



**Union County Educational Services Commission**  
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(Att. 2)

**Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors**  
**March 7, 2018**

**WESTLAKE:**

<b>Enrollment as of February 22, 2018</b> Actual: 74 Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 1	<b>Referrals: 5</b> Intakes Scheduled: 4 Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: February 22, 2018	Emergency Drills: Lockdown
Suspensions: 0	February 1, 2018

Westlake had four intakes/tours scheduled this month for potential new students. The case managers, parents and potential students visit our school to discuss our program and take a tour of our facility. They are very impressed by all that we have to offer. Parents vary on what they are looking for in a program with some wanting a focus on independent living skills and a strong vocational program while others are looking for strictly an academic program. Westlake has a mix of what is offered and continues to increase higher level learning for all students.

Music has continued for all Westlake students who are extremely excited to learn from Mr. Patrick. His classes are geared toward movement and participation by all and students find the music program to be an outlet in expressing themselves. The holiday music show back in December was such a success that we are talking about the possibility of having a spring music show.

Westlake wrote a grant to the Westfield Service League for funding to create a calm room for students needing a calm, quiet environment. The calm room would be used as a means of de-escalating students in crisis to work on coping skills and creating an environment with materials that will assist in re-directing students back to academic work. Materials in the calm room include relaxing music, low lights, sensory materials, fine motor tasks, bean bag vibrating chair etc.

Westlake will be presenting at the next Board of Education meeting on March 7, 2018 to discuss our program and all it has to offer. The BMW car club will also be at that meeting to present us with an annual check that they donate to Westlake each year. We are looking forward to meeting new faces on the Board and showing them what our program has to offer.

**Language Arts:** The school celebrated several events this month. Mrs. Attlesy's students read about Groundhog Day and followed a step-by-step drawing to make a picture of the groundhog. Discussions were held over whether a ground hog can really tell if spring is coming sooner or later. The class also celebrated the 100th day of school. Necklaces were made using 100 pieces of Fruit Loops cereal. 100 Day glasses were also made and pictures were taken of the students wearing the glasses. The students also read about Presidents Washington and Lincoln. For Black History Month, the students read in "Time for Kids" about the accomplishments of Black Americans.

Mrs. Capizzi's students started a unit on letter writing. Students have learned the different parts of a letter through interactive activities and games. They choose a friend/teacher to send a letter to and will be learning about how to address the envelope and the mailing process in the coming weeks. Each month students will be writing a letter to someone to practice these skills.

**Math:** In math Mrs. Pajewski's students have been working on their individual programs. Concepts include matching color/shape, identifying coins and their values, counting money, word problems, simple addition/subtraction, multiplication, and division.

**Science:** Mrs. Roble's students have been reading in Science about veterinarians and the skills needed to do their job. They are also reading about the life cycle of bees.

**Food Science:** The students have been very busy this month. They have made Valentine Candy, pillows, and breads for the sales at the Commission Board meeting, Commission office, and Westlake School during their vocational and food science lessons.

**Social Studies:** In the subject of Social Studies, Mr. Carten's students are covering a unit on current events and Black History Month. The students are researching famous African Americans including Rosa Parks, Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z, Maya Angelou and Jackie Robinson. They will be creating a mural for display in the hallway of all the famous people they learn about.

Mrs. Convery's students have had an eventful month for holidays and observances in Social Studies. They began the month studying Groundhog Day and read a story graphing the class predictions on whether the groundhog would see his shadow. This month is also Black History Month where students read about Rosa Parks in the Time for Kids magazine, as well as an illustrated story entitled "A Picture Book of Rosa Parks". The students also listened to stories about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln to coincide with President's Day.

Mrs. Costello's students continue to learn about the seven continents. Students have studied and created world maps, and discussed animals from various continents. This led to a unit about the Olympics, beginning with the colors of the Olympic rings, which represent colors from the flags of each continent

**PE:** Students are currently working on a Basketball Unit. They are taking part in drills, skills, and activities leading up to a school wide basketball game. Students look forward to the game every year. Some students are progressing at a slower pace and are still building their gross motor skills while other students are enhancing their dribbling and ball skills. We are slowly working our way to passing, shooting hoops, and eventually playing defense. My goal of this unit is to teach students how to play basketball and expose them to the sport of basketball and not just shooting around so they can play games with their friends and families. This year's basketball game will be held on Thursday, March 29, 2018.

**Health:** In Health Classes we are continuing our understanding of being active and healthy. Students follow the weekly schedule of activities that assess their work in health class and activities that are incorporated into instruction. Mr. Moss is currently working with the administrators to plan and prepare for the annual lessons on growing up, puberty and hygiene. We are also working on adding lessons to expose students to suicide prevention which will be modified for our students with disabilities.

**Sign Making/Engraving machine:** Students made a sign for a student ambassador at Hillcrest Academy North and sent it interoffice mail. It was a surprise incentive from the school Principal, Mr. John Marquet, to his student who is representing his school. Students also are working on making signs for a few new staff members at Westlake including: Nurse IJ, Jenn Davis, paraprofessional and Meg Joyce, paraprofessional.

Horticulture: Mrs. Capizzi's class has been reviewing the different tools that we use in the greenhouse and garden. We have been playing matching and bingo games to become familiar with the different tools. We are hoping to get outside as it warms up to clean out the beds in the garden to prepare for spring planting. Mrs. Capizzi is working on writing a grant entitled, "Union County Kids Dig In" with the assistance of Phyllis Sandrock, which would enhance our horticulture program and give back to our community.

Post Office/Print Shop: Students continue to write letters to each other and are very excited when they receive letters from their friends. Mrs. Shaw's students responded to a letter written by Mrs. Tantillo to the class. Each student responded writing back to her in their individual mode of communication. One student wrote back using his braille machine which was translated by his paraprofessional. In the Print Shop, students are exploring the jobs associated with the print shop (copying, collating, filing, laminating and more). We have completed laminating jobs for staff and are receiving jobs from the main office (copies and mail delivery).

Sweet Shoppe: The students are continuing to prepare baked breads and cakes for Tuesday morning Sweet Shop. Students are enjoying serving their peers and the other classes look forward to visiting the Sweet Shop. Two students, F.D. and J.D.L. have begun to take more initiative in the kitchen and are becoming more independent. The Hillcrest Academy South Principal, Dr. Balsamello has thanked Mrs. Palmer for having his students come to her class as a reward. Our students are able to serve the HAS students coffee, hot chocolate and baked goods.

Jewelry: In our jewelry workshop, we produced necklaces, lanyards, earrings and key chains for the school Valentine's Day Sale and the Commission sale. We had a very successful month and all students seem to be enjoying making different items in the jewelry program. They have the freedom to design and make a variety of products.

Fabrics Plus Shop: In vocational class, Fabrics Plus Shop, the students made various Valentine's Day products using recycled bottles. The students produced decorative bottles using yarn and stencils. Some of the students were apprehensive about their products. But once they sold their first product, they were very excited and they made good sales at the Commission as well as at the Westlake Valentine's Day Sale.

Life Skills: In Life Skills, the students learned how to write a chronological resume. The students typed and saved in word document on the computer and took a copy of their resume home. They also briefly learned about a cover letter as well.

Retail: The Retail Center vocational shop was very busy this month. Students participated in two sales; one here at the school and one at the Commission office. Items for sale included socks, candy bars, dog biscuits, balloons, dollar items and candy filled containers.

