



Union County Educational Services Commission
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(Att. 2)

**Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors
 January 3, 2018**

WESTLAKE SCHOOL:

Enrollment as of December 14, 2017 Actual: 75 Changes: Entered: 1 Exited: 1	Referrals: 3 Intakes Scheduled: 3 Accepted: 1
Fire Drills: December 4, 2017	Emergency Drills: Lock down
Suspensions: 1 (due to ongoing behaviors) Leading to termination as additional supports needed were not met.	December 12, 2017

Westlake hosted an open house on December 5th for the parents of Crossroads School's middle school program. We have been working closely with Crossroads in bridging the gap to continue to meet the needs of all UCESC students and continuing their education once they age out of Crossroads. Eight parents participated in the tour and were impressed with the facility at 1571 as well as the program. Westlake is a larger facility with a cafeteria, therapy room and gym and their children would be able to participate in more work readiness programs as they enter their high school years. We appreciated the support of Joann Purdy, Social Worker, UCESC Transition Services, in bridging the gap and setting up the open house and Reed Leibfried, Principal at Crossroads and Elaine Liggeri, School Social Worker.

Our music enrichment program has seamlessly added a sense of spirit and happiness for our students and staff. The students love working with Mr. Cerria and have enjoyed practicing for the upcoming holiday sing a long scheduled for next Thursday, December 21st. Parents and case managers are invited to this holiday event.

Language Arts: During Language arts, teachers are adding in letter writing into the curriculum. Students started learning how to write a friendly letter to their peers by understanding the structure of a letter that includes a heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature. They are writing letters to a friend other than their classmates in order to get to know them better. A Powerpoint lesson was shared with classroom teachers on addressing all of the areas in writing and sending a letter.

In reading, some students are working to acquire new words and improve comprehension through the use of the Edmark Program. The short story, "Dan Does Tricks" provided an opportunity to work on sequencing and on transition words. Students have learned how to type a letter on the computer and they are being mailed in the Westlake Mail box. They have typed two letters already. The students in the more advanced reading group have just finished "Maitland's Kid" and have had some great discussions about the story

Math: Mrs. Attlesey's students have started a unit on fractions. They are just learning the basic parts and completing activities dealing with denominators of 2, 3, and 4. One individual student is working at a more

advanced pace focused on mixed numerals. Additionally, classes work on money skills and have been counting equivalent amounts of money, adding money, and solving money word problems.

Science: In science, students have learned about the parts and function of a flower. Using the FOSS science kit, they planted wheat seeds and will learn how wheat turns into bread. With the winter months here, students are participating in a variety of winter activities, including the hibernation of animals and formation of snowflakes. These are a prerequisite to a unit on winter animals that students will learn about after the winter break. Students in Mr. Carten's class are discussing the earth's five layers. The students are learning that geologists use a seismograph to measure earthquakes. They viewed a video on how faults cause earthquakes and completed a hands-on project to see how faults move. Students flatten four pieces of different colored clay and stacked them. These represented the layers of rock. They were cut into different size pieces and then physically moved to show how the earth shifts. This is a favorite activity of student's in learning about the earth.

Food Science: The Food Science class prepared cakes and cookies for the Parent Association meeting. They also prepared pumpkin bread for the Crossroad's parent tour at Westlake. Students set up a table in the cafeteria to showcase items they baked, as well as provided the parents with chocolates to take home with them.

Social Studies: Students in Mrs. Roble's class began a unit on writing an opinion paragraph. This will be in response to a hot topic in the news. The students will look for and utilize opinion language. They will also be reviewing American holidays and the tradition associated with them since we are approaching the holiday season. Students learn about all holidays as everyone celebrates differently. Classes devote time to discuss three major holidays this month. They have studied Christmas, are now studying Hanukkah and will be studying Kwanzaa next week.

PE: In Physical Education classes students completed lessons that focused on Football. They took part in games and drills, leading up to a split-class game. Some classes progressed to a flag football game with students being the focal point and Mr. Moss fades himself out to allow them to be independent while other classes take part of a simulated and prompt-filled games. Currently, PE students are recalling information learned in football and generalizing their knowledge. Some students remember how to throw and catch a ball while others have needed to be reminded. Each student is given an exit question about football pertaining to content knowledge of the sport. Mr. Moss's goal is to teach the students plays and to understand the overall sport of football while watching the game with their friends and families.

Every class is started by providing students a welcoming conversation. Students also use recently purchased pedometers (15), to see how many steps they have moved in class.

Health: Health classes are continuing on the topic of maintaining a healthy life style and being active. Guided dances (Chicken Dance, Cha Cha Slide, etc.) from a website called, 'GoNoodle' model movements to get students heart rates elevated and encourage movement. From the guided dances, students follow a stretching video modeling technique to loosen their muscles and joints. Mr. Moss provides students with interactive videos and worksheets which allow them to compare progress.

Pre-Vocational Skills and Pre-Employment Training Skills: Work Readiness has been challenging students to increase their skill level. Students are exposed to various vocational activities like packaging, assembling, sorting, putting in/on, and matching. Students are engaged and learning new skills quickly being able to increase scores on the AFLS Basic Skills area in BS5. Seven good news awards were given to students. Awards were given for punching the time clock independently, showing leadership, mastering a skill, maintaining focus, and working with a peer. Mrs. Casey assisted during the Open house/tour for Crossroads parents to see the Westlake school program. She spoke about the tasks the middle school students' work on when they visit Westlake's vocational workshops on Tuesdays. Creating a partnership with teachers, parents,

and students will help establish a smoother transition when aging out of Crossroads and transitioning to Westlake.

Vocational: Graphic Arts: Graphic Arts have filled orders to keep the school store stocked with Westlake apparel. We have made at least one of every size for T-shirts and hoody sweatshirts. Students have taken inventory and will make more as needed. We had inquiries and quotes were provided from the Deron School, and from our student Christian's brother for a High School international trip in April. We created a price quote, took an order, filled out forms and designed artwork, and created an invoice for the LMA school government shirts. We will be ordering shirts, setting up and measuring images on light box, prepping / coating screen and exposing the image to make the screen. We contributed to school spirit PJ day and the ugly sweater contest by donating a Westlake shirt to the winners. We embroidered Westlake apparel, personalized blankets, and bags. We have been trying to make holiday aprons for the upcoming sales however we are having technical difficulty with the machine constantly rebooting.

Sign Making/Engraving machine: The machine can make various types of signs. All students are exposed to sign making and the different skills needed to master this task. Students are now working on the mechanics and measuring the signs. Students continue to make key chains to sell for the upcoming holiday sales. They have also created ornaments for the Holiday sale. Other important skills that students are working on include; assembly line production, sorting by size shape and color, filing by letters, zip code and color. More advanced students are working on data entry along with sign making on the computer programs.

Horticulture: Students having been watering the Amaryllis they planted and are watching them grow. They will be sold next week at the school sale to students and staff.

