



Union County Educational Services Commission
 45 Cardinal Drive • Westfield • New Jersey • 07090
 (908) 233-9317 • FAX (908) 233-7432

(Att. 2)

**Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors
 January 2, 2019**

WESTLAKE:

Enrollment as of December 14, 2018	Referrals: 2
Actual: 66	Intakes Scheduled: 0
Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 1	Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: December 17, 2018	Emergency Drills: Lock down
	December 12, 2018

School Spirit day was the first Friday of December with all students wearing pajamas for pajama day. Students look forward to spirit days that are paired with an incentive activity. This month students watched the movie, “High School Musical”. This went along with the new Westlake dance team which was formed two months ago as students took a real interest in dancing in a “flash mob” style dance. James, our team captain of the Westlake Stars worked with his peers to choose a song from the movie and organize practice times. Students met weekly to create and practice the choreography. The team performed their dance to open our spirit day event. Students on the dance team enjoy working as a team and performing for their friends.

Our holiday music show was held today with each class performing various holiday songs and some students performed solo. Mr. Cerria, our music teacher had students practice for several weeks and the highlight song was “the twelve days of Christmas.” Parents, staff and students all sang together for a festive holiday show.

Language Arts: For reading students continue to work on Edmark programs that work on skills such as word recognition, sequencing and comprehension. Currently, Mrs. Porchetta’s class is on Chapter 8 of Hatchet and students are making progress with story elements such as, setting, main idea and identifying with characters.

Math: In math, students practice using money in naturally occurring situations (i.e. money ID, counting, addition, subtraction, using a register, and accounting). Individually, students have continued to work on their specific programs such as: 1:1 correspondence, touch math, money skills, matching, and sorting.

Science: In science, some students are working on animal habitats. They have learned about oceans and the desert so far. Other students are discussing the earth’s climate. Students are studying climates of the past such as; the ice age. Students watched a short video on how the ice age began. These include how the climate changes the earth and how scientists study those changes.

Mrs. Convery’s students have been studying the human body. They have completed lessons on the study of the skeletal system and are now onto the digestive system. Each student has completed a cut out skeleton to be displayed in the classroom. More organs will be colored and cut out to add to the skeleton as they study more body systems.

Social Studies: Students are learning about winter holidays and how different events are celebrated. The students have listened to stories and watched videos on Hanukkah and made Menorahs and dreidels. They will also be coloring winter scenes and discussing the new season of winter.

Other students are working in groups to complete rubrics based on current events. Some of the articles studied were the California wild fires, the passing of George Bush, Thanksgiving traditions and moving to be healthy in schools.

Mrs. Pajewski's students have been learning about the holidays (Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa) and map skills. (identifying symbols map, globe, street water and compass MM map key). Using the Time For Kids Magazine, topics of discussion centered around ocean habitats, HIB and Being Mindful. They are continuing with Seasons of Kindness with displays on their back wall. With the holidays approaching students are placing stockings with kind acts and words that the students have been mindful of onto their wall.

Physical Education: Students are learning all about flag football. Currently, students are enhancing their knowledge of throwing and catching footballs with their peers. The students are enhancing their motor skills by practicing running and taking flags in a warm up game.

Some of the students have shown recall skills of how to throw and catch a football while others have needed prompting to complete each skill. The goals of the lesson are to expose students to the sport of football, who to root for, when to watch, where to watch, and where they can play with their friends and families.

Health: In health classes, students continue to discuss the importance of an active and healthy life style. Through educational websites and articles, Mr. Moss has each student completing worksheets to assist their understanding and learning about how and why it is necessary to practice good healthy hygiene habits each and every day. Nurse Ij has her student health classes discussing the importance of sleep and exercise.

Vocational: 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 of the signs. Students continue to make key chains to sell for the upcoming holiday sales. 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 planted Amaryllis bulbs which have been growing beautifully. This month they are being sold at the Commission sale, as well as at Westlake's upcoming holiday sale. Other UCESC schools will have an opportunity to purchase any amaryllis that are left over. Students have been working hard to care for the plants and have done a nice job.

Post Office/Print Shop: In the Print Shop students are exploring the jobs associated with the print shop (copying, collating, filing, laminating and more). We have completed copying jobs from the staff, worked on our office kits and various jobs received from the main office (copies, shredding, and mail sorting/delivery).

Sweet Shoppe: The students have been making candy pops, pretzels, and chocolate covered oreos. Two students are making pillows and the Superintendent already ordered 6 more. The students went to the Senior Center to visit for the holidays and one student greeted visitors at the entrance and offered everyone cookies as they came in. It was the perfect job for him. The students laughed at the senior's jokes and enjoyed talking and getting to know them. Mrs. Palmer went to the December Board meeting at the UCESC and sold some of the candy made by the students. There was so much interest, that she ran out of candy boxes and

chocolate oreos. The students are now getting ready for the upcoming PSE&G trip to sell to the employees. All the students are so happy to go there, especially since PSE&G is so happy to see them. The PSE&G staff purchase their hand-made items and then treat our students to pizza. This Wednesday, students have gone to the Commission for an additional sale to the UCESC office staff and Crossroads staff. Wagner Farm Arboretum's Christmas sale has begun and Mr. Palmer dropped off breads and candy on Friday. This brings in additional sales for the holidays and keeps our students very busy.

Jewelry: Students are making bracelets, earrings, key chains and necklaces to be sold at the numerous sales this month. So far, the feedback has been positive and students seem to really enjoy designing and selling the items.

DecorDream Shop: In vocational class, DécorDream Shop, the students are focusing on making wooden signs for the Holiday sale this month. For the Commission sale, the students made various Christmas signs and it was a big hit. At the commission, the students worked at three different departments such as sales, packaging, and taking orders and we took a great amount of personalized orders for January. The Overlook hospital holiday boutique sale was amazing. We sold most of the holiday signs and all the messages of hope. It was so great to see our signs displayed at the gift shop. We were happy to hear that we are invited back next year.

Retail: Students continue to run a functional school store with regular daily business hours. This store provides valuable opportunities for students to practice a variety of skills across curriculum. It also provides opportunities in school jobs and vocational training (i.e. housekeeping, general maintenance, stocking, organizing shelves, inventory, data entry, sales clerk, announcements, surveying student and staff demands, decorating, purchasing orders, accounting, shopping lists, and visiting other schools on a cart).

Mrs. Convery's retail center is gearing up for their holiday sales at PSE&G this week. The students have been busy since after Thanksgiving making items to sell. They always sell many gifts to the employees and the employees are always generous and kind to the students. They will have to quickly restock for our holiday sale at the Commission and the student holiday sale this coming week. The Retail Center will have a table at the sale with items for the students to purchase that only cost a dollar or two.

The students are also going to take some of their profits and purchase a set of Bingo cards for our friends at Runnells. We have noticed when we volunteer on Wednesdays that the Bingo cards are very worn and broken. The cards cost more than \$250 and the students have earned all the money themselves. They will be proud to present the cards to the residents when we go to Runnells on December 19th.