Dog biscuits remain one of our best selling items. We sell out any time we make a batch using our special recipe and dog biscuit maker. The students made and packaged a double batch of peanut butter dog biscuits and donated them to a pet adoption charity for a special event.

**Therapies: Speech:** This month the speech department assessed students' skills using SGO post tests and also completed progress reports for all students. For our assistive technology users, we created pages on PLQ and programmed other augmentative communication devices for students to participate in class and therapy groups.

In OT/Speech groups, students worked on making peanut butter and jelly heart sandwiches and tortilla snowflakes. Basic concepts, including hot/cold, soft/hard, wet/dry were discussed. They also participated in

an obstacle course which combined speech, fine-motor, and gross motor components. Students used their iPads to label and request items in all sessions.

A scavenger hunt was also conducted where students had to find puzzle pieces hidden in various locations throughout the ADL room. When all pieces were found, students completed the puzzle together as a group. Multi-step directions and prepositional concepts were reinforced during this activity.

In individual and group speech sessions, students worked on vocabulary development for winter themed activities, created valentines and played games to reinforce peer interaction.

**Physical Therapy:** Currently we have two physical therapists working at Westlake School (one works three days a week and one works one day). There are 21 students on our physical therapy (PT) caseload with a total of 32 individual treatment sessions, six students receiving IEP driven gross motor groups (divided into 3 groups) and one monthly consult. This month, Mrs. Feuerstein continues to use our iPad app called "Exercise Buddy" with some students. This app allows her to easily add video-modeling into the PT sessions. In particular, she uses the video models of balancing on one leg and horizontal jumping with a group of students. Final SGO recorded data clearly shows improvement when using the video modeling. This month Mrs. Feuerstein has been using our new color-coded muscle chart with many students. She added Velcro arrows so that students can learn their muscles and place the arrows on the muscles they are utilizing while exercising. This has been very successful with some students and it is great to see them remember muscle names from session to session.

**Occupational Therapy:** The Occupational Therapists continue to collaborate with teachers and classroom staff regarding the sensory needs of their students and provide necessary equipment and training when needed. Mrs. Edelstein has been instrumental in identifying and ordering equipment that will be used in the Westlake calm/de-escalation room.

The OT's continue to collaborate with the speech department to determine activities for the ADL support groups. Activities this month included cooking (heart shaped PB&J sandwiches and tortilla snowflakes), reading written/picture recipes and completing recipe reviews. These students also participated in an obstacle course incorporating fine and gross motor skills, language and cognitive activities. The therapists also planned a scavenger hunt in the ADL room. This activity incorporated reading and following multi step directions and concepts (ie. look under the rug near the foot of the bed), locating puzzle pieces then working cooperatively to make the puzzle.

As part of the PLC time, Mrs. Edelstein assisted teachers in making teaching materials for the Jewelry workshop - visual designs/patterns to follow when making earrings, lanyards and eye glass chains, and organizing the materials needed for these items into individual kits. She also made materials for CBI trips to the grocery store including a laminated picture grocery list. All of these materials have been placed in google drive under the Westlake PLC as shared resources for all of Westlake staff.

**Social Work:** Social Workers have worked very closely with our consultant psychiatrist, Dr. Amy Borg-Glickman, to update and assist with the emotional needs of our students this school year. Proactive meetings that include our clinical, behavioral, educational and administrative team have been held with families in order to support strategies to provide a more comprehensive school-based program. Families have reported these meetings to be of great assistance helping guide them in their effort to understand, accept and implement emotional and behavioral interventions. We continue to meet with team members to adjust supportive cognitive and behavioral techniques that decrease behavior and increase learning throughout the school day. Individual and group counseling sessions are ongoing.

Efforts to educate parents about Transition opportunities for their adolescents have expanded thanks to the Project Search program. Parents rely upon our staff especially when faced with difficult choices concerning future outcomes. Although time is limited for face to face contact, shared google docs have allowed Hermena Goodson and Phyllis Sandrock, as well as our Administrators, to work to improve our approach to Transition. CSTs are requiring more documentation of SLE programs for their graduation requirements.

**Behaviorist:** This month, the behavior department has continued to respond to many crisis management calls for three students who needed frequent interventions. Other students with less frequent interventions included three additional students. The behaviorists have 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.

Behavior strategies and plans have been written for many students. Data collection for these and other students has been reviewed on an ongoing basis. Data continues to be inputted on all students with BIPs, as well as graphed and analyzed by the two behaviorists on an ongoing basis.

The behaviorists meet weekly holding structured teacher meetings to discuss student behavior concerns and academic individualized programs to assist teachers with strategies and ongoing concerns. In addition, behaviorists are scheduled to observe/consult/train weekly in each class (twice per week for ‘autism classes’). The behaviorists also continue to meet weekly with administrators, giving feedback and information on students’ needs, as well as discussing pressing behavioral and/or instructional needs of students.

The behaviorists provided Part 1 of Safety Care Trainee training on February 9, along with Supervisor of Instruction Robert Peneno. Part 2 will occur on March 19. A make-up training in which the behavior department is expected to participate will occur March 6th.

**LAMBERTS MILL ACADEMY:**

<p><b>As of February, 2018:</b>  LMA Actual: 42  LMA District - Non-New Point:37  New Point Specialty at LMA: 5  Changes: 3 Entered: 2  Pending: 0  Exited: 1  <b>Trinitas Hospital :</b>  Bedside Instruction: <b>40</b>  (inpatient)  Day Program: <b>47</b>  Approved-Agreement signed: <b>71</b>  Classified: <b>41</b>  Regular Ed: <b>30</b></p>	<p>Fire Alarms: 0   Fire Drills: 1   Security Drills (1): 1</p>
<p>Referrals in February: 4  Intakes Scheduled: 4  Completed: 4  Accepted LMA placement: 1  Placement Pending : 1</p>	<p>Suspension out of school: 0  In School Suspension: 0  HIB: 0</p>

## Administration

LMA is taking collaboration to the next level with its advocate program. Students and teachers are teaming up to create strategies that work best for each individual student in each class. Teachers spend time with students and therapist to create plans that are facilitated through the students **Behavior Intervention Plan, BIP**. Staff meets daily during their common planning time to analyze data, review plans, and collaborate on future interventions and how to incorporate them into their instruction. The advocate program helps to improve school climate, student attendance, and student motivation. Our overarching goal is to increase parent involvement, positive student behavior leading to positive academic outcomes, and build connections between staff and students through regular meetings and weekly activities.

Our STEAM approach, under the conception that Lamberts Mill Academy will build “**(e)STEAM**”, **e**motional **S**tability **S**cience **T**echnology **E**ngineering **A**rts and **M**ath, for our students that are classified emotionally disturbed and psychiatrically involved is being fortified by LMA staff attending an exciting professional development day where professionally trained LMA staff instructed all of the LMA educators, which included teachers, clinical therapists, paraprofessionals, and building administrators to the exciting world of drone (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) development. Teachers started by building their own Multi-Rotor Drone and then learned basic flight control on a simulator. They will begin to learn how to master their own Drone/UAV with real flight instruction in a controlled area. Staff will now be able to plan an interdisciplinary curriculum that provides quality courses to enhance our current STEAM, Social Emotional Learning, and Project Based Learning programs by providing a unique foundation that explores mechanical engineering, programming, coding language, assembly, repair, and piloting a Drone/Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) to augment academic and therapeutic modalities. This curriculum will also help students develop skills needed for employment and college especially relating to electrical networking, mechanical assembly, computer coding, business marketing, entrepreneurship, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Piloting.