Post Office/Print Shop: Students designed new Westlake street maps for all classes. Vocational students requested letters from Mrs. Roble's class to be used to design and create street signs which are now displayed in our halls. So look for Vocational Way, School Spirit Street, Palm Tree Lane, Delicious Way, Wolves Court when you are walking around. In the store, Mailboxes have been set up and labeled with staff names. Students are learning how and where to place labels on an envelope that has to be addressed. These addressed envelopes were created for matching, finding the name and place it in the correct box, and stacking envelopes in size order, or ABC order. All materials are left in the room to be used with any classes or therapy as needed.

Sweet Shoppe: The Sweet Shop has been keeping the students very busy every Tuesday morning. The students have been making breads and candies that go up to the Wagner Arboretum in Warren. They have already sold many of our breads and 50 candies. Mr. Palmer delivers the food every Friday morning to the farm for us. We will be selling at the Arboretum for 3 weeks in December.

Jewelry: Students are working on making beaded lanyards, necklaces and earrings. Completed items are being priced and packaged for upcoming sales. Our CBI trips to the Clark Commons Mall have been successful in purchasing the necessary items for our jewelry making workshop.

Fabrics Plus Shop: Students are producing a great quality of drawstring bags and dog toys for the holiday sale. For the looming knitting project, the beginners completed their first hat which they took home. The advanced students are currently working on making a scarf independently.

Retail: Students have been opening up the "Wolves" school store with specific set times. The store is open for business 3 times a week, Wed., Thurs. and Fri. Students made a business hour sign that is displayed in window. Students working in the store will cover stations like cash register, return department, taking inventory, window display and stocking shelves. We continue the effort of incorporating CBI trips to Target, Shop Rite, and Five Below to replenish the supplies needed for the store and reinforcement system. Students get very excited to work in a real store and look forward to serving customers. Students have collected items from all Westlake

vocational shops to be displayed in our store in our Westlake products department section. Students have made sure prices are on items, inventory is taken and signs are displayed. The school store has also begun to sell stamps to staff members and use them in our Post office when writing letters to their friends.

Mrs. Convery's class is busy preparing for their annual trip to PSE&G in Newark. Students are busy making dog biscuits, filling in pails with candy, counting candy kisses and cutting and wrapping chocolate bars. Students are expected to have a wonderful time this Friday at PSE&G, as we always sell out. Customers tell us that they look forward to seeing the students, and we have many repeat customers. Additionally, the students are treated to a pizza lunch, which they really enjoy. After the PSE&G sale the students will have to make more items for our sale at the Commission offices, as well as our annual student sale.

Life Skills: In Life Skills, the students just finished a unit on job searching. The students learned different ways to do a job search such as networking, internet search, new papers, job fairs, and a door-to-door search. The students are getting much more confident by practicing in front of their peers using a script.

Mrs. Palmer's, Mrs. Robles and Mrs. Shaw's class went to the senior center to sell all of the crafts, chocolates and other items they made. Mrs. Roble's class sold jewelry that was made by Mrs. Porchetta's jewelry class. It was a good experience for them to see that the products that are made by the upper level vocational students are bought by people in places other than Westlake School. They had a great visit with our friends from the Boyton Senior Center in Westfield and the Seniors always look forward to their visit.

Therapies: Speech: This month in speech students worked on a variety of skills, including: cooking (muffins and mac & cheese), following written recipes and filling out post assessment forms. Students also worked on following directions containing prepositions while completing an obstacle course, and following picture schedules to complete apartment tasks. The speech therapists worked collaboratively in groups to target pragmatic skills of students through a variety of activities (go fish, guess who?, headbanz, apples to apples). The speech department has also been making materials for many communication tasks (go-fish cards, holiday puzzles, social stories, etc.) during their PLC time. In addition, we worked with students individually and in groups on fall-themed activities (fall puzzles and worksheets, scrabble board with fall vocabulary).

Physical Therapy: Currently we have two physical therapists working at Westlake School (one works three days and one works one day). There are a total of 33 individual treatment sessions and two IEP driven gross motor groups. A new student admitted to our school will also begin to receive individual PT weekly when he starts school. This month Mrs. Feuerstein continues to use our new iPad app called "Exercise Buddy" with some of her students. This app allows her to easily add video-modeling into PT sessions. It also offers features such as muscle/bone/body part identification, visual timers and pictures of many useful exercises.

Occupational Therapy: Currently we have 3 occupational therapists working at Westlake (2 full time OT's and 1 COTA Mondays and Fridays). Mrs. Edelstein provides supervision to the COTA in the areas of treatment planning and note writing. There are 90 individual OT sessions and 6 groups with a total of 18 students. The OT's collaborate with teachers and classroom staff regarding sensory needs of their students and provide necessary equipment and training when needed. Some of the new materials/techniques being utilized with students are a "compression canoe" which is being piloted with several students and noise dampening headphones and that has been given to a teacher to trial with two of her students.

The OT's collaborate with speech to determine activities for the ADL support groups. Activities this month included cooking (corn muffins for Thanksgiving and mac and cheese), filling a recipe review, reading and following written directions while completing a gross motor obstacle course and a scavenger hunt that incorporated directional and spatial concepts.

Social Work: There were 15 IEP meetings completed this month and Mr. Balassone and Mrs. Tantillo assisted parents and case managers in the areas of reviewing goals and objectives, transition and other services provided during these meetings. We are happy to have Mrs. Sandroock return this week.

So far this year, Westlake has been faced with multiple challenges related to student medical concerns and behavior concerns. The social workers have been working closely with the school behaviorists and the families in all of these cases to address these issues from social, emotional, and medicinal angles to support the family needs. At times, it requires social workers to also assist in arranging in home counseling and/or other supports. Both Mrs. Sandroock and Mr. Balassone have developed positive relationships with the students and their families.

The social workers continue to work with students on choosing appropriate actions, speech and appropriate responses. Whenever possible they are working to help students advocate for themselves and address issues using self-calming strategies. Group and individual counseling sessions continue for all students and situational counseling sessions as needed to discuss any additional concerns. Consultations by Dr. Amy, referring psychiatrist, continues to benefit specific students with medication and other needs.

Mr. Balassone continues working with the Boy Scouts on earning their citizenship badges. In addition to learning about what a citizen is, and what makes a good citizen, scouts are now working on specific activities that good citizens do. The most recent meeting involved learning about recycling, the different materials that can be recycled, why we recycle, and what is made from recycled material. Scouts were eager to bring their new knowledge home and discuss beginning a recycling program at home or increase the materials that their family is already recycling.

Behaviorist: This month, the behavior department has continued to be heavily involved with responding to a significant amount of incidents where crisis management procedures have been necessary. The behavior department has also continued to consult with the teachers, observed and modeled strategies based on individual student behavior intervention plans, and conducted team meetings with staff who work with the students involved in these incidents to provide additional support and updates to behavior intervention plans.

The second round of Safety Care Training occurred at the end of last month through December 1st at the Commission Office (completed by C Gewirtzman, A. Moss and D. Cicalese). At this point, teachers, therapists, and administrators at both Westlake and Crossroads and three paraprofessionals selected to serve on the crisis team at Westlake have all been trained and certified in Safety Care.

