - R 4352 Sexual Harassment of Support Staff Members Complaint Procedure (Abolished)
 - P & R 9130 Public Complaints (Revised)

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

Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley Y	Warren Hills	
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Motion passed.

XVI. OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

CSA Financial Disclosure Forms

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 Robert Jones 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

February 2, 2026

7:00pm

Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871