Mrs. Porchetta's class sells pizza weekly to staff on Fridays creating jobs for her students to take orders, greet staff, use their money skills and deliver the pizza. It has been a big hit and students are making money for their classroom.

Life Skills: In Life Skills, reviewed a unit of the banking system, after completing a savings and checking application form. The students also designed their personal checks using the blank checks template website. The students loved designing their own personal checks by selecting a design, check font color, and border color as well as entering personal information. After they printed out their checks, the students practiced filling out all 6 parts of a check correctly.

Therapies: Speech: This month the speech department has completed ADL groups that worked on a variety of skills, including: cooking (corn muffins and mac & cheese), following written recipes and filling out post assessment forms and following picture schedules to complete apartment tasks with students. Therapists also worked collaboratively in groups to target pragmatic skills of students through a variety of activities (Apples to Apples, A to Z, thumb-ball).

The speech department has begun meeting as a department with therapists from Crossroads in an effort to collaborate, provide consistency across their discipline and make resources used for student instruction. Currently, they made materials for many communication tasks (go-fish cards, holiday puzzles, social stories, etc.)

Lastly, they worked with students individually and in groups on winter holiday activities, like crafts, books, riddles, and scavenger hunts. They are working with students in the school store and attended CBI trips to Shop Rite, Michaels, Five Below, and Whole Foods.

Physical Therapy: Currently we have two physical therapists working at Westlake School. One works three days a week and one works one day a week. There are 22 students receiving physical therapy (PT) services with a total of 32 individual treatment spots, two PT groups and two PT monthly consultations. This month one of our student's PT services has been decreased due to outstanding progress with IEP goals.

One of our weekly PT groups is doing great with Yoga. Students meet every Tuesday for one hour (in combination with our OT). They work on motor planning and bilateral coordination as we perform various yoga sequences and practice breathing exercising. This group is a nice break for our students during their fast paced day.

We continue to take data and monitor our students' progress towards their PT IEP goals. A select group of students are being monitored on two formal balance assessment tools; the Timed-Up-and Go (TUG) test and the Pediatric Berg Balance Scale (PBBS). Midterm scores have been assessed this month on these balance tests to be used for SGOs. In addition, some of our students are using video modeling during their sessions for balancing on one foot and broad jumping. A group of students are self-assessing by recording their long jumping distances on a log during their sessions.

Occupational Therapy: Currently, Westlake has 2 occupational therapists working full-time and 1 part-time OT who works on Wednesday and Thursday. We also have our Level II fieldwork COTA student who continues to be here Monday through Friday and working full days until the end of this month.

This month we continue to assess student's self-care skills, household skills, fine motor skills, computer skills and sensory needs in order to increase their independence in the school and home setting. We measure the student's performance and progress through using the AFLS task analyses. The mid-point review of SGO's are approaching therefore, we continue to assess SGO goals and brainstorm strategies to help our student's achieve these goals.

We also continue to collaborate with speech regarding activities for the ADL support groups. Activities this month included apartment tasks, hygiene skills, and following a simple visual and written recipe.

The Life Skills classes continue to be very successful. This month the focus of the group has been on upper body hygiene skills and apartment skills. Technology continues to be integrated during our sessions through the OT Ipad's that have been programmed to go along with these activities, allowing the students to make choices, identify items used, and to communicate with their peers.

Since it is the holiday season, students and staff are making decorations for the holiday concert.

Social Work: Brightly colored thanksgiving gift bags were given to eight families determined to be in need of supplemental Shop Rite gift cards for food and other related holiday expenses. The Westlake Parent Organization funded the special project and were delighted to hear words of thanks from those whose life they were able touch.

A UCESF grant was conceptualized to harness the knowledge and talents of Lamberts Mill Academy and Westlake staff and students in order to update and renovate the Activities of Daily Living space from a classroom into a simulated furnished apartment setting. If funded, the classroom space will be transformed into a more user-friendly apartment for all Westlake students to practice necessary personal and housekeeping skills in order to become a contributing member of their household.

Three families, two of whom have 2019 senior graduates, completed the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) paperwork needed for enrollment in order to be deemed eligible for funding for an “over 21” adult program. DDD case manager, Ron Wasserman and the school social worker worked on site with select family members that have been struggling to complete the application process. Families look to Westlake for guidance and support, especially, as their adolescent’s graduation date nears. Numerous families have delayed obtaining guardianship of their special needs adolescent for multiple reasons. Without legal guardianship, the special needs student is required to sign all legal documents which are often unsettling to parents who are no longer considered to be legal guardians once their child is eighteen years of age.

Behaviorist: This month the behaviorists have continued biweekly meetings with all teachers. These meetings give teachers a chance to receive support from the behaviorists as it relates to students’ success and achievement in their classrooms and provide an opportunity for the behaviorists and teachers to collaborate. Data collection procedures, analysis of student behavior data, use of specific behavioral strategies as well as instructional support as it relates to student behavior are routinely discussed during these consult times. An action plan is included in the written report of the meeting, and responsible parties (teacher/behaviorist) complete the listed activities by next meeting. These notes are shared with the teacher and administrators by the behaviorists.

In addition, Team Communication logs continued to be shared digitally as well housed in each student individual portfolio binders to provide an open line of communication between all staff working with the student. These team communication forms are updated regularly by the behaviorists, as changes are made to procedures used with individual students, and new information is obtained from various sources (e.g. therapists, parents, Dr.). The team communication logs serve the function of allowing the entire team working with that student to receive the most updated information and staff is instructed to initial the hard copy of the log with each update. Additionally, data sheets, Behavior Intervention Plans and Behavioral Strategies have been shared with staff through the Google Drive.

Behaviorists have been active members of pre-planning meetings for IEPs as well as IEP meetings along with participating in Administrator/behaviorist meetings. Behaviorists attended and participated in preplanning and IEP meetings for WL, CS, and BA. Behaviorists have also participated in two meetings this month with the consulting Psychiatrist, Dr. Amy. During these meetings, behaviorists have provided behavioral data, current strategies and observational notes for the following students: BB, JN, NM, BA, and MF. Department meetings between the behaviorists at Westlake and Crossroads have occurred this month as well. Behaviorists discussed and collaborated on use of team communication logs, behavior support plans, incident reporting and data collection procedures.

Safety-Care 15, a brief weekly training and practice session, continues to be held each Friday. This is open to all staff and is conducted by the behaviorists as well as the other Safety-Care trainers in Westlake.

Crisis calls that are unscheduled continued to occur this month, with various students. The Zen Den has been utilized with many of the students when a crisis occurs. The use of the Zen Den is considered successful when students are able to de-escalate in the room with individualized strategies employed with each student, and then return to original tasks in their designated classrooms.