Upcoming Events:

Holiday Sing-a-long – Thursday, December 21, 2017

Happy Holidays from Westlake School!



Westlake Mission Statement

Westlake School is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing, positive environment by emphasizing high expectations for all students, fostering independence, encouraging confidence and a collaborative commitment to functional academic excellence.

LAMBERTS MILL ACADEMY:

Enrollment as of : 12/15/2017 LMA Actual: 37 District - Non-New Point: 33 New Point Specialty at LMA: 4 Changes: 2 Entered: 3 Pending: 2 Exited: 2 Trinitas Hospital Bedside Instruction: 36 (inpatient) Day Program: 40 Approved-Agreement signed: 64 Classified: 29 Regular Ed: 35	Referrals in December: 7 Intakes Scheduled: 5 completed: 5 Accepted LMA placement : 3 Placement Pending: 2 Suspensions: 0 In School Suspension: 0 HIB: 0 Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: 1 Security Drills (1): 1
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Administration

Students are now in the pre planning phase of launching the first Lamberts Mill Academy Newsletter. The goal of this project is to provide students with an outlet for their creativity, ideas, and help develop critical thinking skills while providing a supervised medium to allow responsible expression, and ideas. This quarterly newsletter will also serve as a positive communication piece between parents and their students. Parent are able to view student work and learn about the day to day activities and exciting events at LMA.

We have launched an advocacy program. Teachers are assigned a small group of students to support throughout their education at LMA. Each teacher provides academic support, guidance, and encouragement for the students in their group. Teachers also make monthly phone calls to parents to provide positive feedback to students' families.

Our annual door decorating contest has arrived. Students and staff collaborate to create spectacular holiday themed door designs. This contest provides healthy competition, team building opportunities, and social skills training for our students. It gives students the chance to be intrinsically reinforced by what they produce.

In the development of teacher-led PLC meetings teachers work in groups through the guidance of administration to determine what they need to learn in order to ensure their teaching produces successful learning for their students. The goal is that the students will be the main benefactors even though staff will also gain valuable leadership skills through discussion, modeling, practicing, and receiving feedback. Currently the teachers are analyzing patterns in disruptive and or out of class behaviors and sharing teaching strategies to decrease these behaviors that inhibit the students ability to learn or negatively affect the student's learning environment.

Select teachers are halfway through their Drone training and in the early phases of introducing students to some of the exciting learning/job related skill opportunities to come. Teachers use their common planning time to pull what they are learning from the Drone Academy and build cross curricular lessons.

Student Government has taken a more active role than ever before in the history of LMA. Students are now planning, executing and leading the monthly community meetings, providing news, activities, fund raising, and developing student achievement awards for their peers.

The "climbing the ladder to success event presented by Professor Floyd Jeter, from NJCU, was an inspiration and learning tool for our students. Professor Jeter was born in the projects and had a tough time reaching his

goals, but in spite of his environment he continued to be successful in his career and education. Professor Jeter worked with our students to help them create their individual ladders to success.

At LMA our field trips are a key component of our school instruction. We use our trips to broaden the educational experience for students while creating real work connections. Examples of this in Environmental Science include visiting the Covanta Plant in Rahway, NJ to learn about what happens with our waste and garbage; a Biology class visiting Raptor Trust in Stirling, NJ seeing what happens to injured wildlife; and English students seeing a performance piece of Ella Fitzgerald by Regina Carter after learning about different types of expression in literacy.

Academics

English Language Arts & Literacy

Students participated in a collaborative Narrative Unit by taking a field trip to the Princeton University Art museum. Students were able to compare and contrast narratives from artists and authors through this interactive activity. Students also participated in being a part of Princeton and experienced a touch of college life by walking through the campus and eating lunch in the student center.

Students have been highly engaged through literature circle reading and developing skills of literacy through bonding in the learning environment. The students are reading independently, as well as their class novels; *Revolution* by Deborah Wiles, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Park and *Crossover* by the acclaimed YA author Kwame Alexander. The Energy and reading drive has taken a path of its own as students begin to facilitate the next novel they want to read to enhance their reading learning communities. We celebrated December by looking at how to incorporate quiet time for ourselves over the holidays. Students have begun to research various novels and book clubs for teens to indulge in for themselves.

Science

We are pretty busy in Science. We took a field trip at the end of November to the Covanta Resource facility in Rahway, NJ. They make electricity from burning garbage. Fun Fact: all Union County waste, including Commission garbage, goes to this facility. The trip stimulates lots of discussion about recycling, power, jobs, consumerism, etc. Our trip to the Pequest Fish Hatchery was postponed until spring, so we look forward to going there upon the return of warmer weather. Forensics students are finishing a unit about hair and fibers and determining differences between class and individual evidence. Forensic entomology is next. In Biology, we are finishing learning all about the macromolecules of life. We experimented with pineapple in jello (do YOU know why fresh pineapple won't let jello set up, but canned pineapple will?) and got to see raw liver in action, destroying hydrogen peroxide. In Environmental Science, we are learning about air pollution and challenging ourselves to understand how China's air pollution problem affects California. We are starting to learn about atomic structures in Chemistry, which always means M&M models.

Mathematics

Students working in Algebra class began working with linear equations. They reviewed graphing on the coordinate plane system, and how to work with ordered pairs. Students learned about Leonardo Da Vinci and his famous drawing; *The Vitruvian Man*. Students worked in small, cooperative groups and tested the theory that an individual's height is equivalent to their arm span. Students measured each other's height and arm span and created a T-table representing the X and Y Values. Students graphed this information on the interactive Smartboard and were able to visually see the linear equation $x = y$.

Students in Geometry class have been learning about and working with polygons. Students have been testing the polygon interior sum angle theorem by creating their own 2-dimensional polygons, and using a protractor to get a precise measure of each angle to see if it aligns with the theorem. Students also worked with alternative methods to find the angle measure of a polygon such as cutting a polygon into smaller triangles from within.

Finally, all students have been working hard on Kahn Academy to improve their basic mathematical computation skills at their own level, along with connecting it to their math class.

Career and Technical Education

Students are being interviewed based on their intended goals and willingness to participate in the Student Learning Experience. I have a few prospective students. I have also reached out to two case workers and only one has responded thus far. I will continue to try and keep the communication lines open. I have also been working on curriculum mapping with an administrator. Community service continues and students are always eager to get out and do their civic duties. The students transported residents from the hallways to the recreation room where they serve them coffee, hot chocolate and a desert.

Physical Education and Health

The month of December has been a busy one in the LMA Physical Education and Health classes. We just finished the student-favorite Floor Hockey Unit. Students participated in activities and games that help them master skills such as passing, puck-handling, shooting, and goaltending. This is by far one of the most popular units amongst the student population. We have just begun the Volleyball Unit where students have been working on mastering skills such as bumping, setting, spiking, and serving. Students are really enjoying this activity and have been exceeding expectations.

In Health we continue to study about the drug use and abuse that is plaguing our world. Students learned about the complications of prescription (painkillers) drugs and how they can lead to addiction. We discussed the pros and cons of legalizing marijuana and the medical benefits attributed to the plant as well as the negative side effects from the abuse of the drug.

