

SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION
March Minutes
March 3, 2025
REGULAR MEETING OF FULL REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY 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. 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	CARMEN PICO		X
SUSSEX TECH	GUS MODLA	X	Left after Budget
VERNON	STEPHANIE VECHARELLO	X	
WALLKILL VALLEY	TRACI DRESSNER	X	

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

District	Representative Assembly Member	Present	Absent
HAMPTON	JOHN NELSON	X	
HIGH POINT	SCOTT RIPLEY	X	
HOPATCONG	JENNIFER POLOWCHENA	X	
SUSSEX/WANTAGE	MICHAEL GALL	X	
MONTAGUE	ANDREE CAMPBELL		X
FRANKFORD	KEVIN NEWMAN		X
FREDON	ARNE OLSEN	X	
LENAPE VALLEY	RICHARD KUNKEN	X	
SANDYSTON	STEVIE COLLINS	X	
NORTH WARREN	KEVIN BRENNAN	X	
WARREN HILLS	LISA MARSHALL *REVISED*	X	
FRELINGHUYSEN	KIM NEUFFER	X	

Also in attendance:
Kim Gallagher, Principal NHA

VII. BUDGET

- RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the 2025-2026 budget for submission to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools as follows:
General Fund \$7,658,051

Special Revenue \$ 43,000

Total \$7,701,051

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the workshop, meeting, and travel budget for the 2025-2026 school year as per the attached Document A, and Professional Services budget for the 2025-2026 school year as per the attached Document B.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

MOVE: N/A		2ND: N/A	
Hampton Y	High Point Y	Hopatcong Y	Sussex/Wantage Y
Montague	Frankford	Fredon Y	Lenape Valley Y
Sandyston Y	North Warren Y	Warren Hills Y	Frelinghuysen Y

Motion passed

VIII. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Brendan Donegan, Seconded by Stephanie Vecharello, to approve the following minutes:

February 3, 2025 Regular Meeting

Voice vote: **All present voted in favor. Motion is carried.**

IX. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Nice work on the budget.
Negotiations were successfully completed.
Huge thank you to Gil for his service.
Make sure ethics forms are completed.

X. CORRESPONDENCE

1. March Parent Calendar
2. March NHA Lunch Calendar
3. March Read Across America Flyer
4. Gertrude Hawk Reminder email
5. March SEL Calendar ***ADDED***

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel & Negotiations - Met 2/19/2025

Buildings and Grounds / Finance - None

Programs and Services / Policy - None

XII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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.

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

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

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.

XIII. 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.

Facilities Updates:

- Snake sinks in room 106,109.
- Called in plumber to snake toilet in Rm.106
- Assembled, new desk, room 106, store old desk in shed
- Replaced light switch and bathroom in room 115.
- Recycled all empty boxes from storage unit
- Started removing garbage from back room at 18 Gail Court
- Replace single-toilet paper holders with double-roll holders in main bathrooms.
- Started mounting on wall power strips. Main office is done.
- Continue to train custodial staff on proper cleaning methods as well as mop bucket maintenance.

XIV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Board did not enter Executive Session

XVI. 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 full-time position to a part-time position of the following staff:

NAME	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE	SALARY CHANGE	NOTES
Ashley Ell	Speech Therapist	3/11/25	FT with benefits at \$64,650 to \$46.18 per hour with no benefits, up to 28 hours per week.	

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 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
Ashley Harper	PT Paraprofessional	9	\$25.50/hr	TBD	Includes .50 for BD
Cheyenne Hawthorne	PT Paraprofessional	4	\$20.00/hr	TBD	
Stacey Segond	PT Paraprofessional	15	\$25.00/hr	TBD	
Jessica Juca	PT Paraprofessional	2	\$20.00/hr	TBD	
Ava Castellana	PT Paraprofessional	1	\$20.00/hr	TBD	

Amanda Conklin	PT Paraprofessional	1	\$20.35/hr	TBD	Includes .35 for AD
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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 **2024-2025 regular school year program** pending completion of all paperwork:

NAME	POSITION	STEP	SALARY	EFFECTIVE DATE	NOTES
TBD	Social Worker	Not to exceed Step 15	Not to exceed \$84,100	TBD	

4. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the 2025-2026 Administrative Calendar as attached.

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

Motion passed

B. FINANCE

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

February Payroll	\$423,609.82
Feb & Mar(1-4) (Fund 10)	\$128,380.46
Feb & Mar(1-4) (Fund 20)	\$305.56

2. **RESOLVED**, that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the attached list of budget transfers for February 2025.