LAMBERTS MILL ACADEMY:

<p>As of December, 2018 LMA Actual: 35 LMA District - Non-New Point: 32 New Point Specialty at LMA: 3 Changes: <u>3</u> Entered: 3 Pending: <u>1</u> Exited: Trinitas Hospital : Bedside Instruction: 27 (inpatient) Day Program: 48 Approved-Agreement signed: 57 Classified: 25 Regular Ed: 32</p>	<p>Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: Security Drills (1):</p>
<p>Referrals in December: 8 Intakes Scheduled: 7 Completed: 6 Acceptance Letter Sent: 6 Sending District Accepted LMA placement: 5 Placement Pending : 2</p>	<p>Suspension out of school: In School Suspension: 2 HIB: 0</p>

Administration

Enhanced Behavior Initiative: This month LMA has implemented a work completion and behavior initiative entitled “*Fun* Friday Electives.” During the week, the students are encouraged to complete their daily assignments and display appropriate behaviors during the school day. Upon a successful week of attending classes, completing assignments, and improving behavior, students are allowed to select two career centered electives for Friday. On our *Fun* Friday Electives, we implement a half-day schedule for regular academics, which leaves the second half of the day (2 Periods) for career centered electives. Some of the electives to choose from include: cosmetology, architectural design, culinary arts, tiling, exploring various arts, music/instruments, theater, and the drone academy. Overall, the initiative has shown that students are ambitious and want to participate in the weekly electives. The scheduling allows students the autonomy to choose where they will participate, and the initiative to complete their work in a timely fashion while demonstrating self-control and improved behaviors.

Election: Hands-on experiences, real life undertakings, and project based activities are the goals that exist educationally for the students at UCESC’s Lamberts Mill schools. On December 12, those students engaged in an activity that will periodically follow them for their lives. With the assistance of the Union County Board of Elections and arranged by LMA Social Studies teacher Eugene Bell, the students participated in an election on a genuine voting machine. Although the voting age in NJ is 18, it was done as an introduction to the responsibilities that all citizens enjoy. For the majority of our ‘voters’ it was the first time that they had ever used such a device (although several noted they had tagged along with parents on a voting day).

“Rise Above ALL” Anti-bullying Assembly: This month, LMA hosted an Anti-bullying assembly entitled “Rise Above All.” Kris and Aaron are a R&B/Pop duo from New Jersey and Toronto, Canada. They have formed the “Rise Above All” anti-bullying assembly where they perform their greatest hits along with messages and testimonials about experiences with bullying.

This year the duo performed about six songs, mixed in with personal life experiences overcoming bullying. The LMA students really enjoyed the live singing and dancing coupled with band performances. The bullying experiences were very motivating and encouraging. Students were excited to meet the performers and share similar experiences that they may have gone through or are currently experiencing.

Toys For Tots: As you will see in the “LMA Clinical Dept” submission we began LMA’s 1st Annual *Winter* Donation Drive. Although we started off small it became bigger and more successful than imagined. The United States Marine Corps Reserve issued the “Commander’s Award” recognizing Lamberts Mill Academy for supporting the Marine Toys for Tots Program. We are planning on expanding our donation drive next year.

Academics

CTE: This month we have been working on identifying websites as forms of personal expressions. These lessons enable students to express themselves in the areas of visual art, dance, music fashion and social media. Students were able to consider what messages they want to express as they build their own apps and ultimately websites.

In finance, students are currently evaluating and explaining the purpose of a credit score. We broke down the elements of credit scores and what impacts they carry.

Community service continues as our young adults take pride in lending their service to the residents of Clarke Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Kudos to the students of LMA for their participation each week.

English Language Arts & Literacy: For the month of December students read and learned about Human Rights in recognition of Human Rights Month. We had book reviews of ten fiction and nonfiction nationally recognized present day Human rights novels. Collaboratively students created a tree depicting their most important human rights and placed on display in our general hallway for all to see.

Students used their skills to express short narrative writings from various text structures they experienced throughout Unit 1. Students read and analyzed both classic readings and modern day Young Adult novels looking for textual evidence to support their statements and see character development. While taking the ELA&L department Unit 1 assessment, they expressed how they felt a part of “High School”, knowing the other high schools in our district were taking it simultaneously as well.

During our social and emotional learning experience in MOSAIC students have established their group norms through exploring positive purpose in a variety of activities with posters, grand discussions and making of tiles. Integrated in our ELA&L classroom management program students have been creating pop up holiday cards for their friends and family. This was extended by the students’ initiative to make additional greeting cards to give to the resident of the Nursing home we visit as a community experience.

Social Studies: Our World History students have spent time learning the significant contributions offered to humankind by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Most interesting were the government systems and the roots of Democracy. Our US History I students have been able to learn the scope of the American Revolution, even visiting all the nearby locations that housed Washington’s armies virtually. Most of our class did not realize the large part that New Jersey had played. We continue with a study of the new nation, its westward expansion, and the pitfalls of growth without planning.

The Great War has been the basis for much study for our US History II students. The roots of the battle, the reluctance of President Wilson to take our doughboys to war, and the terrible price that was paid in lives and casualties. Also reviewed were international alliances, the terms that the Germans suffered when ending the war, and the move to greater prosperity in post-war America. The Civil Rights movement has been the topic of review for our students in 20th Century Civil Liberties. We have looked at the NAACP, SNCC, the Supreme Court's role and the various dynamics that played for great equality for all Americans. We even watched a small documentary about post-war housing in Lettittown, PA, where a black family seeking to join the community caused a large outrage.

All the social studies classes also had an election day simulation. With the cooperation of the Union County Board of Elections, a machine was brought to our school and all the students voted. They filled out registration forms, voted and even received a 'I have voted' sticker. It was hugely positive. We used the 2008 presidential race that resulted in Obama beating McCain 56-13.

The students at LMA had a broader experience. All voters were given registration forms to complete using ones that were edited to resemble the one they would complete for NJ. On the day before elections they reviewed the process in their social studies classes. The Social Studies faculty of the Commission had selected the election of 2008 – Obama vs. McKain. The LMA students learned about the 2008 election candidates and the issues that were faced. They learned about the Bush difficulties as a result of the Iraq war, the poor response to hurricane Katrina, and the housing mortgage crisis. They learned that Obama sought to make a change in Washington, while McKain offered what he called experienced leadership. They also watched Obama's Grant Park acceptance speech after he was declared the winner.

On voting day, the students found all the components of a polling place; a real machine, registration table, poll workers, and the ever-present sign that proclaimed, 'Vote Here Today.' Voters were taken to the polling place, signed the registration book, offered instruction on how to use the machine, voted, and then given an 'I Have Voted' sticker. Great thanks too to our poll workers, Anna who worked as registrar and Amanda and Arli who gave out the stickers. As all voters left the polls, they were also given another pep talk about the importance of good citizenship and the responsibility they will have as voters.