World Language

This month students continue to work on the unit Daily life: "*La Vida escolar y las Tradiciones*" in Spanish class. Students took a Pre-assessment about the unit to place them according to their level. Students are able to engage in conversations, express feelings and emotions, exchange opinions and compare different school habits and food from the Spanish-speaking countries and the United States.

Through interdisciplinary instructional, students have learned different ways to integrate math and music while role-playing "*El Chavo en la escuela*". Students also used geography to locate different Spanish speaking countries learn about different schools around the world. While using several videos and Power Point presentations the teacher enabled students to see comparisons between languages in both the grammar explanations, and in visual activities called "hear and say." Students learned to look for language connections and to integrate this new skills as they continue studying Spanish. In addition, students are working on different topics in which they have to create a well-organize research project about traditions in the school/ home in order to describe and then illustrate each tradition.

LMA Clinical Department

In Lifeskills each group focused on the topic of healthy boundaries and appropriate social skills in different environments. The month will conclude with our annual holiday door decorating contest. The goal of this activity is to enhance community team building skills, increase social skills, and allow the students to demonstrate their individual creative abilities. This activity empowers students by teaching them self-advocacy skills in choosing their design and encourages a sense of belonging at LMA.

New Point - The unit will have 14 students on it on the date posted above.

Students were looking at historical events that encompassed the subjects of math and science including the Wright Brothers first flight at Kitty Hawk, the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor and the military court martial of General Billy Mitchell. These historical events involved aspects of flying, military complications, mathematical equations.

Ms. Barbara's class continues to have students write letters to all parties that donate or visit our students at New Point. She opened a relationship with a similar program as new Point Specialty in Florida. The students were receptive to this idea and have been enjoying the experience.

The students completed the annual unit on Charles Dickens, The Christmas Carol and on a Victorian Christmas. They also studied the holidays of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

Mr. Fitzsimmons and his Vietnam veterans group visited us on December 6th. We provided breakfast for this fine group of veterans. They told the students how they still deal daily with their PTSD symptoms even today.

The students volunteered at the St. Anthony Social Center and gift wrapped presents for families in need. On Friday December 15, the Social Action Club worked at the Westfield Food Pantry. The students took orders and prepared orders for families for Christmas.

The students attended the show Seussical the Musical in Staten Island. It was well done and enjoyed by all.

Trinitas

Older students read a Scholastic News article about Pearl Harbor and interviews with two WWII veterans who grew up in Hawaii and were in their nineties. One gentleman had been in the Navy, and the other gentleman had been in the Army. Their first-hand memories of the bombing captivated the attention of the students.

Some special lessons this month focused on the holidays. Short stories, such as "The Gift of the Magi" by O'Henry and "Once Upon a Christmas" by Pearl S. Buck, were read. Younger students practiced their fictional writing skills by writing about a gingerbread man who was running some place. Students had to decide where their fellow was going and why. After completing their writing, the students used their imagination once more to color and decorate a paper gingerbread man. Their artwork and compositions are on display for all to see in the hallway. The students are very proud of their unique, imaginative creations.

CROSSROADS:

Enrollment as of Actual: 47 Changes:0 Entered: 0 Exited:0	Referrals: 1 Intakes Scheduled: Pending Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: 12/19/17	Emergency Drills: 12/11/17

Classroom Accomplishments:

Kristina Cassidy's class:

Students read and completed their weekly reader, "Kids Can Give". They used pictures to see what they could do when receiving gifts for holidays (say thank you, give a hug, smile). They have been learning about the changes of seasons and since winter has arrived, they have discussed different things they can do in the snow, particularly make snowmen. Students used their fine motor skills and followed directions to make an edible snowman- rice cakes for the body, spread white frosting on the body for the snow, pretzels for arms, mini chocolate chips for eyes and buttons, candy corn for the nose, and sprinkles for the mouth.

Manny C., is our student of the month. He has been doing a great job when coming to groups. He is more tolerant of listening to songs and giving more eye contact when saying hello to his friends in morning meeting. He did an excellent job on the community based instruction trip to the mall. While at Wendy's, Manny went to the register to help order lunch. He handed in the money and then counted the change that was given back to him. He helped count out the specific amount of spoons that were needed for all the frostys they ordered and even helped pass them out to his friends.

During their trip to the mall, each student greeted Santa and took a picture with him. They took a ride on the carousel and took a train ride around the mall. Students also worked on gross motor and daily living skills as we maneuvered through the mall and met different people.

Later this month, Buddy the Elf will be bringing the students a Christmas tree and joining the class soon. They will be making a Christmas tree pizza for their holiday party (crust shaped as a tree, mozzarella cheese with green food coloring) and will also make Christmas trees using sugar cones, vanilla frosting with green food coloring, and sprinkles.

Kristina Cassidy was fortunate enough to get trained in CRP/AED this month and the paraprofessionals started training in Safety Care!

Stephen Goham's class:

This month's theme consists of winter/holiday events and activities. The students are learning to read and identify new vocabulary. They are also learning to apply and discuss these new words while developing a holiday story web. This activity targets skills such as word recognition, word usage, and comprehension; they also target language/speaking skills such as a students' ability to recall/retell a story and state facts/supporting details. Two students (Jacob and Juliana) are participating in a holiday chapter book called Christmas Catastrophe. These selected students are testing their ability to identify characters, setting, and main ideas, as well as their ability to answer WH questions (comprehension). Throughout the month, all students engage in various holiday arts & crafts and cooking activities, such as making a wreath or baking cookies. These tasks

help the students develop their ability to follow directions, use their creativity, and increase their fine motor skills. Their most favorite December activity is creating crystal ornaments in science. The students design Christmas ornaments of their choice by using pipe cleaners and mixing borax with boiling water. The children enjoy observing the crystals forming over time.

In the area of reading, both Siley and Samuel have mastered reading words at the kindergarten level (approx. 52 words) and have moved on to the next set of words at the first grade level. These two students have also increased their ability to form appropriate noun/verb combinations when speaking, and continue to strengthen this skill. Danyael has shown improvement in matching and sequencing the letters in his first name. Juliana has made significant gains in the areas of identifying Touchpoints, which has allowed her to begin solving addition equations.

Kristen Fisco's class:

All students are beginning to gain a stronger grasp on the independent activity schedules. There are 3 versions, 1-5 tasks, clothing corner, and prevocational tasks. Adriel and Khalil consistently bring the box to their desk, Luis matches the numbers, brings the box to desk, completes the activity, and puts the number on the back of the board. Josiah and DJ are able to complete the tasks with complete independence. Gatik is working to gain independence.

A focus of special events conducted in Kristen's class were based on Wants and Needs. Students attended to a short video on wants and needs (We Have Needs, Things I want). Each student had to fill in the blank emergent reader. Students inserted words or PECS cards into the blank space on the emergent reader. Next, students created a "wants" stocking and a "needs" stocking. They cut items out of circulars and pasted them into the corresponding stocking. Students viewed multiple wants or needs poster boards during a "write the room" activity. (Ex. poster: Television- is this a need? Ex. poster: Water- is this a need?) Students placed a "Yes" or "No" PECS on the poster. Students then turned over the poster to check their response. After each poster, students placed a "yes" or "no" on their worksheet.