MOVE: Christopher Bilik		2ND: Stephanie Vecharello	
Andover Y	Byram Y	Franklin Y	Green Y
Hamburg Y	Hardyston Y	Kittatinny Y	Lafayette Y
Newton Y	Ogdensburg	Sparta Y	Stanhope
Sussex Tech	Vernon Y	Wallkill Valley Y	

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	2/18/25	Understanding and Supporting Individuals with Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA): Michael Selbst	Virtual Alliance of Private Special Education Schools of North Jersey	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	2/20/25	Solving the Tier 2 Puzzle: Supporting Student Mental Health Before a Crisis	Virtual DA Webinars	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	2/20/2025	Training on COBRA Remittance Reports	Ameriflex	\$0	\$0
Kathleen Grennan	2/27/2025	3 Hour Virtual Learning Lab - Experienced WJ User Learning Journey	Woodcock Johnson V (WJV) Virtual	\$150	\$0
Andrea Romano	2/27/25	Federal Education Updates Discussion w/ AG Platkin	Virtual	0	0
Corrie Pisciotano	3/4/25	E-Verify Overview (I-9)	webinar	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	3/5/25	Form I-9 Overview	webinar	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	3/6/25	I-9 Document Training	webinar	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	3/6/25	Release of the Educational Environment Dashboard and Statewide Information Session	Webinar	\$0	\$0

Andrea Romano	3/7/25	Using Pyramid Model Practices to Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children to Reduce Expulsion and Other Exclusionary Practices.	Virtual Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health @Montclair State University	\$0	\$0
Cristina D'Amico	3/7/25	Using Pyramid Model Practices to Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children to Reduce Expulsion and Other Exclusionary Practices.	Virtual Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health @Montclair State University	\$0	\$0
Naome Dunnell	3/7/25	Using Pyramid Model Practices to Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children to Reduce Expulsion and Other Exclusionary Practices.	Virtual Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health @Montclair State University	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	3/7/25	Using Pyramid Model Practices to Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children to Reduce Expulsion and Other Exclusionary Practices.	Virtual Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health @Montclair State University	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano Lindy Powell	3/10/25	Responding to School Bomb Threats & Bomb Threat Drilling	NJDOE Office of School Preparedness & Emergency Planning	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano Lindy Powell Anthony DeFelice	3/11/25	SCCC Reunification Walkthrough	New Jersey State Police	\$0	TBD
Corrie Pisciotano	3/13/25	School Safety: Naloxone Administration Training	Rutgers Health	\$0	\$0
Corrie Pisciotano	4/22/25	OFAC Fingerprinting & School Bus Training	Morris County Public Safety Training Academy 500 West Hanover Ave,	\$0	\$25.05

			Morris Plains, NJ 07950		
Naome Dunnell	2/6/25	PIRS Seminar Supervisor Meeting	NJ Pyramid Virtual	\$0	\$0
Naome Dunnell Cristina D'Amico	2/26/25 - 6/10/25	Seminar in PIRS Practice	Montclair State University & NJDOE	\$2400 \$1200 each	TBD
Cristina D'Amico	3/7/25	2025 NJ Pyramid Model State Leadership Team Conference	Montclair State University	\$0	\$0
Nancy Daily	2/25/25	Making Inclusion Powerful	Star Autism Support Virtual	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/7/25- 4/11/25	HR Benefits Week 2025: Daily 1 hour training topics	Virtual HR Daily Advisor	\$0	\$0
Lindy Powell	4/7/25- 4/11/25	HR Benefits Week 2025: Daily 1 hour training topics	Virtual HR Daily Advisor	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/3/2025	2025 ECHO Autism Communities Symposium	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Andrea Romano	4/4/2025	What Is My Value Instructionally to the Teachers I Supervise?	Virtual	\$0	\$0
Anthony DeFelice	3/4/2025	Lunch & Learn - A Conversation: Reading & Interpreting the 25-26 State Aid Notice	NJASBO - Virtual	\$0	\$0

2. **Resolved**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent that the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Directors approve the joint transportation agreement with Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative for field trips for the 2025-2026 school year, as attached.

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

Motion passed

XVII. OLD BUSINESS:

Reminder to complete the School Ethics Disclosure Forms

NEW BUSINESS:

Superintendent Evaluation - 2024-2025 CSA Evaluation Timetable attached.
Would like to honor Gil for his service with a plaque.

XVIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting was called to adjourn by Kathleen Clohessey and Seconded by Jane Byron, all voiced in favor.

At 8:10 P. M.

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony DeFelice
Business Administrator / Board Secretary

Important dates:

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Important dates:

Regular Meeting

April 7, 2025

7:00pm

Northern Hills Academy 10 Gail Ct Sparta, NJ 07871