In addition to the LMA students, voters also included most of the LMA faculty, and members of Mr. Hill's classes at Hillcrest South, and West Lake students who were brought by Mrs. Shaw and Mrs. Robles. Overall, it seemed like a grand day. The Union County Board of Election staff members were also impressed by the voters and their level of interest. After the polls closed, the numbers were tallied and at the end of school it was announced that Obama had won by 56 votes to 13 votes. Hopefully this event will provide our students with a positive life imprint.

Science: As we hunker down for the winter, we are busy learning lots of cool stuff. Our Forensics students have been presenting projects on the wrongfully convicted. We are doing our presentations multiple times to realize how much better we get at presenting with practice. Of course, Chemistry wouldn't be any fun without M&M atomic structure. Protons, neutrons, and electrons are way better when we can eat them at the end of the lesson. Biology students have been doing great work on research projects on different organisms that are unicellular or multicellular and either eukaryotic or prokaryotic. In the process we've learned about some little organisms that can do a lot of damage to humans. Our Earth and Environmental students watched a bit of the live landing of the Mars Insight lander this month and are now using discussions of Mars to understand why geology is important to the search for life in the Universe. And we have just started to make

crystals in class to see the ‘formation’ of rocks before our eyes. All classes have been learning about the brain, too. This month we explored how human brains create long-term memories and discussed how this should impact our study habits.

Mathematics: Students in Consumer Mathematics have continued to explore making purchases in the real world. They learned about finding unit prices, and how to find the ‘best buy’ of an item. This topic is transitioned into hospitality and exploring careers that involve hospitality and gratitude. Students gave examples of employment in which employees receive tips and how their performance affects the amount received. Students did ‘mock’ situations in which they role played being patrons of a restaurant, and how well the service was. Students calculated different tip amounts.

Students in Algebra classes have been working with polynomials and how to perform different operations with them. A new technique has been introduced in which students are ‘chunking’ the newer material into smaller steps so they are more manageable and more easily assessed. This method was introduced with using the Smartboard, and now students have begun using it more independently to break down larger complex problems into smaller steps.

Spanish: This month students are working on the unit Daily life: “*La Vida escolar y las Tracciones*” in Spanish class. Students took a Pre-assessment about the unit to place them according to their level. Students engage in conversations, express feelings and emotions, exchange opinions and compare different school habits and traditions from the Spanish-speaking and American countries. Moreover, students have used geography to locate different Spanish speaking countries and to learn about different schools and traditions around the world. While using several videos and Power Point presentations, the teacher enables 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, to understand how language works and to integrate this new skill as they continue studying Spanish. In addition, students are working on different projects as a Summative Assessment in which they have to create a well-organized research about traditions in the school/home in order to describe and then to illustrate each tradition.

Physical Education and Health: For Physical Education, we have been participating in the Floor Hockey Unit. We began the unit with the lead-up activity of Pillow Polo where students practiced the basics of floor hockey using soft, cushioned sticks. Now the students will be using full-length floor hockey sticks. First the classes all learned about the history of the sport and the background of what is now known as the NHL. Students are currently practicing skills such as passing, stickhandling, and shooting. We will also be learning about goaltending skills and game strategy as we head into the final weeks of the unit and participate in lead-up activities and games.

For Health we finished the Personal Hygiene Unit and have been learning about the different types of illnesses that are current in today’s news such as the flu, colds, mononucleosis, conjunctivitis, etc. Students are learning about how each one affects the body and how to manage and/or prevent said illnesses.

Students were also treated to a wonderful time going to Warinanco Park to experience ice-skating. Fun was had by all whether the student was a seasoned vet on the ice or a newcomer never lacing up a pair of skates.

LMA Clinical Department During lifeskills for the month of December we decided on a way to give back to the community with a school wide initiative. Students thought up the LMA Donation

Drive. It was decided that this month's focus be about giving especially to those less fortunate. Throughout the month we created posters to advertise our Donation Drive where each home room will collect items for donation. Each homeroom has been collecting 1 type of the following items: blankets, canned goods, toys, and warm weather accessories (gloves, hats, and scarves). Each morning students have been sorting through the donations and collaboratively working together to enhance their team building skills and social skills. We have contacted United Way of Greater Union County who will be receiving the blankets and warm weather items. Toys will be dropped off to Toys for Tots of Metuchen and the canned goods/non-perishable items are being collected for the Westfield Food bank.

New Point Specialty: Students have been working on specific topics for a group presentations. The four topics were Violence, Drug Abuse, Hunger, Tobacco Use in America. Students were divided into groups and asked to give a short history on each and provide statistics. Students also proposed a hypothesis on how to make changes to alter the trend and composed a realistic to plan that would help positively effect each topic. The students needed to present a conclusion to their problem. Lastly, they had to present their topic to the entire student body. This idea was great, because history, science and language arts were integrated into this project,

In English, the students studied the life and times of Charles Dickens. This lead to a viewing of the *Christmas Carol*. We also read and discussed the O. Henry classical short story The Gift of the Magi.

Ms. Fort arranged for a Producer, Mr. Richard Friedman to come and explain the fascinating world of television production. Mr. Friedman has won an Emmy Award for his production of a B.B. King concert at the Apollo Theatre.

The Social Action Club welcomed Mr. Fitzsimmons and the Vietnam veterans in for lunch on December 17th. We enjoy having this group speak to our students, especially at Christmas. The Social Action Club will work the Westfield Food Pantry on December 28th.

Trinitas: Since students are in grades K - 12, they work individually on assignments from their sending districts. However, some of the younger students have enjoyed reading The Gingerbread Man, retold by Catherine Mc Cafferty. The students colored and cut out figures and wrote an end to the story. There is a creative display on the wall outside our classroom.

Older students, who have not yet received assignments from their sending districts have enjoyed reading short stories with holiday themes. "The Gift of the Magi," by O. Henry focuses on the spirit of giving. "Once Upon A Christmas," by Pearl S. Buck is an excerpt from her autobiography.

The teachers have joined with other staff in bringing in gifts for the children on the inpatient units, which will be given to them on Christmas.

CROSSROADS:

Enrollment as of December 14, 2018 Actual: 44 Changes: Entered: Exited: 0	Referrals: 1 Intakes Scheduled: 0 Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: 12/19/18	Emergency Drills: 12/18/18

Allison Gebler's Class, Room 102- The thematic unit focused on winter weather changes, December holidays and positive social interactions with peers through Social Studies, Science, art

projects, and a variety of play based group activities.

In the area of English Language Arts, students completed letters to Santa, using an array of skills involving writing, tracing, cutting and pasting visual supports. Students selected positive social skills from a list of characteristics they have demonstrated and generic gift categories they would like to receive for Christmas. Students also decorated cards for their families and the possible differences in family dynamics and members were introduced during Circle Time, using visual supports and PECs.

In the area of Math, students completed crafts and games, to celebrate Chanukah, each of which included an assortment of counting, color matching, turn taking and 1:1 correspondence activities. Students were introduced to geometrical concepts through the creation of multiple shapes within snowflake cutting activities.