Natalia Amador's Middle School Class:

Students learned about various holidays that are celebrated around the world- Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. The class continued to strengthen their pre-vocational jobs by completing the a number of tasks here at Crossroads and attending the community based instruction trip to Westlake School. So far, they worked on completing Ellison orders, sorting magazines, doing laundry, and collecting recyclables.

Science & Social Studies: The middle school teachers rotate into all classes and teach thematic units. This month's theme includes-winter animal habitats, migration, adaptation, hibernation; the effects of germs and the flu season; and special arts and crafts.

All students continue to work on their direct instruction VB-MAPP goals. Josh has shown progress with his WH questions and subtraction with regrouping. Aiden is working on DLS and double-digit multiplication problems. Jefferson has been strengthening his study skills by using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast different text. He is also working on multiplication by grouping. Uthmaan is working on his money skills and sight word reading. Cristian is learning how to use flashcards as a study method for multiplication and definitions.

Christina Witte's Middle School Class:

This month was a busy and exciting month in Room 109. Students started using Attainments Math Curriculum, which targets particular math concepts into real-world applications, such as calculating allowances or reading maps and schedules. During this instructional time, the students are grouped into small groups, based on their level of achievement in the particular topic of instruction. It has been a new and fun trial period, as students are learning not only math but also how to cooperate and pay attention within a small group.

One of the biggest achievements this month is in the area of meal times. Several parents had concerns about their children's limited diets and/or particular feeding issues, so they have been working hard on mealtime instruction during lunch. One of the students that stands out, in particular, is Elaina; who started buying school lunches and through the use of a triangle feeding program, is now eating, or at least tasting almost every item of the school lunches.

The students are also continuing their pre-vocational jobs in our school and this month the class is working on Ellison Orders, sorting and delivering Scholastic Magazines, as well as doing school laundry. In addition, all students continue with their daily jobs, including feeding the birds in our window bird feeder, taking care of the worm-compost and tending to the indoor-growing station. Just last week they harvested their first cherry tomatoes.

Occupational Therapy Department:

Kim, Claire, and Dina participated in community based instruction with the middle school. While attending a ShopRite trip, they worked with Justin and used pictures to help him identify the items once he was directed to the correct aisle. . Dina went to Westlake School where she assisted in the pre-vocational school store program. She used pictures and therapy techniques to keep the students on task.

The OT department worked on coloring, gluing, cutting, tearing paper, and folding paper to make individual Holiday Elves. Each student made their own, which are displayed in the front hallway for everyone to enjoy.

Kim continues the supervision of the OT intern from Quinnipiac University (3 months). Claire will finish her internship on December 15. Kim and Holly attended Safety Care Training this month while Dina conducted 2 VCO's with Dr. Callahan.

Physical Therapy Department:

Currently at Crossroads School we have one physical therapist working two full days each week. A new student to our school was added to our caseload. There are now 14 students receiving physical therapy (PT) with a total of 16 individual treatment slots and three students receiving IEP directed physical therapy group. In addition, Aliza is running motor groups for the three youngest classes in our school each week.

Our students are continuing to progress nicely with their PT goals and objectives. This month, George W. was proud to beat his own dribbling record and happily charted his success on his "progress tracker." We learned that Elijah D. loves basketball and we have been able to use this game as a motivator to practice many other IEP goals including dribbling, catch/throw and standing up from the floor independently. Lucky E. is learning how to ride an adaptive bike for the first time which is very exciting. Our new student Gautham S. is adapting nicely to our motor room and enthusiastically participates in his sessions.

Each student continues to track their progress on their individual picture based "progress trackers." This allows students to self-assess and monitor their progress with specific PT IEP goals. The students enjoy giving themselves stickers as they progress with items on their charts. It is also a useful way to visually track our students' progress.

Our PT led (non-IEP directed) motor groups continue to run smoothly on Friday mornings. Students in our youngest three classes enjoy coming to the motor room for a structured movement break where we practice age specific gross motor skills.

Behavioral Team:

The Behavioral Team has launched a school-wide initiative to increase the use of activity schedules in classrooms and during related service sessions. An activity schedule is a set of pictures or words that cues someone to engage in a sequence of activities. Activity schedules create wonderful opportunities to build independence in our learners, increase student initiation of leisure activities, promote student choice making and increase opportunities for successful social interactions. Activity schedules are a great tool to be used in our classrooms, but these schedules can then be generalized to be used in a student's home and in their community. An activity schedule rubric guide was designed to assist staff with creating schedules and to track staff progress overtime. Ongoing support will be given to the classroom staff to assist with selecting activities based on VB-MAPP assessment results, individualizing what type of activity schedule works best for each individual student and utilizing data collection to track student progress.

A great example of the use of activity schedules was seen in room 111. The classroom and behavioral team collaborated to collect materials and took photos of over 40 activities. The photos were then formatted into pictures schedules and the classroom was redesigned to accommodate individual student work spaces. Individualized activity schedules are now completed daily with a variety of leisure, play and academic tasks included. Data is collected on student schedules to track progress and guide changes/additions to be made to each schedule. An activity schedule choice board has also been added to the classroom. Students can begin to select the activities they would like to complete in their own schedule. Social games, opportunities for communication and more advanced leisure activities (e.g. building lego structures with a picture model, playing Connect 4 with friend, etc.) will soon be added to student schedules.

The Behavioral Team provided a two day Safety Care training to related service staff from Crossroads and Westlake school this month. Safety Care is a training program for staff working with children, adolescents or adults who may exhibit challenging or dangerous behaviors. The focus of Safety Care is on prevention, safety and humane, supportive, evidence-based interventions. Safety Care teaches concepts and skills related to prevention and de-escalation of behavioral incidents and provides staff with physical techniques for responding to dangerous behaviors.

HILLCREST/SOUTH:

Enrollment as of 12/19/17 Actual: 105 Changes: 18 Entered: 12 Exited: 5. 1 moved out of state, 1 transferred schools, 2 residency issues/ violation of contracts, and 1 assault with injury to staff. Suspensions: 5 for assaults.	Intakes Pending: 3 Waiting List: Reg. Ed.: 0 Sp. Ed.: 0
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This month 12 new students started at the Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS). Ms. Mendo, guidance counselor, created individualized schedules for the students and ensured that they were on track to graduate. She assisted administrators by reaching out to the non-English speaking parents to inform them about our schools and when their child would be starting at Hillcrest. She continued to meet with Seniors to discuss post-secondary plans and how to achieve them, as well as assisting them in creating their FSA ID and completing the FAFSA. She also tracked student Credit Retrieval progress. Ms. Mendo met with Ms. Dattilo to develop a plan for teachers to monitor and grade students' progress and work. The students have continued to participate in the Union County College ALEKS Math Boot Camp program. This intensive tutoring program will prepare them for the Accuplacer post-test that will be scheduled in January. Ms. Mendo organized a U.S. Navy assembly and students were informed about this altruistic alternative and the benefits it offered.