## Academics

**English Language Arts & Literacy:** Through the use the Japanese tradition of Senbazru and Origami, Lamberts Mill Academy students created 1,001 cranes over the past several months. This project facilitated literacy skills and helped to circumvent behavioral issues. Students also discussed how this project brought meaning and purpose to their own life during their Mosaic Class which focuses on social, emotional learning and character development.

The Cranes were carefully packaged and shipped to the Mayor of Hiroshima Japan to be placed by the feet of the statue of Sadako. To help send off the cranes students participated in a moment of silence in hopes of promoting peace globally.

In observance and celebration of Black History Month each class period do now activity for ELA&L was surrounded around African Americans. Through word searches, reading comprehension text, crosswords, close reading and drawing this made Black History month a seamless celebration of African Americans throughout the month.

**Science:** February was a short month, but we tried to get some great stuff squeezed into Science class. We had a speaker from Rutgers visit us. The board-certified forensic entomologist shared a fascinating (and gross!) presentation with students about how insects can help us solve crimes. She also shared her extensive bug collection with us and offered to return later in the spring to help us collect and classify our own insects. In Biology, students finished up our unit on Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration. We built up lactic acid in our own muscles by doing some chair sits against the wall. We also played with some yeast and witnessed how they ‘feed’ on sugar. In Forensics, we have been studying ballistics and finished with a timely debate on gun laws in the US. In Chemistry, we are finishing a unit on bonding, but then launching into projects on different groups of molecules. Our Environmental science students watched a live webinar

about water conservation in California and finished up 3D projects on natural resources from a state or a country they selected. Some of the projects were fantastic!

**Mathematics:** Students in Algebra classes learned about collecting data, and how to read visual representations, along with the importance of data analysis. We got ‘real world’ data by students competing in ‘Olympic-like’ events in the Gym such as number of free throws made, and how far they can jump. Students measured, and collected data based on students’ performance. We took this data and created different forms of data representation on the Smartboard including box-and-whisker plots and stem-and-leaf tables. Students learned about median, Q1, Q3, min, max and outliers of their data sets.

Students taking Geometry are learning about transformations on the Coordinate Plane. They are learning how to slide, rotate and reflect a point over a certain point. For students to learn about these different transformations a coordinate plane system was created on the classroom floor, and student’s were able to transform different points. Finally, students are now beginning a project on finding different types of logos and demonstrating knowledge of transformations by showing the steps to perform rotations, slides and reflections on the Coordinate Plane.

**History:** This month, students have been progressing as expected through their individual classroom curriculums. Students in World History are finishing their unit on the classical civilizations of Greece and will begin Rome. During their study, students learned about the development of the city-states and compared their similarities and differences. This study included the social structures and cultures of Athens and Sparta. They were introduced to the concept of myths and used them to further their study of the early polytheistic religions. Students evaluated myths to determine how myths were used to explain historical events. Students are currently using maps and other primary documentation to evaluate the impact of the Punic Wars on the development of Roman and Mediterranean culture.

Students in US1 have been studying the aftermath of the American Revolutionary War and the creation of the United States Constitution. Students began their study by evaluating the effectiveness of the Articles of Confederation and why it needed to be revised. Through the use of primary documents, students determined the causes of Shay’s rebellion and used them to explain the failures of the Articles of Confederation. Students then moved into the study of the New Jersey plan and the Virginia plan. Students are currently taking on the role of state representatives at the Constitutional Convention and determined which plan best represented their state’s needs. Students will simulate the convention by debating and voting on which plan to choose.

Students in USII have been studying the impact World War I left on the world, the roaring 20s, and the beginnings of the Great Depression. Students evaluated the similarities and differences between Wilson’s 14 points and the actual Treaty of Versailles. They were asked to predict what life would be like for Americans after the war based on the agreements and disagreements regarding the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. This led into our study of the cultural boom of the 1920s and the Harlem Renaissance. Students grouped together to research and teach their peers about a particular artistic medium of the time. Students are now studying the causes of the Great Depression. Students have been asked to compare hidden economic factors of the 1920s to economic systems present in our society to effectively evaluate whether things have improved. Students have also completed a simulation of the stock market crash of the 1920s by working in pairs to invest their money in a mini-stock market game. This experience helped them to better understand the functions of the stock market and to develop a firsthand account of what happened in the stock market crash.

Students in sociology finalized their unit on culture through a study of colonialism and the postcolonial lens. Students determined the reasons for colonialism through a study of slavery and trade, identifying groups that were victims and victors of colonialism. Students furthered their study by reading perspectives of victims

and victors to identify differences within their point of view of events. Students used these differences to define postcolonial lens and its impact on society and education. Students are now entering a unit on socialization.

**Physical Education and Health:** February has been an exciting month for Health and Physical Education at Lambert's Mill Academy. Students were working hard practicing and mastering their badminton skills and preparing for the 2nd Annual LMA Badminton Tournament. The tournament was a great success and all students had a wonderful time. Finals for the tournament took place in the gym in front of the staff and students with the participants putting on some of the best badminton play this school has ever seen.

In celebration of Black History Month students learned about some of the most influential people in athletics such as Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, and Muhammad Ali. We are now covering the 2018 Winter Olympics and learning about all the sports that are part of this historic event.

In Health we continue to work on the CPR/AED Unit. Students have been practicing personal safety and universal precautions as well as what to do in certain situations. Students have also had the opportunity to practice their CPR skills on a mannequin either alone or with a partner.

**World Language:** This month students worked on the unit "*La Familia y las Celebraciones*" in Spanish. Students acquired vocabulary and communication skills as they completed the do now and mini lesson through auditory, visual, and kinesthetic activities about family celebration vocabulary. Students are now familiar with the food items, the verb "*vivir, hacer, cocinar, decorar, necesitar, tener, ser/estar, ir, gustar, and preferir*" possessive adjectives, and party phrases. Through interdisciplinary instruction and different activities, the students connected a family story with the Japanese tradition of "Origami Cranes", which tells the parallel stories of longevity where the Japanese refer to the cranes as "bird of happiness". Japanese mothers ask for the protection of the crane's wings for their children and hope and healing during difficult times. The students in Spanish class reached the goal of creating the 1,001 cranes for English class, which were shipped to Japan to bring peace around the world. Also, the students worked on a project for Black History Month called "*Mi herencia and Encontrando mis raíces*". They also completed cultural interview questions based on the essential questions: What is your definition of "culture?" and "How do you define "family?"

### **LMA Clinical Department**

During life skills the groups focused on decision making and problem-solving skills. The groups were presented with an activity called "fallout shelter." This activity involved fictional characters of different ages and backgrounds. The students were asked to individually complete this activity, and then discussed their responses as a group. Once completed the students engaged in healthy debates where they had to defend their choices based on the information presented. Each group varied slightly in how this activity was completed with the main goal of healthy interaction and communication.

### **New Point**

February was celebrated by honoring Black History and its contributions to the American nation. Black scientists such as Dr. Drew, George Washington Carver and Elijah Mc Coy were celebrated for their contributions to the world of Science. Black pioneers such as Jackie Robinson and Willie O' Ree were celebrated for breaking the color barrier in Baseball and Hockey respectively. The military exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen and the 54th Massachusetts were also studied in class. The students also did English research papers on the biographies of famous U.S. presidents and presented them to our class.