In the area of Science / Social Studies, students completed daily review of the weather patterns they have seen throughout the month, selected appropriate clothing items necessary for winter weather and learned about different tools used during the Fall and Winter seasons (rakes for leaves, shovels for snow).

Centers for the month focused on the creation of decorations for each December holiday. The culmination of these crafts will be included in a multi-denominational classroom celebration, with an early focus on the principles of Kwanzaa, including a mini-feast and gift-giving exchange. Each of the principles of Kwanzaa will be related to possible daily student demonstrations of similar social skills: collaboration, creativity, trust, cooperation, independence and responsibility.

In the area of individualized goals: Niall has demonstrated understanding of his toilet training program by initiating the process an average of once a day. Tanzania has begun an individual program of emotional self awareness, in which she will address stressors caused by peer behaviors and assist in determining a sensory response plan using visual supports. Alex is now initiating the use of his PEC's book to request preferred items and activities, with frequent verbal reiteration of his wants. Kairo has greatly improved upon his form and focus during writing/tracing activities through the incorporation of OT within his Direct Instruction and daily responsibilities.

The best part of this month was the development and incorporation of new hands-on sensory endeavors. Each sensory activity can be implemented in individual or group settings: 3 constructive kinesthetic sand bins, 3 water-play centers, 3 playdough based bins, 1 rice and beans search/find activity and a variety of supplemental centers (shaving cream, water beads, magic stay dry sand).

Room 102's Star Student, Alex, has regained the level of hygienic independence he demonstrated last year! He is currently remaining accident free, 4 out of 5 days a week, adhering to a bathroom schedule, and initiating each step of the process mostly independently.

The class will continue to work on individualized independence outside of the classroom: delivering messages, complying with hallway rules and maintaining expected positive behaviors during specials. Room 102 is looking forward to celebrating the start of 2019 next month.

Consuelo Alzate's Preschool Class, Room 103- This has been another very busy, exciting and rewarding month for room 103. As part of our community based instruction, the class had the opportunity to visit the Barnes and Noble store in Edison. The children attended story time, created an art project, and enjoyed looking at a variety of books and toys. The students also had the opportunity to visit the Clark Gym, where they were able to interact and play with peers from

another class.

In class, children were busy celebrating Thanksgiving and preparing for the Holiday Season.

All of our students are making remarkable improvements in all areas of development. Sebastian and Lyla have mastered level one of the PECS training. Jose and Ezequiel are now showing great progress and advancing in level one of the PECS training as well. All students are now able to use a fork during meal times, brush their teeth without hesitation and can sit in group activities for a longer period of time.

Briana Gallo's Class, Room 104- The focus of December is Holiday Traditions and interactive play. In the area of English Language Arts students participated in interactive books about the various holidays in December. Each book contains an arts & craft activity to compliment the objectives learned in that book. In the area of Mathematics students are working on rote counting and 1:1 correspondence by using TouchMath. In the area of Science/Social Studies students completed centers based on Community Helpers. Students are learning about firemen, police men, veterinarians, garage men, teachers, and construction workers.

Room 104's Star Student, Aiden, has been doing great in the area of communication by using PECs. He is requesting food and desired activities throughout the day with little, to no prompts.

Anna Garrison's Class, Room 105- The students started off the month with a unit on Hanukkah. Students read a book explaining the meaning of the holiday and how it's celebrated. The class made their own menorah, a sun catcher dreidel, a Star of David ornament, as well as latkes. The students really enjoyed these activities.

The next unit is focused on an array of different subjects. Mrs. Garrison will be conducting "Eight Days of Teaching" in the classroom, where a new unit is discussed each day. This will consist of reading a book, followed by a craft or baking cookies. Students will also be able to make their own gifts to bring home to their parents.

Stephen Goham's Class, Room 106- 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. Three students 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.

Chantel Abughazaleh's Class, Room 108- This month's themes included winter/snow. By studying these themes, students created different crafts such as snowmen and snow globes. They learned about the importance of Hanukkah and Christmas and spending time with family and friends. To coincide with these themes, students read coordinating books. Some of these stories include: "Snow Happy!" By Patricia Hubbell, "First Snow" by Peter McCarthy and "Hanukkah" by

Trudi Trueit.

On December 4th, the class attended the Clark Gym where students had a great time playing with the different pieces of equipment. As the holidays are approaching, students will make Christmas cookies and create holiday cards to give to their families.

Christina Witte's Middle School Class, Room 109- The primary focus of instruction this month was in the area of pre-vocational instruction. Room 109 started the production of our holiday sale items, which were made possible through the Foundation Grants for Entrepreneurship that we received. All students had an active part in the production of candles and we noticed that this activity capitalized on each student's engagement and maximized their potential to work and contribute in a meaningful way. Jillian stood out particularly. Students decorated wooden candle holders and one of the steps entailed tying a bow around the stumps. Even though this is a skill that Jill had not been able to do independently she was extremely motivated in this activity. She was watching and trying repeatedly and the joy over accomplishing this task was evident in her demeanor and work. Elaina also showed much improvement in her ability to independently follow the instructions and problem solve as she was working (a big accomplishment for her). She worked on measuring out the candle wax by exact weight, as well as the other ingredients in liquid measures. Rashid showed perseverance in preparing the candle jars and inserting with wicks before pouring the wax and Devin decorated the candle stumps with greenery and berries.

Students also learned about the solar system and conducted some experiments and STEM activities with 'moon sand' and 'space sand' that does not get wet. The culmination of this unit ended in a trip to the Planetarium, where we watched a life demonstration of going into space and visiting the planets with Jack and Annie from the Magic Treehouse series.

Natalia Amador's Middle School Class, Room 111- Students learned about the different holidays we all celebrate within our country; Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. The class has continued to work on strengthening their pre-vocational jobs by completing the many tasks here at Crossroads and by attending community based instruction at Westlake school. So far, students have worked on completing Ellison orders, sorting magazines, doing laundry, collecting recyclables, and this month we are working on utensil orders and kitchen inventory.

For science and social studies, the middle school teachers have been rotating into all the classes and we have been teaching thematic units. This month's thematic units include: winter animal habitats, migration, adaptation, and hibernation; the effects of germs and the flu season; and special arts and crafts.

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. DJ is working on expanding his vocabulary and strengthening his single-digit multiplication skills. Jefferson is working on using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast different text. He is also working on double-digit multiplication. Uthmaan is working on his money skills and sight word reading. Luis is working on identifying the letters of his name, numbers 1-5, and interacting with new people.

Speech Therapy- Ezequiel and Jose are both quickly moving through phase 2 of the PECS protocol. They are travelling to a communication partner to exchange a picture to make a request. Hope continues to accompany the students to the Clark Library to enhance their learning through STEM activities, as well as conducting MakerSpace activities every Tuesday afternoon. She ensures that the activities are themed, when appropriate. Eileen and Jessica have been

incorporating the holidays into speech group activities. The speech team's wonderful bulletin board was created to include all the different ways our students here at Crossroads communicate.