Student participants in the HAS Community Service Program (HASCSP) in Ms. Scheetz's art class prepared holiday cards and crafts for the veterans residing in the Memorial Veteran's Home in Edison. The Frosty's

Friends committee held its ninth annual fundraiser in order to raise money to purchase toys for the statewide toy drive sponsored by Jersey Cares. Our annual “Random Acts of Kindness” committee was formed for the purpose of performing small gestures of kindness to benefit the communities that we serve. Fundraisers were held to support the committee’s elf-like activities. The Hillcrest Singers were in their eighth year of spreading holiday cheer. Students volunteered their time and talents to sing holiday songs and spread cheer to the residents of Runnells Long Term Care Facility, Genesis Nursing Home, and Children’s Specialized Hospital. The HASCSP concluded their annual “gently used” coat drive to benefit Jersey Cares. As a result, several large bags of “gently used” coats were collected and are now on their way to those individuals in need of a warm coat this winter. We would like to thank everyone who participated in this drive and supported this worthy cause!

Ms. Gilchrist, school social worker, continued to supervise the Rutgers social work intern, Ms. Shirley Rosas. The student focused on School Spirit Days with an attempt to improve student culture, morale, improve grades, and conduct. The social worker attended the monthly DCF meeting and pre-tested DCF involved students on the new behavioral scale. Ms. Gilchrist met with Dr. Glickman to go over scale results and treatment plans. Ms. Gilchrist assisted the principal each morning by monitoring the “blind spot” and in the afternoon by distributing cell phones. Ms. Gilchrist arranged for 28 students to partake in the incentive trip to the Movies. All students had excelled in behaviors, academics, and attendance. Ms. Gilchrist provided support for the Administration in terms of difficulties arising when students acted out in behaviors unbecoming of a HAS student.

In Ms. Duarte’s U.S. II classes students studied immigration as it took place in the early 1900’s leading into 2017. Students were able to draw parallels between the push/pull factors that affect immigration. Students then began to explore the concept of war and the various reasons nations initiate war through a study of the main causes of WWI. This study extended into the nations feelings on war today through a view of political cartoons depicting a somewhat unpatriotic perspective. All of this conversation drew interesting student reactions expressed in discussion and through writing. In Economics students concluded their budget unit as they researched various aspects of their prom budget to create prom collages. The unit helped students appreciate and understand the importance of budgeting in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

In Ms. Wrzesinski’s U.S. I classes students demonstrated critical thinking and analytical skills that were accomplished by looking at primary and secondary sources, note taking, and graphic organizer skills, as well as analyzing various texts and maps. The topic covered this month were the thirteen original colonies that included the New England Colonies (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts: Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Connecticut), the Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware) and the Southern Colonies (Maryland, Virginia, North/ South Carolina and Georgia). Students also reviewed the difficulties that these colonists faced, why they left their home country, establishment of government, key people and overall societal life. Students also looked at current event articles that were aligned with the common core standards and answered questions plaguing our country today. In the Modern World History classes students reviewed Portuguese and Spanish explorers, the 3 G’s (god, glory and gold), reason for exploration, stops during exploration, technological advancements, key influential people and overall trends of European countries during the time of expansion and exploration. Students also looked at current event articles that were aligned with the common core standards and answered questions plaguing our country today.

In Ms. Ferrari’s classes the vast majority of students advanced on their weekly math fluency drills on multiplication and division. Many students have shown week over week growth on these exams which was a good confidence builder for the students. This confidence should help them as they move onto standardized tests in the later part of this year and on their unit assessments. Ms. Ferrari started a review of the PARCC Algebra II exam to prepare students for the PARCC assessment in late April. She prepared Google Docs and practice worksheets to enforce key concepts that will be essential for students to understand prior to taking the assessment. Some key concepts that were reviewed included the exponential growth model, exponential decay model, geometric sequences, and logarithms. In our Success Seminar class we reinforced the importance

FASFA and reviewed the process with the students. The teacher continued to work hard to tailor the learning based on the individual needs within each class.

Students in Mr. Sobieniak's trigonometry classes learned how to solve problems that required the use of both the law of sines and the law of cosines. They also learned about bearings and solved many real life applications problems. Students in the Probability and Statistics classes learned about conditional probability and more properties of mutually exclusive and independent events. They practiced applying their knowledge in real life applications. The Success Seminar students focused on learning about grit and mindset. They researched about ways to develop resilience. They also learned how to change a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Students of all mathematics classes were using Khan Academy or the UCC ALEKS program to improve their algebraic skills on Fridays.

Mr. Grez's Biology students further enhanced their knowledge of evolution and adaptation to extreme environments by completing a Problem-Based-Learning project entitled "The End of Humanity?". Next month, Biology students will begin studying the interdependent relationships that exist in ecosystems. Marine Biology students finished their study of fishes and cetaceans and demonstrated their mastery of the topics by creating children's books about a fish and a "Missing Cetacean Poster." In January Marine Biology students will begin their investigation of marine reptile and invertebrate species.

This month was nuclear chemistry month for Mr. Sternberg's courses. The students learned about radioisotopes and their decay products. After gaining this background knowledge, the students researched the practical uses of nuclear energy. They began to prepare presentation slide-shows on a topic of their choosing. Topics ranged from irradiation of food to cancer treatment using ionizing radiation. They also chose to either support nuclear energy or debunk it as a danger to society using their topic of expertise. The Forensic Science students demonstrated their aptitude at analyzing fingerprints. Becoming proficient in pattern and minutiae recognition, they were able to classify fingerprints that were gathered with ink. Through circumsppection and magnification, the students found the subtle nuances that distinguish one print from the next. We recently began the topic of Blood typing. After learning about Punnett squares and blood genetics, students were able to predict the probabilities of offspring to inherit specific antigens on their RBCs. Moreover, they learned that Forensic Scientists utilize this useful type of class evidence to rule out suspects in a crime.

Students in Ms. Holden's English classes read and analyzed *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Students studied the themes exemplified in *A Christmas Carol* and how the theme has remained timeless over the years. Students enjoyed comparing and contrasting clips of different video versions of the classic. Students also researched the life and times of Charles Dickens through interactive web sites. Students completed the unit on *A Christmas Carol* by taking an online interactive quiz. In addition, students worked on improving their vocabulary skill using the free rice vocabulary program.

Ms. Cioffi's students continued reading and evaluating arguments. Lesson plans centered around students identifying elements of a strong argument and then evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in these arguments. Students wrote their own arguments based on their evaluation and analysis of two paired articles. Students then wrote arguments that utilized the elements of a strong argument that they learned in class. Future plans for English courses are for students to continue with the practice in writing strong arguments, continuation with independent reading in order to improve their sustained reading skills, and completing ReadTheory.org activities so students and the teacher can monitor growth in students' skill levels.