Ms. Fort had students prepare writing and poetry for her annual publication called **Get the Point**, This publication consists of art, essays, reflections and poetry from the residents of New Point and has been a major success at new Point Specialty over the years.



The students on February 13th, visited the MOPAC in Morristown to witness *The Mayhem Poets* . This show was a rap show about being a better person. The students loved the show. On February 22nd, the students visited the The Seeing Eye Dog Institute in Morristown and were shown first hand the intensive training involved in developing a therapy dog.

**Trinitas**

Our younger elementary students read about groundhogs and the annual viewings of Punxsutawney Phil in Pennsylvania. They illustrated their written predictions of what the groundhog will do. Our younger elementary students also learned about President Washington and President Lincoln. They identified these presidents on coins and wrote essays beginning with “If I was the President of the United States....”. In honor of Black History Month older elementary students read biographies and viewed video presentations of celebrated African Americans such as Jesse Owens, George Washington Carver, Rosa Parks, Wilma Rudolph, and Ralph Bunche. One student researched Rosa Parks and created an excellent poster containing an annotated timeline of her life.

**CROSSROADS:**

Enrollment as of Actual: 46 Changes:0    Entered: 0    Exited:1	Referrals: 1 Intakes Scheduled: 1 Accepted: 1
Fire Drills: 2/28/18	Emergency Drills: 2/23/18

**Classroom and Therapeutic Department Accomplishments**

**Michelle Mancini’s Class:** Differentiating instruction and focusing on individual student goals and objectives is our primary daily focus. Each of our students are consistently striving to accomplish progress and new achievements. Kairo C., mastered sorting items into 5 categories. Niall D., learned to play with his shape sorter correctly. Kevin D’Souza mastered imitating 6 motor movements. Naila L., mastered tapping her touch points to number 6 independently. Max O., mastered tacting weather conditions and George W., is writing his first name correctly on his writing worksheet.

Highlights in the class include the theme “Room 102 Loves You Too”. Students are learning about the holiday Valentine’s Day. They read the book “Clifford’s Valentines” by Norman Bridwell and increased knowledge of Valentine’s Day. Student’s also learned about the shape of a heart and made heart valentines to exchange with friends.

There are many other themes students are also learning about this month, including Groundhog’s Day. They read the book “Groundhog Day” by Michelle Aki Becker and made a groundhog. February is dental health month. Students enjoyed our visit from the dental hygienist from Westfield Dental who gave us a presentation on dental health. It is George Washington’s Birthday this month too. The class completed a George Washington craft. They learned it is Black History month as well and colored a packet of famous black Americans.

**Consuelo Alzate’s Class:** February has been a busy month. The children in this class have been learning new and challenging skills. All students are showing great improvements in most areas of development. The children enjoyed making Valentine’s cards and presents for friends and family. In class they are learning about friendship and sharing with others. Due to our children practicing different skills through

their individualized plans, we felt that it would be great to showcase one individualized accomplishment for each student.

This month's accomplishments are:

- \*Tanzi and Fernando are doing very well utilizing their Token System.
- \*Alex is using PEC'S to mand for food, drinks and the ipad.
- \*Raphael is using full sentences to express his needs and wants.
- \*Lucky is now learning to pack and unpack his book bag.

The children went on a field trip to the Paper Mill House to see the play "Curious George". They interacted with "George" after the show and even took pictures with him.

**Kristina Cassidy's Class:** In honor of Valentine's Day, students read their Weekly Scholastic, Perfect Pairs for Valentine's Day and created valentines on starfall.com using the Smartboard. This allowed our students to practice reading, writing and technological skills. They thoroughly enjoyed picking a valentine, selecting a card, choosing a message, and placing postage on each envelope prior to mailing. Students also decorated mailboxes for themselves. They created valentines for their classmates and delivered them to each other which allowed them to practice social skills.

Eseosa is our student of the month. He is doing much better staying focused to complete his independent activity schedules in class. He is following all of the steps with minimal-to no prompting. He has also made progress adding with TouchPoints. Eseosa is working on double-digit addition now and is currently working on writing out his wants and needs.

Room 104 had a nice time at Clark gym where they were able to generalize skills learned in gym class in a different setting. They also worked on behavioral, gross-motor, and fine motor skills. Seamus' mother was kind enough to take our class and Consuelo's class on a trip to Paper Mill Playhouse to see Curious George. Students practiced social skills as they participated in a meet and greet after the show.

We just started having music class a couple weeks ago. The students have enjoyed following along and playing a variety of instruments.

**Stephen Goham's Class:** Groundhog Day – Students participated in worksheets involving cloze sentences, reading comprehension, decoding secret messages, and crossword & word searches. Students also learned about shadows, using flashlights and sunlight to create fun images. Students also discussed Chinese culture & festivities, map skills, and zodiac signs. Students enjoyed making Chinese lanterns and writing their names in Chinese symbols. During President's Day week students compared and contrasted the lives and Presidencies of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

The children in room 105 participated in a candle-making project using wax. Students chiseled small pieces of wax from a large block using a hammer. They gathered the wax into containers and melted the wax in a pot of boiling water. Students discussed the process using key vocabulary from a previous "states of matter" unit. Once the wax was liquidized, the students poured it into heart-shaped molds and inserted a wick. The candles were delivered home as Valentine's Day presents for moms and dads. Students in room 105 also participated in a candy heart experiment, observing how candy disintegrates differently in various chemical mixtures.

I am happy to report that first year student Juliana R., is our Student of the Month!!! She was now demonstrating success in the area of reading. She was having great difficulty retaining sight words and applying phonic skills. A decision was made to implement the EdMark Reading Program as her primary

reading program. Juliana is finally beginning to increase her sight word recognition. She is displaying confidence when reviewing previously learned words and is developing an interest in reading.

**Kristen Fisco's Class:** A thematic unit and monthly theme for February was Black History Month. Students identified civil rights activists. They used dotters to mark within the boundaries of pictures of different civil rights activists (Rosa Parks, Jesse Owens, Booker T. Washington, etc.). They then matched pictures of the civil rights activists around the classroom. Students also practiced identifying facts about Rosa Parks. They each participated in a Getting to Know Rosa Parks activity. The students first attended to a short story and then practiced recall by identifying key facts by selecting various PECS cards to answer where she lived, what she was remembered for, and how she changed history. They responded to questions on a corresponding worksheet by pasting or writing out their responses or writing them in.

The class went on a field trip to ShopRite. Each student had a specific item to search for on a shopping list. They practiced pushing the cart, selecting items, paying, and bagging groceries. When they returned to school, they followed a picture sequence to make Valentine's Day trail mix. As a follow up activity, they answered comprehension questions.

Kristen Fisco and Natalia Amador were in charge of planning an enrichment day for Valentine's Day. They planned for a craft in which the students made an "owl you need is love" ornament. Each class danced at the dance party, made February pudding, and exchanged Valentine's Day cards.

**Natalia Amador's Class:** For the month of February, students learned about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. They explored this topic by reading books, watching videos, and working on different projects. Natalia was proud to see how her class using their higher order thinking skills to elaborate upon what they learned. They expanded the lesson by learning fun facts about all of our presidents. They also learned about the history of Valentine's Day by reading social stories and having a day of enrichment through cooking, dancing, and card exchanges.