Occupational Therapy- The OT department was busy preparing for the holidays. Students worked on fine motor skills of cutting, grasping and releasing, as well as visual perceptual and cognitive skills of matching and following (visually and auditory) directives. In addition, OT also worked on a themed wall for December with each student making a "penguin" for a winter scene.

Kim, Dina, and Holly each attended one day of a two day conference for school-based Occupational Therapists. The information was shared amongst the therapists as they attended various sessions within the conference. This sharing was beneficial as the two days built off each other and information was needed to grasp the complete concepts.

Kim and Shannon (OT intern from Quinnipiac) attended the monthly parent meeting where they presented "OT at Crossroads: How we do it". They led the discussion amongst the parents, sharing experiences and discussing problem solving solutions.

Miller/Square- At the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year we were fortunate to receive new and updated Video Conferencing equipment. We now have 3 new units, including one that is able to be brought directly into our classrooms for classroom observation by our consultant Dr Paul Callahan. We have been continuing our video-conferencing twice per week with Dr Callahan. He has had the opportunity to observe all of our students in their classrooms as well as several students individually on the Elevated Square. We will be conducting our second Staff Video-conference on December 13th where Dr Callahan supports and educates the staff on the Miller Method as part of our ongoing Professional Development. We are finalizing plans for Dr. Callahan's upcoming two day visit to Crossroads School in February. He will spend one day collaborating with classroom staff while spending time in our classrooms followed by a second day of Professional Development on The Miller Method. Twenty-two students continue to receive Miller Method direct services on the Elevated Square to work on skills including self and body awareness, communication, social interaction, problem solving.

Physical Therapy- Currently we have one PT working two days a week at Crossroads School. Thirteen students receive PT services with a total of 13 individual treatment spots, two PT consultations and one PT group. One student has been added to physical therapy this month after recommendations from his teacher and OT. In addition, another student from our school was informally assessed for PT services and we are awaiting district response for potential addition to our regular PT caseload.

Our students continue to demonstrate progress during their physical therapy sessions. S.P. began receiving PT services this month and he is off to a great start. He's beginning to learn the routine of our sessions and is already showing progress towards his goals. R.M. continues to practice bilateral coordination exercises with a "movement break" program in his classroom throughout the day. G.S. and S.J. are working nicely together during their PT group demonstrating improvements in turn-taking and learning from peers. All of our students with PT continue to work towards their IEP specific goals this month during their sessions.

HILLCREST SOUTH:

Enrollment as of 12/14/18 Actual: 95 (last month 93) Changes: Entered: 4 Exited: 2 for attendance Suspensions: 3. 2 as per EPS due to assault after school in Elizabeth. 1 for disruption, aggression, and assault on staff.	Intakes Pending General Ed.: 5 Intakes Pending Sp. Ed.: 1 Waiting List: 0
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This month Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) welcomed new students and Ms. Gronert created individualized schedules for the students to ensure they are on track to graduate. Ms. Gronert worked alongside Dr. Balsamello in communicating with administrators at Elizabeth Public Schools to transition EPS students to both Hillcrest Academy North and South Campuses. She continued to meet with potential seniors to discuss post-secondary plans and how to achieve these goals. In addition, Ms. Gronert is continuously working with Ms. Dattilo and the staff to monitor the student's progress and work. This month, the student's in Ms. Ferrari's Success Seminar Math Strategies class took the accuplacer after completing a six weeks ALEKS Math boot camp with Union County College. The students at HAS greatly benefited from this intense program. All students who took the assessment demonstrated progress and two students passed the assesment.

Ms. Clark had a busy month for the HAS Community Service Program (HASCSP). The Frosty's Friends committee held its 10th 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 HASCSP concluded their annual "gently used" coat drive to benefit Jersey Cares. We would like to thank everyone who participated in this drive and supported this worthy cause! The Hillcrest Singers are in their ninth 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. Selected students visited Junior Achievement's Program Headquarters in order to participate in Finance Park. This experiential learning opportunity was provided to our students through a generous grant from Junior Achievement and serves as a culminating activity for part of HAS' economics curriculum. Students that attended this event were also required to transfer the information that they learned back into their home community. In doing this, student's family and friends also benefited from valuable financial literacy lessons.

Tuesday Spirit Day has been an ongoing success. Ms. Gilchrist, the Social Worker, attended the monthly DCF/HIB meeting and identified new students for specialized services. Ms. Gilchrist hosted the second perfect attendance breakfast for the month of November. There were 12 eligible students and all attended. The Social Worker continued to track the Seniors and identify who was no longer attending Saturday School in Elizabeth and who may require modifications to graduate in 2019.

Mr. Hill's Social Studies students in U.S. History I, U.S. History II and World History classes demonstrated critical thinking and analytical skills through the evaluation of primary and secondary sources. Sources spanned all mediums, including artwork, primary and secondary texts, as well as audio/video elements. Students were able to evaluate various events from the past and compare them with events in the present by reading and analyzing standards aligned current events informational texts as a means of better preparing them to develop and implement thoughtful solutions to personal, community, and societal issues of the present and future. US I History students began their work in Unit 2 by analyzing sources related to The French and Indian War, making connections to discover how these series of events paved the way to the Revolutionary War, and beyond. USII History students analyzed the impacts nationalism, political conflict, and militarism had in setting the stage for World War I. Modern World students analyzed primary and secondary documents related to the industrial revolution, period related inventions, and the intended and

unintended consequences the introduction these elements had within the western colonialist/imperialist framework of the time. Mr. Hill's classes also participated with Mr. Bell from Lamberts Mill Academy in a mock voting scierio. Mr. Hill obtained a voting booth and ballot forms and had students complete the process for the 2012 Presidential election.

Ms. Duarte's Social Studies students wrapped up previous units of study and began their current units. In USII students completed unit assessments on the Industrialization unit through the utilization of Google Classroom. These assessments served to assess student understanding, and bring a sense of comfort for students as they ease their way to working with technology and the use of assessments. Students are now beginning their study of WWI by looking at the main causes of the war and the way in which trench warfare contributed to the death rate of the war. In Economics students wrapped up their budget projects and attended the Finance Park trip where they used the information they learned to conduct a real life simulation. The unit helped students appreciate and understand the importance of budgeting in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. All together, students are ending the year with great conversation and understanding.

Students in Mr. Reichman's Chemistry classes learned about the history of atomic models over the last two and a half millennia. They are currently working on using technology resources to complete an electronic presentation on the timeline of experiments and observations that led to the revolutionary models of the atom that were developed during this time period. Recently, Mr. Reichman's classes participated in class discussions about current events about science, including the recent news from China about genetically engineered human embryos. Students shared their points of view, including alarm at the prospect of engineered children and interest in whether the CRISPR method could be used in place of radioactive spiders or intergalactic planetary matter to create superheros.