Ms. Scheetz's Art students continued their work on painting and color theory this month. Students created a new painting on old record albums. In this lesson, they learned about the history of vinyl albums, how they are made and played. They were also able to play real albums in class thus, introducing most of them for the first time to a form of media that has been utilized for almost 100 years and has served as a very important part in representing and expressing pop culture and its diverse history. Students were required to base their designs on

some aspect of the vinyl record: represent pop culture, design around their shape, color, or utilized the hole in the middle. Many students created designs about pop culture, some were inspired by the shape and created designs such as flowers and popular round logos and some “recorded” their own history by including pictures of their lives or family. In this unit, they continued to learn about color theory and practice and refined their painting skills. Each unit builds the foundation for the next. In the upcoming unit, they will use their drawing, design, and painting skills in a three dimensional project.

The students in Mr. Barone’s Physical Education classes have finished a unit on basketball. They were involved in a number of games which incorporated all skills used during a game such as passing, shooting, dribbling and rebounding. The students enjoyed these intense games and Mr. Barone was very pleased with the overall participation from all his classes. In the Fitness Center, students continued with billiards and ping-pong tournaments. In addition, students continued using the exercise machines, bowflex, and kettlebells during their workouts. In Health classes from Mr. Barone and Ms. Rubin, the School Nurse and Health teacher, the students completed a unit on Tobacco and were introduced to a new unit on Alcohol. During the initial lesson students discussed the numerous health risks of alcohol use and now understand that it is an addictive drug that slows the central nervous system (CNS) and impairs physical abilities and judgement. The students were just introduced to how the media influences teens about alcohol. Next month, the students will learn about drinking alcohol and its effect on the body. They will also have a chance to use the “drunk goggles” that were received from the Commission Grant.

Ms. Rubin, in her role as the School Nurse, made calls to all of the absent students’ parents each day. The nurse has been assisting with entry procedures, including bag searches. The nurse has been seeing an average of 15-16 students per day. An audit of the health records was done in December and all records passed the audit. Ms. Rubin covered the Westlake School when the Westlake nurse was absent and there was no substitute. She also assisted at Westlake School during several medical emergencies.

HILLCREST/NORTH:

<p>Enrollment as of: 12/15/17 Actual: 96 Referrals : 11 Changes: Entered: 11 Exited: 0</p>	<p>Drills: 12/1/17- Fire drill 11/28/17 Bus Evacuation Drill 12/7/17 EM Staff Training OSS Suspensions: (1) Verbal Threat</p>
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In English, students began a new unit on the power of language and arguments. Students have been exploring the essential question of “How can arguments be won?” Students began with a miniature class debate in order to observe and discuss good argument techniques. Students have studied about the elements of a good argument, point of view, and how to write arguments. Students created thesis statements surrounding topics in their independent reading books such as plot, theme, and characters. Students also created claims and found evidence from their books to support those claims. Students learned how to cite their evidence in MLA format. Then, students wrote body paragraphs in which they proved their claims with supporting evidence and analysis. Recently, students read an article with opposing views on gun control laws. Students compared and contrasted the opposing points of view in the article. Students are currently writing an argumentative essay on their position on gun control laws by developing a claim, citing evidence from the article, and analyzing that evidence.

Students also continue to read their independent reading books every day, and have been tracking their lexile level weekly using an online reading assessment. During independent reading time, the teacher and students engage in daily discussions about reading progress and strategies for improvement.

The trigonometry class is working on all six ratios. They have created charts for the functions for the critical values of the angles. They have mastered finding the missing sides and angles of a right triangle. Emphasis was put on real world applications where measures could not otherwise easily be found.

The Prob & Stat classes completed a unit on scatter plots and the line of best fit. They have used Google sheets as well as graph paper to find the “trendline” or the “line of best fit.” Afterwards they had to come up with the equation for the line, using the slope and y-intercept form.

December brought on a new chapter and set of skills to students in 20th Century Civil Liberties. Students became familiar with how to properly use the internet in doing research. Students were able to work upon these skills by researching the Jim Crow laws of the American south and the Nuremberg laws of Nazi Germany. Students discovered how the laws had an effect on the people who were oppressed. Students did this by breaking down primary source documents, researching expert opinions, discussing and debating key topics and synthesizing the information in a final presentation.

December 6th was our first College Day of the school year. Four post-secondary programs were represented; Lincoln Tech, UCC, Kean University, and Empire Beauty School. Every student had the opportunity to visit each desk and speak with the representative about the school.

HAN held a “Community Night” in Elizabeth on December 6th at the Elizabeth Public Library. The theme for the night was focused on student attendance. Six parents of students that are “at risk” of violating the school’s attendance policy were present. The meeting was insightful and productive.

This month, 21 new students started at the Hillcrest Academy North. Ms. Mendo created individualized schedules for the students and ensured that they are on track to graduate. She assisted administrators by reaching out to the non-English speaking parents to inform them about our schools and when their child would be starting at Hillcrest. She continued to meet with Seniors to discuss post-secondary plans and how to achieve them, as well as assisting them in creating their FSA ID and completing the FAFSA. She is also tracking student Credit Retrieval progress. Ms. Mendo met with Ms. Dattilo to develop a plan for teachers to monitor and grade students’ progress and work.

The students at Hillcrest Academy North have continued to participate in the UCC ALEKS Math Boot Camp program. This intensive tutoring program will prepare them for the Accuplacer post-test that will be scheduled in January.

The health office is organizing student charts for new students starting this month. This includes making sure all new students have a completed immunization record. The nurse filed the annual TB report with the Union County Superintendent and Local health department.

Health class finished the DVD “In the Womb”. The class continued the Human Reproductive unit. Parenting and Peculiarities of the Newborn was completed as well as Development and Parenting of the Infant to 1 year olds. Physical Education classes continue to meet their fitness goals.

In the month of December, the Social Studies Department at Hillcrest Academy North discussed various human rights violations throughout history. In US I, students analyzed the causes and impacts of slavery in the Americas. They studied the story of Solomon Northup, whose life inspired the movie “Twelve Years A Slave.” In US II, students studied European Imperialism and the impact on the countries that were colonized. This was highlighted by a case study on the Belgian occupation of the Congo.

NONPUBLIC:

Non-Public School Security Aid Program expenditures have been allocated. Each Non-Public School is in the process of purchasing security enhancements for their schools through a *Layering of School Security*:

- The Perimeter of the School: Parent and Visitors Signs
- The School Building: Access and Identification procedures to the school
- The Classrooms: Variety of ways to lock classroom doors in an emergency
- The Students and Staff: Student and Staff Identification

The Non-Public Nursing program is running in all of the Non-Public Schools in Union County. The Non-Public nurses are working on completing the state required health screenings (hearing, vision, blood pressure, height, weight, and scoliosis) for all Non-Public school students, with the consent of the parents.

The Non-Public Title 1 program will continue to service students through the end of April in Union County for those students who qualify for the additional educational service.

The Non-Public Schools are continuing to receive technology orders based on the school's allotted allocation for the 2017 – 2018 school year.

The Non-Public School Teaching Team is working diligently on their PLC Goals: Communicating with Students and how to reduce student stress and anxiety with the learning environment. Teachers have received a book, "The Art of Stopping Time: Practical Mindfulness for Busy People", to assist them in developing effective strategies to reduce stress and anxiety for their students within their learning environments.