The class has continued to work on strengthening their pre-vocational skills by completing the many tasks available here at Crossroads and by attending community-based instruction. So far, students have worked on completing Ellison orders, sorting magazines, doing laundry, collecting recyclables, taking utensil orders and kitchen inventory. The students are working on sorting weekly readers, laundry, and Ellison orders.

This month the class was lucky enough to visit the Raritan Community College Planetarium. They learned about star identification, constellations and mythology, observing seasonal changes in the sky, moon phases, and the solar system and galaxy. The trip was exciting and informative.

For science and social studies, the middle school teachers have been rotating classes and have been teaching thematic units. This month's thematic units include: President's Day, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day card making, and a magic balloon experiment.

All students continue to work on their direct instruction and VB-MAPP goals. Josh has shown progress with his WH questions and subtraction with regrouping. Aiden is working on DLS and a new reading program called Reading Mastery. Jefferson is working on strengthening his study skills by using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast different text and learning how to plot points on coordinate plane. Uthmaan is working on his money skills and sight word reading. Natalia's main goal for this month is to teach her students how to follow an independent task schedule with minimum to no assistance. The teacher would like to foster in all the students independence and a sense of accomplishment.

**Susan Parenti's Class:** Hibernation/ Migration- The students discussed the meaning of hibernation. They watched a Brain Pop video that discussed hibernation. The students learned the ways the animals prepare for the winter. They discussed the different animals that hibernate and where they hibernate. Students also sorted

various pictures of animals and the locations where they hibernate. To demonstrate understanding of the content material, the students participated in answering WH questions after the Brain Pop video, completing a worksheet and a craft. The students made a Bear hibernating in a cave.

**Groundhog Day:** The students discussed fun facts about a groundhog. For example: what they eat, where they live, and what they look like. The students enjoyed watching an informative video on groundhogs. The students learned if the groundhog sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter. If he does not see his shadow, warm weather is near and spring will arrive early. The students made predictions of what would happen. They graphed the results and they completed a craft.

**Valentine's Day:** The students read a book about Valentine's Day and made gifts for their parents. They also read "There was an Old The Lady Who Swallowed a Rose". The students completed activities to go along with the story.

For a Valentine's Day fundraiser, the Middle school students handcrafted kiss- a gram boxes. The students assembled the paper boxes, shredded colorful paper to place into each box, packaged each box with 4 Hershey kisses and tied a name tag onto each box. The students also delivered the boxes on Valentine's Day to each classroom. It was a great opportunity for the students to work together and the money will go towards a middle school field trip.

To honor Black History Month students learned about Barack Obama, Rosa Parks and George Washington Carver. They discussed their accomplishments and why they are important to our country. The students participated in answering WH questions after a Brain Pop video and completed a craft.

On Presidents' Day the students discussed why we celebrate Presidents' Day. They learned about the role of a president and reviewed two famous presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

It is always exciting to hit the 100<sup>th</sup> day of School- Students celebrated by reading a story about the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school and completing various counting activities.

**Allison Gebler's Class:** Students were very busy with a variety of holidays and commemorations during the month of February. For Black History Month, the class recreated inventions and artifacts to celebrate the achievements of famous African Americans. Students crafted stop lights in memory of Garrett Morgan, paper airplanes for Bessie Coleman, and made peanut butter cupcakes as a tribute to George Washington Carver's peanut recipes. These activities involved multiple skills each student is working on including: following picture schedules to complete directions, fine motor skills while cutting/gluing/stirring/pouring/folding, color and shape recognition, one to one correspondence, and answering WH questions through vocalization, the use of personal AAC devices, or PECs.

The pre-vocational jobs this month included: shredding and recycling. Students interacted with staff and peers in other classrooms through the use of a script or ProloQuo on an AAC device to collect items to be shred or recycled. Each student practiced the functional household process of recycling, including collecting, sorting, and packaging recyclables for the entire Crossroads School. The process was then completed on one of the February field trips by taking the packed recyclables to Westfield's Recycling Center.

All of the students and staff in Room 111 are very excited to share that exceptional behavior on their trip to Clark Commons this month earned them a class pet. Students assisted in picking out two fish and then participated in voting for their names by pointing or verbalization. The fish, Cosmo and Wanda, are cared for on a rotating basis by each student to develop responsibility skills and awareness of others' needs.

February's Room 111 Star, Andy C., mastered a recently introduced packaging work task of inserting buttons into a jar. After a few weeks of practice, Andy went from multiple verbal and gestural prompts to a minimal amount of "keep working" reminders.

Field trips this month have included the Clark Gym, Clark Commons, Recycling Center, Westlake Prevocational Lab, and Dunellen Movie Theater. The class practiced ADL skills including shopping and paying for items. Students in Room 111 also successfully participated in a game of wiffle ball with Room 108 at the Clark Gym.

**Speech Department:** Gianmarco is improving his ability to use the Proloquo2Go application on his iPad to respond to personal information and social questions using full sentences. William has significantly increased accurate responses to yes/no questions about himself. Elijah's attention span and work ethic has greatly increased during speech sessions.

This month our middle school students participated in Tinker Tuesdays, a makerspace (STEAM) program Crossroads has developed at the Clark Public Library. Students beaded necklaces, utilized a mail delivery app on the iPad, built and measured towers they made out of conversation hearts, conducted experiments to see which substance cleans pennies the best, and put together heart-shaped and love message using tangram puzzles.

Crossroads staff and students are getting ready to participate in a new event called *Hobby Day* on Friday, February 23rd. Local businesses and parent, staff and community volunteers will be demonstrating various hobbies to promote student interest in potential leisure and/or pre-vocational skills. Parents and Commission staff have been invited to attend a Hobby Day Open House, to explore the various demonstration tables and speak with our volunteers.

**OT Department:** Andrew M. has made significant progress in the area of self-care as he brushes his teeth independently. He has also "found his voice" making noises/vocalizations throughout the day. O.T. sees this as his attempt to speak, however with motor apraxia the vocalizations do not come out as recognizable words at this time. His actions, when attempting to vocalize often relate to the work he is doing. He also has been laughing more than he did in the past.

During middle school O.T. groups the area of self-care has been the focus. The students are learning to perform the skills in practice areas and then transition the skill into more natural environments.

The O.T. department has been busy training new staff members on sensory techniques that are used in the classrooms for students on sensory diets. The techniques include "brushing" for tactile awareness, use of "pressure vests" and "weighted vests", as well as protocols for students on the "Therapeutic Listening Program".

The O.T. department has been busy with parent interactions, as several parents have observed sessions, came in for training, or requested information.

**PT Department:** Currently at Crossroads School we have one physical therapist working two full days each week. There are now 14 students receiving physical therapy (PT) with a total of 16 individual treatment slots, three students receiving IEP directed PT group and one consultation. In addition, Aliza is running a motor group for the youngest class in our school each week where students participate in a structured movement break practicing age specific gross motor skills.

One student was added to physical therapy this month after evaluation from his district and another student was evaluated by his district for potential PT. We are awaiting word on the results of the assessment.

Our students are continuing to progress nicely with their PT goals and objectives. Rashid began receiving PT this month for the first time and he is transitioning beautifully to his program. He enjoys coming to the motor room and is starting to understand the structure of how we run our sessions. Max is showing nice gains on stair negotiation. He loves to sing our “feet take turns on the stairs” song which seems to motivate him to make progress.