Ms. Ferrari's Math classes advanced on their weekly drills on fractions. Many students have shown week over week growth on these exams which is a good confidence builder for the students. In addition, the Algebra students have shown week over week growth on reading, comprehending, and evaluating word problems. This confidence should help them as they move onto more standardized tests in the later part of this year and on their unit assessments. The skills the Algebra students worked on included plotting points on the coordinate plane, graphing linear equations, graphing equations on a calculator, graphing intercepts, finding slope and rate of change, graphing using slope-intercept form, and graphing linear functions. The skills the Geometry students worked studied included parallel lines and transversals, proving lines parallel, and parallel lines on the coordinate plane. Ms. Ferrari diligently kept up to date with the five students that she was assigned to be the Credit Retrieval grading teacher.

Mr. Sobieniak's students in Algebra II classes learned to write functions defined by expressions in different but equivalent forms to reveal and explain different properties of functions. They also learned that polynomials form a system analogous to the integers and some properties of polynomials. Students in Probability and Statistics classes learned more about representation of data. They also learned about stem and leaf diagrams and histograms. Students were investigating many real life applications problems. The students in the Success Seminar/Math Strategy class used Khan Academy to improve their algebraic skills. Students of all mathematics classes were using Khan Academy to improve their algebraic skills on Fridays. They used the interactive SmartBoard throughout their lessons.

Ms. Cherville's Spanish students learned about the four seasons in the target language. The topic brought knowledge of vocabulary on weather, clothing, food, and a variety of activities. Students also expressed themselves in a poem about their favorite season. The last week of December students learned about transportation and how to go to different places in the target language. They identified tourist places and landmarks in Latin America through video clips. The students also identified holiday music and symbols that have their origin in Latin America. Advanced students wrote a complete holiday children's story which will be shared on our last day of school.

Ms. Holden’s students in English completed Unit 1 and took a three part assessment test based on the skills they had learned in Unit 1. Students also read and analyzed *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Students viewed excerpts from the movie based on the novella. In addition, students compared and contrasted an updated version of the classic and utilized the chromebooks to research the life of Charles Dickens.

Ms. Cioffi’s English courses have written a narrative as a final project for Unit 1 of the English curriculum. Classes were assigned a narrative essay in which they brainstormed, outlined, edited, and drafted out a final narrative essay. Students incorporated the knowledge and skills that they practiced throughout the course of Unit 1. The remainder of the month, students will begin the Online English Common Assessments for Unit 1. They will reflect on their assessment and achievement and then begin Unit 2 of the English curriculum where the focus will shift from fictional narratives to informational pieces and argumentative writing.

Ms. Rubin, the school nurse and health education teacher, continued to assist with entry and dismissal procedures. The school nurse made calls to all of the absent students’ parents each day. She has been compiling attendance letters for students with excessive absences as per the NJDOE. The nurse has been seeing an average of 15-20 students for health concerns each day. There have been a number of new students starting at HAS this month and the nurse was in the process of obtaining current health information from the sending academies. There were two episodes of students with food allergies which required hospital transfer due to anaphylaxis. The nurse kept in touch with the families of those students to get the proper food allergy action plans in place. One of our school nurse substitutes, Ms. Kristen Dinagar, observed Ms. Rubin teach health as part of the requirements for her school nurse certification. Required health screenings continue throughout the year as required by the state. Ms. Rubin and Ms. Ferrari ran the School Store three times each month during lunch periods. The students assisted with selling items and gaining community service hours. The students were excited about this new addition to our school. In health class, the students had lessons about the respiratory and digestive systems. The next module in health class will be the skeletal system.

The students in Mr. Barone’s physical education classes continued with their unit on basketball. In addition to the “3 Point Shootout” game, students have been competing in games of “21”. This game challenged students to compete against one another and utilized all aspects of basketball that include, dribbling, shooting, and rebounding. Students in health class recently completed a unit on the respiratory system and were introduced to a unit on the digestive system. This seemed to be a very interesting topic to the students because many of them were not aware of what exactly happens when something is eaten. Mr. Barone explained that the digestive system provides nutrients and energy for your body through the digestion of food.

HILLCREST/NORTH:

Enrollment as of: 12/14/18	Referrals : work in progress
Actual: 86	
Changes: Entered: 1 Exited: 1	Drills: Fire Drill: 12/3/18
	Lockdown: 12/3/18

In the month of December, students in US History II gained both knowledge and skills through studying World War I. Students learned the causes of war, and applied these causes to “The Great War” in Europe. Students connected the previous focus of study, the Industrial Revolution, to the war, analyzing the effects of industrialization on World War I. All the while, students were practicing the skill of integrating textual evidence in support of their argument. When writing about World War I, students used the “Claim-

Evidence-Analysis” template - the same template used in their English classes. This combination of knowledge and skills made December an incredibly productive month in USII.

In health class, the students completed a unit on fetal development in the third trimester. The students learned about each body system developing during the third trimester, the stages of labor, pain management during labor and problems that can occur during the birthing process. They also learned about newborn testing. The students also watched a video called “In the Womb” that chronicles the journey from conception to birth.

In English, students continued to work through the writing process as they revised and peer-edited the rough drafts of their narrative essays. Students completed the writing process by making changes and revisions to their essays using the feedback from peers. Students ended the process by finalizing and publishing their final draft. Students applied their historical knowledge on the Holocaust to literature as they read excerpts from The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank. Students also wrote their own journal entries from Anne Frank’s point of view. Students completed all parts of the Unit I assessment.

The yearbook committee revised the theme to superheroes. A cover is being drafted and revised for publication. The page layout has been set and implemented. Committee members are currently working on compiling senior information, creating a senior superlative survey, designing pages, and organizing photos.

Algebra 2 students have begun to use the substitution method to solve systems of linear equations to make real-life decisions. With fun research activities, students act as financial advisors and have learned how investors distribute shares. Algebra 1 students have concluded a unit with compound absolute value inequalities to find limits and set boundaries of possible solutions. All students have used logic and reasoning to discover rules in mathematics and tested the rules in real-life scenarios.

In Creative Writing, students are starting each class writing a story for ten minutes. Students focused their writing on imagery. They wrote a short story in seven steps, paying attention to the details and describing them. Students continued the imagery section by reading a stream-of-consciousness story “The Final Voyage of the Ghost Ship” by Garcia Marquez. This story is one sentence. Then students wrote their own stream-of-consciousness one sentence story. They turned to setting next, where students read “The Machine That Won The War” by Isaac Asimov. They wrote another short story, this one focused on setting.

This month Hillcrest Academy North welcomed new students and Ms. Gronert created individualized schedules for each student to ensure their track to graduation. Ms. Gronert worked with the administrators at Hillcrest Academy North in communicating with the administration and guidance counselors at Elizabeth Public Schools to transition students from EPS to both Hillcrest Academy North and South Campus. Ms. Gronert has continued to meet with potential seniors in regards to creating post-secondary plans and goals. She also collaborated with the staff at Hillcrest Academy North in planning for Career Day in January. This month, the students in the Success Seminar Math Strategies class took the Accuplacer after completing an intense six weeks ALEKS Math boot camp course with UCC.

