

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

**Thank you for your participation in our March 2025 Board of Education meeting and the passing of our 2025-2026 proposed budget as followed:**

General Fund	\$7,658,051
Special Revenue	\$ <u>43,000</u>
Total	\$7,701,051

**We appreciate your attendance at the meeting, the questions or comments shared and your continued support in the educational programming that SCESC provides to school districts, families and students in our educational community. Our staff thanks you for all of your support in providing opportunities for all of us to do what we do best! Thank you!**

**What's New at Sussex County Educational Services Commission?**

**Northern Hills Academy**

Preparation for the budget has taken a considerable amount of Superintendent's time with regard to supporting a newer Principal and a new Business Administrator. Working to educate them on the process of an ESC and the traditional flow of financial revenue and expenditures has been invaluable to the understanding of operations of SCESC.

School safety continues to be a hot topic with several trainings occurring in late February and early March. Sussex County CIT training will begin again and the Superintendent has attended 3 state meetings to determine the financial impact of both the Governor's budget and the state of the nation's budget.

An ESC Council meeting was held to discuss how the school funding formula may impact ESC's and how NJ budget/Federal budget may impact grant programs under Title programs and Non Public programs as well as special education.

Attended a FEA workshop on School Health programming. Field trips, special education and transportation were three key topics addressed and the issues under each seem insurmountable. Nurses are amazing and the knowledge base they need to have surrounding all of those key topics is incredible. It certainly made me have a wider appreciation for their skill sets.

**Northern Hills Academy**

During February, Northern Hills Academy had an exciting month filled with fun events! To celebrate Valentine's Day, students participated in a baking activity, creating delicious treats. Baking in the classroom offers a fantastic opportunity for students to develop real-life skills while having fun! When students bake, they practice important skills that go beyond just following a recipe. Through baking, students enhance their understanding of essential concepts, including math, teamwork, direction-following, fine motor skills, and creativity. The celebrations continued with a Valentine's Day dance party, where everyone came together to enjoy music,

dancing, and fun, wrapping up the holiday festivities with excitement. The day centered on fostering friendship and promoting kindness. In addition to the Valentine's Day activities, the school also celebrated the 100th day of school. Students marked the milestone by counting to 100 in various creative ways, such as through activities, games, and projects. It was a month full of joy, creativity, and spirit at Northern Hills Academy!

Our Physical Therapists, Dawn Kunken and Lia Kondos, recently conducted a professional development training session for our staff aimed at enhancing health and wellness among both students and staff. This initiative, known as Courageous Pacers, emphasizes flexibility, strength, and endurance. Courageous Pacers was designed to encourage student participation in physical activities while imparting valuable life skills related to fitness. The program provides a straightforward, adaptable framework to promote physical activity and health for children with disabilities and special education needs, fostering a sense of achievement and self-worth. Courageous Pacers prioritizes consistent effort and personal growth, reinforcing the concept that everyone has the potential to reach their goals and experience success.

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b># OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>NON MEMBER</b>
<b>ANDOVER</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>		
<b>BLAIRSTOWN</b>	<b>WARREN</b>		
<b>Butler (N/M)</b>	<b>MORRIS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Delaware Valley N/M</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FRANKFORD (N/M)</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>FRANKLIN BORO</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>FRELINGHUYSEN N/M</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>GREAT MEADOWS (N/M)</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>HACKETTSTOWN N/M</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>HAMBURG BORO</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>HAMPTON</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>HARDYSTON</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>HIGH POINT</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>HOPATCONG</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>JEFFERSON(N/M)</b>	<b>MORRIS</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>KITTATINNY HS</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>LAFAYETTE</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>LOPATCONG</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>MONTAGUE</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>NEW MILFORD N/M</b>	<b>BERGEN</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>NEWTON</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>NORTH WARREN</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>OXFORD (N/M)</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>RANDOLPH (N/M)</b>	<b>MORRIS</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>SANDYSTON/WALPACK</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>SECAUCUS (N/M)</b>	<b>HUDSON</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>SUSSEX/WANTAGE</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>SPARTA</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>VERNON TWP</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>WALLKILL</b>	<b>SUSSEX</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>WARREN HILLS MS</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>WARREN HILLS HS</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>WASHINGTON BORO N/M</b>	<b>WARREN</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>WEST MILFORD N/M</b>	<b>PASSAIC</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>West MORRIS CENTRAL N/M</b>	<b>MORRIS</b>	<b>1</b>	
		<b>53 total students</b>	<b>8 non member</b>

## Project Search

We had our Project Search Steering Committee meeting. At this meeting we decided that based on enrollment in the program over the last 3 years, that SCESC and all partners are planning to move to just one site next school year. Project Search will have interns at the Newton Hospital location only. We will continue to work with Hackettstown Hospital on identifying potential candidates and employment opportunities for the interns.