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 on their charts as they learn new skills. It is also a useful way to visually track our students’ progress.

As the caseload continues to grow currently there is only room for one (non-IEP directed) motor group. Our youngest class enjoys coming to the motor room on Friday mornings for a structured movement break where we practice age specific gross motor skills.

**HILLCREST SOUTH:**

<p>Enrollment as of 02/22/18          Actual: 106          Changes: 1 Entered: 1 Exited: 0          Suspensions: 8 for being under the influence of marijuana, one of which was in possession.</p>	<p>Intakes Pending: 2 Reg. Ed.          Waiting List: 0</p>
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The second marking period ended at Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) in the beginning of February. Students that took semester courses were given new schedules and began their second class. Ms. Mendo, shared School Guidance Counselor, put together the second semester roster and ensured that teachers who changed schools were familiar with their schedules. Teachers entered their second marking period grades into PowerSchool and Ms. Mendo assisted them as needed. Report cards were generated and sent home.

Senior and underclass student audits were also held this month. During this time, students’ graduation status was discussed and concerns regarding credit retrieval progress, attendance, and/ or grades were addressed. Students understood that their graduation would be in jeopardy if all requirements were not met and were asked to sign a contract. The second session of Elizabeth’s Saturday Recovery Program began this month and Ms. Mendo worked with the students’ counselors at their Elizabeth Academy to enroll them in their necessary courses. Ms. Mendo, in conjunction with Ms. Dattilo and Mr. Young, finalized the list of students needing the Portfolio Appeal, devised a plan to administer the Constructed-Response Tasks, and began working on the Cover Sheets and Education Proficiency Plans.

Ms. Gilchrist, School Social Worker, continued to supervise the Rutgers Social Work Intern, Ms. Shirley Rosas. The Social Worker attended the monthly DCF meeting and pre-tested DCF involved students. The Social Worker met twice with Dr. Glickman to discuss DCF and other students who were in need of extra services. The Social Worker worked in conjunction with the Principal and the School Counselor in auditing students attendance, grades, and progress in the Credit Retrieval Program. Due to the influx of students who came to school under the influence of marijuana in February, Ms. Gilchrist contacted Prevention Links to provide support.

On February 9, 2018 HAS staff met at Hillcrest North to collaborate during the Professional Day on activities relating to the School Professional Development Plan including routines and rituals as well as question and discussion techniques. The Safety and Security Monitors worked on Emergency Management seminars and Ms. Gilchrist provided Social Workers with training related to the signs of drug and alcohol abuse.

The School Spirit Days held on Wednesdays focused on improving school culture, morale, as well as increasing student grades, improving academics, and behavioral interactions. On the hugely successful Mac and Cheese Cook Off School Spirit Day, Ms. Mendo won the First Place.

Students involved in the HAS Community Service Program (HASCSP), organized the annual collection drive and fundraiser to benefit the American Recreational Military Services (A.R.M.S.) organization to support their efforts in providing care packages to local troops that have been deployed overseas. February was Black History Month and in recognition of this, the “Sharing Our Culture as We Share Our World” committee organized our eighth annual Black History Month Celebration. Both students and staff were able to enjoy a culture-rich day of history, music, and a sampling of authentic foods. Our thoughts naturally turned to those we care about and love. HAS students wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to people that were sometimes overlooked and forgotten. Therefore, student crafted Valentines and treats were distributed to the Center for Hope Hospice and the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation. HAS students loved to remember their furry friends and therefore hosted their third annual “Paws and Claws” drive to benefit the Friends of the Linden Animal Shelter. Donations of pet food, toys, and used towels were requested to support the shelter’s efforts of providing a safe and warm home for the unwanted animals they received.

The students in Ms. Ferrari’s classes have diligently completed their weekly drills and progressed nicely through the different steps. The students were able to reconnect and reinforce their basic math facts. The algebra II students have added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided polynomials. They have factored polynomials, found the roots of polynomials functions, and studied special polynomial functions. The Geometry students worked extensively on postulates and theorems as they related to transformations. They were translating, reflecting, and rotating figures on the coordinate plane. The Math Strategies students have worked extensively on solving equations using percents. They applied the percent proportion and/ or the percent equation to solve real world problems. The Success Seminar students discussed and answered questions on a number of different motivational speakers. They have also been given time to write poetry and make posters for the poetry contest and poster contest the UCESC held to celebrate African American History.

Students in Mr. Sobieniak’s Trigonometry classes learned a new way to find the area of a triangle. They also learned how to graph trigonometric functions. Students in the Probability and Statistics classes learned about measures of dispersion. They learned about range, quartiles and percentiles, interquartile range, mean absolute deviation and we started to learn about variance and standard deviation. The Success Seminar students focused on learning about college preparation. We learned benefits of starting a two-year college and a large university. Students also learned to identify how they use/waste their time and how they can improve their time management skills. Students of all mathematics classes utilized Khan Academy to improve their algebraic skills on Fridays and all classes used the interactive whiteboard.

In recognition of Black History Month, Ms. Holden’s students read and analyzed the Emancipation Proclamation. Using Webquest, students also researched the lives of famous African-Americans. In addition, students enjoyed reading and analyzing poems of two African-American poets, Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou. Students also wrote inspiring essays on an African American who they consider a hero. Using exemplars from the Common Core Curriculum, students continued to increase their skills in analyzing how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to the overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Ms. Cioffi’s English courses continued with the Unit Two English curriculum. Students have learned about Text Structure and Author’s Choice in both Fiction and Informational texts. Students analyzed word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, pacing, and characters in fiction texts. They wrote written responses in which they discussed the use of these elements and determined how they affected and influenced the text.

Students also read informational texts where they identified the central message and analyzed how the author used specific details to portray the message to readers. Students also wrote their own narratives where they used these text structure elements.

Ms. Cherville joined HAS as the Spanish Teacher for the second semester. Her students started the World Language program by learning everyday phrases in Spanish. They identified adjectives and used them to describe people. For Valentine's Day, they learned seventeen love phrases. They used them to create love poems and cards. They practiced conversations using learned structures and vocabulary. In addition to the poems, Spanish speakers completed eight short chapters from "El Desafio" reading a comprehension story book.

Mr. Sternberg's Chemistry students learned all about valence electrons and how they interact with their microscopic environment. They began by discussing Ionic Bonding and the students demonstrated their aptitude by illustrating how electrons transfer from metals to nonmetals to achieve a stable octet configuration. After showing their acumen on a formalized assessment, students began drawing the infamous Lewis structure diagrams, as illustrated in numerous chemistry texts worldwide. With knowledge of valence electron and the octet rule, the students will soon decipher the appropriate chemical connectivity of covalent molecules and extrapolate their arrangements in nature. The Forensic class focused on the science of heredity and individualization, covering the use of DNA evidence and analysis. After they learned the biological significance and structure they observed the true story of a man who was exonerated by DNA evidence after 18 years in prison. From this mini-lesson, students got a glimpse of how justice can be flawed and the need for rectification. Then they chose an exonerated, innocent person from the multitude that had been wrongly incarcerated. From their research, they presented a slide show to the class, showcasing the victims' fights and eventual liberation from unjust incarceration.