The Child Student Team has completed over 250 Initial Evaluations, Re-Evaluations and Annuals for our Non-Public Schools. All reports have been given to the respective parents, schools and districts.

Wishing you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

From the Non-Public Department Team: Staff, Teachers, Nurses, CST, Tutors, and Paraprofessionals.

TRANSITION SERVICES:

Work Readiness Academy Individual Student Enrollments: 13

Project SEARCH-Overlook Medical Center Enrollment: 8 (1 terminated)

Westlake School (Job Academy): 12

Lamberts Mill Academy (Job Academy): 1

District Direct Programs: 2 (Plainfield & Elizabeth)

The Work Readiness Academy is in its second year of operation at maximum capacity with 13 students enrolled in the program (12 full-time students, and 1 afternoon shared-time student). Students participate in internships at various local businesses with support from our program staff. The classroom portion of the program is focused on teaching the students critical skills for employment including digital literacy.

Highlights from this month included:

Most Common Interview Questions: Students formulated answers to help prepare them for future interviews. Identifying the following: What they wanted to share about themselves, what work

experience they have, what their strengths are, what their weakness is, why they should be hired, and what kind of days and hours they would like to work.

Mock Interviews: Students formulated answers to the most common interview questions which they used to help guide them in a Mock Interview. The mock interviews were lead by various instructors and paraprofessionals where the students were interviewed for a specific position at one of the following local businesses: Chick-Fil- A, American Eagle, and Paylocity. Students came dressed appropriately for the interview equipped with their resume and cover letter in hand. The students were critiqued on first impressions, body language, verbal communication, and how well they closed the interview. A great job was done by all!

Google Sites: Students were introduced to the New Version of Google Sites. Students learned about the different tools to use and how to work as a team to create a project which will be presented in class.

Post Secondary Goals continue to be identified and action steps to achieve them are being discussed.

The Essential Question of: **“Why is it important to think about actions and consequences before you act/react?”** was addressed.

Other Highlights:

Students participated in a Baking Elective

Students visited the Strength and Fitness Club in Cranford NJ twice this month where they are learning proper weightlifting techniques and the various muscles used when lifting.

Career Exploration Trip to Print Tech Marketing Solutions in Springfield, NJ

The Work Readiness Academy targets students with disabilities (ages 17-to-21) who are in need to a comprehensive transition program with a significant focus on community-based work-learning. Students are referred from sending school districts across Union County.

The Project SEARCH-Overlook Medical Center program is in its second year with a full class of nine students. The students spent this month participating in their first internship rotations. The departments hosting student interns during the first rotation include:

Food Services

Dietary Services

Infection Control

Information Technology

Environmental Services

Materials Management

Emergency Services (Expedited Care Unit)

Overlook Foundation

Mail Room

Each morning the students spend 60 minutes in the on-site program classroom at Overlook receiving instruction in employability skills.

Instructional topics covered this month in the Project SEARCH at Overlook Medical Center program included:

(Teamwork) What are your strengths and preferences in working with others?

(Problem Solving in a Group) How can you effectively make a decision with another person?

(Harassment in the Workplace) Why is it important for you to understand your workplace rights and responsibilities?

(Interviewing for a Job) Why is it important to stick to the facts and highlight skills when answering interview questions?

(Financial Responsibility) Why is it important to consider the difference of needs over wants when making important financial decisions?

Other highlights from this month included:

-A visit from Wade Wheeler from NJ Citizen Action to discuss Banking Basics and Money Management.

-Holiday Brunch to show appreciation to the students' mentors at OMC.

-Ashley Carter, Coordinator of CONCERN Employee Assistance at OMC taught a lesson on Stressors at Work and Self-care.

Project SEARCH is a collaborative effort between UCESC, Overlook Medical Center (part of Atlantic Health System), the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Arc of New Jersey, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, and NJTIP at Rutgers, Project SEARCH

TRANSPORTATION:

The estimate of total yearly transportation costs was mailed to all participating districts on December 18, 2017. This report is needed by the districts for budget planning and preparation and is mailed every few months. Costs fluctuate due to student additions and deletions and interim reports give participating districts a more accurate "snapshot" of their total annual costs. A similar report is also prepared for the contractors who work for the Commission.

The winter season has now begun, and the inclement weather notification system is in place and has already been implemented due to the early onset of the winter season this year.

The Department's revenue statement is used as a measure of the amount of business conducted by the Department as compared to the same time last year. The statement shows that compared to last year, which was the busiest ever, the Department has maintained its revenue base.

TECHNOLOGY:

The IT Department has been working to supply the staff with a remote control software that will allow teachers to block students from working on unauthorized content during lessons. We have moved toward GoGuardian however, since it does not meet all of the district's needs, we are still in the research phase.

We are still working with Comcast and Cooperative to complete the telco service cutover. We have recently begun speaking with a telco firm regarding a full upgrade to our phone systems which would include uniformity across all buildings as well as simplification of usage. Fortunately this company has a relationship with Comcast so we have requested they assist us in speeding up the service cutover.

We have reconfigured our Google Apps for Education backup solution, Backupify. This is an ongoing process as we are molding it to our network so it best serves our needs.

There are several aspects of this network that the current IT Department was given little to no documentation on and one of these is the routing environment. All three sites have Cisco 1900 routers as well as one layer 3 switch to accommodate traffic between the central hub at 45 Cardinal Drive and the other two buildings. We were not left any credential information regarding these devices and have been struggling to make improvements while working around them. We are happy to report we have been able to circumnavigate the security settings at two locations and are finally moving forward with network architecture improvements.

The New Era Tech's quote for an installation of sound system in 1571's gymnasium has been approved. We are working to schedule the project currently.

We have been creating a much more detailed list of monthly system maintenance duties for our Network Administrator position. This includes general maintenance to all systems as well as scheduled upgrades to software and firmware. As we move forward we will explore backup testing and disaster recovery.

The IT Department has completed our Google Cloud Print configuration. We have tested printing access from all sites successfully.

We have decided to retire our Altiris software/hardware management system. Since we are moving further and further into the Chromebook infrastructure the need for a Windows software management system as reduced. We have determined that it is no longer worth the cost and time to maintain this system.

As all files must eventually be migrated off of the old server architecture, we have begun a project where we will slowly move files within the district network and then finally to the Google Cloud. Some files/folders will not be uploaded to Google for security concerns but the majority of the staff shares will. We will begin this project at Hillcrest Academy North and, based on the success there, we will perform the migration at the other schools one by one.

We have made several improvement to the Aerohive wireless infrastructure. We will continue this process as we move towards PARCC and increase the amount of active wireless connections. These have begun to include building support systems such as the HVAC.

The IT Department has successfully promoted a new domain controller at 1571 and so far everything has been stable. We will continue to monitor the progress of this system for the next several weeks. If this system has no issues then all 2003 servers will have been successfully retired.

We repaired failed hardware components on our SAN and confirmed that early warning systems in place are functional and accurate.

cc: Robert A. Behot, Business Administrator/Board Secretary