The interns are 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.

- The supervisors/mentors are much more comfortable assigning new tasks to our interns which is great to see. This (as expected) has been a comfort level barrier and it is GREAT to see us all working together to overcome this barrier with the mentors!.
- All intern evaluations have been completed and the interns have been progressing on target.
- 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.
- John O'Hara asked to have a meeting with the Foods Services Department in Hackettstown and they have agreed to have us keep the cart in our classroom and take weekly inventory for the hospital staff to order needed items-another great task assigned by our incredible business partners here at Atlantic Health!
- The Nursing Department has asked us to participate in their department for internships! They have written and submitted a proposal for this and are waiting for approval. Fingers crossed-this would be huge!
- Sparta Child Study Team toured Newton Project SEARCH with a student and parent and have completed the application to send a student in 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

- John O'Hara attended the Statewide Project Search meeting in Red Bank to keep up with the new trends being implemented by different sites.
- John O' Hara attended a committee prep meeting for AHS to discuss the committee panel meeting that they are conducting. The AHS staff has asked me to participate in the community panel Friday March 7th to promote the Nursing department and how great everyone has been to Project Search
- John O'Hara is coordinating the assessment day for April and marketing is continuous through email and phone contact for potential new interns.
- John O'Hara has a meeting with the North Warren School District to discuss the program-they love our flyers!

### **Preschool Instructional Coaches**

Both PreSchool Instructional Coaches have been very active throughout the end of February and the beginning of March. Both have attended and participated in ECAC (Early Childhood Advisory Council) meetings, attended and/or finished PIRS Training and will be attending the Pyramid Model Training and Conference. These trainings allow the PICS to complete the requirements of the NJDOE for these positions.

Both PIC's have been actively providing materials to teachers to use in their classroom for behavior management. They have modelled instructional practices for teachers, observed teachers and provided feedback to the teachers they are working with.

For the curriculum programs in each of the collaborative school districts, the teachers have held meetings with Teaching Strategy, participated in GOLD training for the Curriculum and provided guidance using the Teaching Strategies Fidelity Checklist. PICS are assisting and supporting the staff in reflective cycles and sharing resources. In addition, assisting teachers in ordering activities and supplies for their classrooms.

Both PICS are working with administrators in the building by attending and presenting at ECAC meetings with districts. They also provide support with ECAC parent meetings and help lead tours of the programs with school administrators. Ms. D'Amico supported a district at Preschool Information Night by helping with the introduction process and provided support to parents when they had questions and concerns. Administrators looked to the PIC/PIRS to add information to their powerpoint for their first ECAC meeting.

Ms. Dunnell has been helping to provide administrators resources on Prek Newsletters and assisting in turn key training PD to teachers to support classroom management. Both PICS/PIRS are being heavily leaned on to assist and support challenging student behaviors.

### **Non Public and Public Itinerant**

The programs under this umbrella continue to operate smoothly. Tracking district needs is an immense job but the part-time staff for the itinerant program continues to excel in this area. She manages to coordinate CST meetings, nursing substitutes and home instruction requests. In addition, she works to ensure that contracts are as updated as possible so that we can bill on a regular basis.

Non -Public programming is playing catch up with speech services. All student annual reviews and reevaluation meetings have been scheduled for students at Sussex Christian and Northwest Christian- the two locations we have had difficulty staffing for speech. Those schools and programs are in compliance with non-public needs.

Planning and coordinating end of year student programming is occurring with the non public schools. Consultation meetings are being scheduled for April and all forms are being reviewed for the 2025-2026 school year as they are scheduled to be sent to special needs students in April.

## **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

The business office has been working hard on next year's budget. I am happy to report that I am continuing to work through my residency program on my way to becoming a certified Business Administrator. I have been meeting with my mentor every month. I am in good hands as he was selected as a recipient of the NJASBO Distinguished Service Award.

Congratulations to Anthony DeFelice, BA for preparing such a comprehensive and balanced budget. As this is his first year he did an excellent job at the budget process. Kudos!!!!

**THANK  
YOU**

**NEXT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING:  
April 7, 2025 at 7 PM at Northern Hills Academy**

**NEXT REQUIRED MEETING FOR ALL REPRESENTATIVES AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
JUNE 2, 2025 at 7 PM at Northern Hills Academy**

**Sussex County ESC is hiring and sharing staff!!!**

Immediate Openings For:

- LDTc
- Paraprofessionals
- ESY Special Education Teachers
- ESY Para-professionals

Current Staff Available to Share:

- PreSchool Instructional Coach and PreSchool Intervention Referral Specialist
- School Nurses for Substitute Coverage and Field Trip Coverage (beginning Mid March)
- School Psychologist

Please share with staff and/or your school community.

Please reach out to Andrea Romano, Superintendent for more information! [aromano@sussexesc.org](mailto:aromano@sussexesc.org)