Mr. Kaplan joined HAS for semester two and brought a new unit and set of skills to students in the 20th Century Civil Liberties courses. During the month of February, students became more comfortable with routines of the class. Skills previously identified for the students to improve upon were the focus through the use of the virtual classroom 'Schoolology.' Students became familiar with the use of academically searching the internet along with the understanding that there are multiple sides to any issue. Students were able to work upon these skills by researching the Jim Crow Laws and discovered the groups and individuals involved and how it affected and continued to affect the United States. Students did this by breaking down primary source documents, researching expert opinions, discussing and debating key topics, and synthesizing the information in a final assignment.

Ms. Wrzesinski's U.S. History I classes demonstrated critical thinking and analytical skills by looking at primary and secondary sources, note taking and graphic organizer skills, and analyzing various texts and maps. The topics covered this month are all ones that lead up to the American Revolution. These topics included the French and Indian War, British influence in the colonies, the mounting hatred of the colonists towards the British, the Excise Taxes (Stamp Act, Sugar Act, Quartering Act and Townshend Act), Boston Tea Party, Boston Massacre, Paine's Common Sense, and finally Paul Revere's ride to warn the colonists that the British were coming. Students also researched current event articles that were aligned with the common core standards and answered questions plaguing our country today. In Modern World History classes the topics covered included the completion of the Industrial Revolution unit with an in depth look into the life of factory workers from the male, female and child laborer perspectives. The next unit started was Imperialism and students were introduced to this unit by a picture analysis overview of the areas they would be studied (Africa, India, and Asia). The African imperialism section covered the "Why" Africa was chosen and "Who" wanted to imperialize it. Students saw the breakdown of all the different European powers along with fighting among those European powers for certain areas of Africa.



Ms. Duarte's units came to a close and new material was introduced in both U. S. History II and Economics classrooms. In U. S. History II students wrapped up their study on World War I with letters they wrote as experienced soldiers living in the trenches. These letters took on the perspective of varied players in the war from the German perspective to that of the American. Students also varied the dates of their letters, which then changed what was discussed and the subject matter. Students then transitioned to studying the roaring 1920's and conducted research on various topics in the time period to participate in a classroom presentation of their work. The student's research turned out wonderful and conveyed a great understanding of the time period. In Economics, students were well into their business proposal projects for which they launched a product, developed a slogan, logo, and mission statement. In addition, students developed an advertisement for their product and a business card; all of which is presented as a visual on poster form. Then, students worked on their PowerPoint presentations that were used as they presented their business proposals. In all, students have acquired new knowledge that has been displayed in multiple ways.

The students in Mr. Barone's Physical Education classes continued utilizing the fitness equipment and participating in pool and ping-pong tournaments. The tournaments have been exciting and competitive which has led to full participation from all students. When in the gym, the students have been involved in competitive volleyball games. The student's volleyball skills have improved noticeably each week. In Health, students have been getting into more detail in their unit on Alcohol. The students learned that alcoholics progress through several stages as their dependence strengthens which include, problem drinking, absolute dependence, and late stage alcoholism. In addition to the stages of alcoholism, the students learned how alcoholism is treated and how others are affected.

Ms. Rubin, the School Nurse and Health Teacher, made calls to all of the absent students' parents each day. The nurse has been assisting with the morning entry procedures and the afternoon dismissal procedures. The nurse has been seeing an average of 17 students per day and five students were sent home ill. In health class, the students learned about alcohol addiction and recovery. The next health topic will be Marijuana and its effects on the body.

**HILLCREST/NORTH:**

<p><b>Enrollment as of:</b> 2/26/18  <b>Actual:</b> 92  <b>Referrals :</b> 0  <b>Changes:</b> Entered: 1 Exited: 2 (attendance + GED)</p>	<p><b>Drills:</b> 2/26/18- Fire drill  2/1/18- EM staff training  <b>OSS Suspensions:</b> 4 (willful disobedience/ open defiance)</p>
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In English, students have been tracking their lexile level weekly using an online reading assessment (Read Theory). Students are learning skills that "good readers" use to approach texts such as annotating, context clues, and inferencing. Students practice these skills that increase vocabulary and enhance reading comprehension. Students have learned about author's purpose, narrator's point of view, figurative language, and literary devices. Students have been practicing inductive reasoning to determine author's purpose and point of view. Most recently, students have learned how to identify author's purpose and narrator's point of view in text examples.

Also, in English, students have been learning about literary devices with focus on literary elements such as setting, theme, and point of view. Students are writing a narrative building on all the elements as they write. They will add other elements and techniques later.

In Creative Writing, students are using all aspects of the writing process to create a descriptive essay/poem that describes a food without ever once naming the food. They have been focusing on how to “show, not tell” in their writing. They have been learning how figurative language also helps them to “show” in their writing.

In the month of February, the Social Studies Department at Hillcrest Academy North explored what it is like to be a black person in America today. We researched the socioeconomic motivations behind the #BlackLivesMatter movement. This research included looking at statistical discrepancies between blacks and whites in Baltimore prior to the riots in 2014. Students then brainstormed possible solutions to fix these discrepancies and prevent riots like these from happening again.

In Forensics, students are continuing to work in forensic evidence as they are introduced to blood splatter analysis, DNA evidence and forensic glass evidence through a webquest project. Each member of the group became a field expert in entomology, trace evidence, serology, and genetics. They were charged with solving the “murder of Plainfield Ave” and present their findings based on the evidence found at the scene including fiber evidence, DNA, fingerprints, and blood. Students presented their findings in a group and each member acted as the expert in their field. Students made posters or powerpoints to visually represent their findings. Next they will dive deeper into DNA evidence and blood splatter.

In Marine Biology, students worked on classification of life in the ocean and made a dichotomous key project. Students will be introduced to the primary producers of the ocean through activities including algae keys and microscopic slides. Students will be branching into invertebrates next month. Students will draw on their knowledge of evolution as we explore life in the ocean for the rest of the year.

In Math, teachers started the month of February with review units in Algebra and Geometry using interactive jeopardy. Students worked together in teams and continued to strengthen their problem solving skills. Algebra students began graphing and studying systems of linear equations and graphing real-life problems. Students are routinely acting as financial consultants giving advice for best ways to save money on everyday investments. The graphs were studied and the three stages were analyzed over time to determine which investments should be made according to the lifestyles of each family. The hands on activities helped students make connections between multiple representations for solutions to systems of linear equations. In Geometry, students are continuously applying Corresponding Parts of Congruent Triangles are Congruent (CPCTC) and finding congruency in our world.

In Health class this month, the students began the substance abuse unit. Topics that were covered were a pretest of general questions about different substances, Molly (formerly known as Ecstasy), and a bingo game of illegal substances vocabulary. In Physical Education, students continue to work on their fitness and nutrition goals. They are also organizing a basketball tournament for the end of March.

The health office is running smoothly. The nurse continues the challenge of obtaining health records from EHS for several of our students. There have been staff changes in the health offices of the Elizabeth High School Academies but these changes have now been updated and the nurse was able to get a few more health records.

The Nurse participated in the Professional Development day on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Activities included teen suicide prevention and procedures for when a student is referred for suspicious behaviors suggestive of potential alcohol or drug use.

This month, the second marking period ended at Hillcrest Academy North. Students taking semester courses were given new schedules and began their second class. Ms. Mendo put together the second semester roster and ensured the teachers changing schools were familiar with their schedules. Students also started the third component of the Success Seminar course: College Prep, Career Prep, Mindfulness, or Service Learning.

Teachers entered their second marking period grades into Power School and Ms. Mendo assisted them as needed. Report cards were generated and sent home.

The second session of Elizabeth's Saturday Recovery Program begins this month and Ms. Mendo worked with the students' counselors at their Elizabeth Academy to enroll them in their necessary courses. On the staff development day, Ms. Mendo, in conjunction with Ms. Dattilo and Mr. Young, finalized the list of students needing the Portfolio Appeal, devised a plan to administer the Constructed-Response Tasks, and began working on the Cover Sheets and Education Proficiency Plans. We have begun having meetings with our seniors to discuss progress towards graduation. Where necessary, timelines have been discussed with these students regarding credit retrieval. We have also continued to have meetings with underclassman when there is concern regarding academics, attendance, or behavioral concerns.

For the remainder of the month we have several things scheduled: Ms. Mitchell is mailing home attendance packets to our students with more absences than they should have at this point in the year. Finally, Music For All Seasons will be coming in for the fourth out of five programs this year. The presenter will be Mary Lu Farrell, a retired music teacher who writes rap with the students.

### **NONPUBLIC:**

The Non-Public School ScIP Team is preparing for the March 12<sup>th</sup> Professional Development Workshop for the teachers. The team is working on presenting Teach like a Champion. The goal of the ScIP team is to integrate the practical, engaging, strategies into our daily teaching practices.

The Nonpublic Teachers and Child Study Team met on February 27<sup>th</sup>, to work collaboratevely on streamlining and updating processes and procedures for service plans and development of PLAAFP (Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance) for students grades K – 12.

The Supervisor of Nonpublic Services is finishing unannounced observations for the Non-Public teachers and conducting collaborative conversations regarding the Danielson Framework.

The Supervisor of Nonpublic Services met with district representatives for the monthly ESEA meeting to collaborate on Title 1 programs, services and applying and planning for upcoming federal grant.

The Nonpublic Schools are continuing to receive textbooks and novels, which are aligned with curriculum and instruction. Schools have purchased with technology allocations laptops, chromebooks, iPads, and printers to improve the educational technology curriculum within the learning environments for our students.

### **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): 2

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.

Instructional topics covered this month included:

Creating/Updating Resumes: Students created a resume/updated a previous resume to prepare for the next round of mock interviews. They also identified keywords from job openings which described various qualities and qualifications of potential employees.

Creating a cover letter: To help students continue to demonstrate skills related to seeking and applying for employment in a desired job, the students continue to prepare for the next round of mock interviews by creating a cover letter to attach to their resumes.

Apple Group continued to answer the essential question of, “How can planning for your future lead to success?”: The Apple Group completed their post secondary goals and actions steps needed to achieve these goals. They then used Google Slides to present this information to their peers and instructor.

Understanding Google Sheets and the various tools it has to offer: The Google Group learned how to organize and keep track of information through the use of Google Sheets. Students also practiced using the variety of tools that Google Sheets has to offer to help sort, copy, keep track of, organize, and add/subtract/multiply/divide information.

Money management (Counting, giving change by counting up or using a calculator, and staying within a budget): The Apple Group practiced identifying the proper amount of change needed (by using the counting up technique and/or using a calculator), practiced purchasing items, staying within a budget, and paying for them.

Other highlights from this month included:

Cooking Elective:

The Apple Group enjoyed making homemade chicken vegetable soup

Visits to the Strength and Fitness Club in Cranford, NJ:

Reviewing the names of the major muscle groups in the upper and lower body

Concentrating on correct lifting techniques

Learning how to find your pulse

What a resting heart rate is and when the best time is to take it

What is meant by cardiovascular endurance

*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 Overlook Medical Program included:

- Through Person Centered Planning, students gained a solid, in depth understanding of who you they are.
- Eating a balanced and healthy diet affects one's work productivity.
- Professionalism in the workplace. Employers want new workers to be responsible, ethical, and team oriented, and to possess strong communication, interpersonal, and problem solving skills.
- Hygiene is a critical factor in getting and maintaining employment

Other highlights from this month included:

- Sandra Marotta Executive Director at Ashrams for Autism visited to conduct a chair yoga class
- Wade Wheeler from NJ Citizen Action visited to reinforce the concepts of Banking Basics. He focused on budgeting skills.

*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*

## **TECHNOLOGY:**

The Technology Department is continuing to make improvements to our wireless infrastructure at multiple locations. As we expand our address pool (which allows more devices wireless access to the network) throughout the three buildings we may run into some infrequent hiccups however they will not be for long and will lead to a more stable environment.

New Era Technology has completed the installation of a new sound system at 1571 Lamberts Mill. As promised, there was no interruption to the students' normal activities and the footprint of the backend is inaccessible to students. The speakers are hung by aircraft twisted steel cable. There are 2 cables, a main and a back-up, that securely fasten the speakers to the ceiling beam. With the speakers being suspended by the cable they are free to move and absorb impact should a ball come into contact with it. The speaker is also constructed of a metal housing which is durable and protective of the actual speaker unit inside. We have scheduled a training of the equipment for early March.

We have virtualized the entire Transportation department's head-end infrastructure. This will allow the Transportation server to be invulnerable to single point hardware failure and therefore exist indefinitely.

While prepping for an upgrade to the Symantec Endpoint infrastructure we suffered an attack on several of our systems in the form of a Bitcoin mining virus. The IT department worked with Symantec to resolve the situation and we continue to improve security on our network.

Our account review with Atlantic was very informative and we are working to evolve the printer infrastructure from individual printers per classroom/office to more centralized multifunction units throughout the building.

We have deployed Netop's Vision software throughout 1571. This allows a teacher to monitor and control students' access while on multiple PCs.

We are working with a vendor to upgrade the AV system in the conference room at 45 Cardinal Drive.

A complete audit of all shared drive data has been completed. We are moving forward with the biggest data migration the Commission has ever had. As we move forward we will deploy IT staff onsite at every location to ensure all potential access problems are mitigated immediately.

The IT Department has purchased the Adobe CC Suite at a deep discount. This will allow students access to the most up to date Adobe products such as Photoshop, Acrobat and Premiere.

### **TRANSPORTATION:**

Nonpublic school transportation applications (B6T's) are due in the student's resident district by March 10, 2018. The nonpublic schools are responsible for the timely submission of the application to each student's resident district. Reminder notices were sent to each nonpublic school by the Transportation Office on February 8, 2018. Calendar requests for the 2018-2019 school year were sent to the nonpublic schools on February 7, 2018.

The next on-site school bus inspection is scheduled for March 9 & 12, 2018. The inspection team feels that two days are needed for inspection. The second day allows for re-inspection and a higher approval rate.

This continues to be a mild winter for transportation, certainly not as bad as past years. A few days of delayed openings and early dismissals have been needed, however, there has been only one day where all schools and districts were closed. The milder temperatures are welcomed by everyone.

On February 9, 2018, the New Jersey Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning presented a timely and informative seminar on school bus safety. Safe practices, procedures and guidelines were thoroughly examined and highlighted by video examples. Twenty-five people were in attendance, representing five boards of education and three bus companies. Topics covered included Situational Awareness on the Bus and Along the Route, Conducting School Bus Inspections, Bus Storage Facility/Parking Lot Security Considerations, Handling Potentially Unsafe Situations and Driver Protocols During a School Crisis.

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