The month of December found Biology, Forensic Science, and Computer Science continuing their exploration of content. Biology students completed a project that had them applying the principles of genetics to Sesame Street characters and creating monster children based off of probabilistic outcomes of their inherited traits which further enhanced their knowledge of DNA by studying its structure and the mechanisms by which it transmits traits to successive generations. Next month, Biology students will begin studying the theory of evolution and discovering the evidence for this groundbreaking fete of science. Forensic Science students began their inquiry into the disturbed minds and acts of serial killers through the completion of a “Serial Killer Cereal Box” project. In January Forensic Science students will begin their investigation of fingerprints. Computer Science students continued their journey towards becoming competent computer programmers by beginning their education on JavaScript and its applications to creating

games and animation. Next month Computer Science students will begin their discovery of computer hardware configurations and applications.

In Art, the month of December was dedicated to sewing. Students designed a creature or an object to be translated into a stuffed felt toy. In this lesson, they had to learn many things regarding hand sewing. They began with an instructional video which was an overview of how to design a simple “creature” and create a pattern by tracing the components onto tracing paper. They reviewed how to cut using relief cutting and were taught how to conserve fabric by placing their patterns on edges of fabric. Later, they practiced simple hand stitches on a “sampler” and learned the running stitch, back stitch and whip stitch. During this lesson, they also learned how to use a threader, knot their thread and begin sewing from the wrong side of the fabric so not to see the end of the thread. They learned how to cut from a pattern and assemble their creations using straight pins before sewing. Students began creating their objects and many designed objects that represented characters in pop culture while some made projects to give to people for the holidays.

This month, our students visited Senior Spirit, a medical daycare for senior citizens. Our students were exceptional at working with the seniors and helping them make crafts such as holiday cards and mini felt creatures. Students worked patiently, one on one with the many seniors who attend the program, helping them glue and assemble pre-cut pieces for their designs.

NONPUBLIC:

The allocations for the Nonpublic School Security and Technology aid for the 2018-2019 school year have been expended. Each nonpublic school purchased security enhancements and technology for their programs.

The Nonpublic Nursing programs are running in all of the nonpublic schools in Union County. The Nonpublic nurses are working on completing the state required health screenings (hearing, vision, height, weight and scoliosis) for all nonpublic school students once parent consent is obtained.

The Nonpublic Title I program will provide services through the end of May.

The Nonpublic teachers are working diligently on their PLC goals related to *Teach Like a Pirate*.

TRANSITION SERVICES:

Work Readiness Academy Individual Student Enrollments: 12

Project SEARCH-Overlook Medical Center Enrollment: 9

Westlake School (Job Academy): 10

Lamberts Mill Academy (Job Academy): 3

Sub-Contracted SLE Programs with UC School Districts: 3 (Plainfield, Elizabeth, and Summit)

Students in the **Work Readiness Academy** continued in their first semester internship experiences. Students are placed in one experience two days per week and a second experience one day per week.

Highlights from the classroom this month included:

Filling out a job application: Students focused on collecting information needed to fill out a job application. They gained an understanding of why the employer needs to find out their personal information, availability, education, job experience, and references.

Developing answers for common questions asked on a job interview: Students developed answers specific to a job description given to them to gain an understanding as to what they need to include in their

answers to have a successful interview. The questions consist of: Tell me something about yourself (which is one of the hardest things for any person to do)? What are your strengths? What area(s) do you need to continue to grow in (improve) in? What is your availability?

Personal Choices: In health class the students have discussed various situations (getting a tattoo or body piercing, and drinking alcohol) and how they need to think about their action, understanding the consequences that decisions can have both short and long term.

Netiquette: Students gained a better understanding of what is considered good manners for using emails, texts, etc.

Cranford Strength and Fitness Club: Students log their workouts which consist of completing four different exercises (12 reps, 2 sets each) then participating in a cardio workout on treadmills, ellipticals, stair steppers, and stationary bikes.

Holiday Party: Students and staff enjoyed each other's company at the Holiday Party. Group Amazon was responsible for making the dessert. The entire class made decorations, and Ashley was in charge of creating a holiday banner for all to take pictures in front of the decorations.

During their weekly skills group students completed reviews of their iStart Strong Assessments identifying personality themes, top two interests and occupations which correlate with them. Students also identified stressors at work, triggers and strategies on how to cope.

We completed the last remaining Family Transition Planning Meetings. Our program social worker, Ms. Purdy, developed Transition Planning Meeting Summaries along with paraprofessional Sarah Cooke for implementation starting in January.

WRA students toured Wegmans Woodbridge where they learned about jobs and how all departments within a large grocery store operate.

WRA students participated in a very successful community service project at the Community Food Bank in Linden. The students learned where they packaged pasta to be distributed to numerous food banks in the state. Following the lesson, they discussed the roles of the staff, how the Food Bank distributes food to the needy and how the students service positively contributes to others in need.

In Life Skills enrichment students learned how to iron, how to do their own laundry, and how to set a proper table from start to finish.

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** program at Overlook Medical Center is in its third year of operation. Beginning in December, the nine interns started the second of three internship rotations. For the 2nd rotation, students are participating in experiences with the following departments:

Neurology/ICU/CCU
Environmental Services
Overlook Foundation
Food Services-Overlook Cafeteria
Central Access/Patient Admissions (New Department!)

Dietary & Nutrition
Human Resources
Information Technology

Instructional topics covered in the classroom this month included:

Healthy Relationships

Self-Advocacy

Stress Management using aromatherapy, herbal tea and meditation.

The interns also enjoyed a guest presentation on Stress Management from the NJ Self-Advocacy Project.

Applications for the 2019-20 Project SEARCH program are now available by visiting the project search website at www.projectsearch-unioncounty-nj.org or contacting Mr. Josh Bornstein at jbornstein@ucesc.org

The Project SEARCH program held an Information Session for school district personnel on Tuesday, December 4th.

The program also held an Open House event for prospective students and their families on Wednesday, December 12th.

There will be additional Open House events held in February.

TECHNOLOGY:

The Technology Department has completed the migration of Edumet into the virtual environment. We continue to work with Edumet's infrastructure team to ensure all data is secure and available to the staff. We will keep the old environment powered on for another month to ensure everything is functional. After that we will power off another physical server saving power and further shrinking our data center footprint.

We are continuing to shape our PowerSchool environment to tailor it to each of our schools specific needs. While a standard approach may work for Lamberts Mill Academy, Hillcrest Academy South, and Hillcrest Academy North, there are many aspects of a personalized student information system that apply to Westlake and Crossroads. We are collaborating with multiple staff members during this exciting time so that we can serve the needs of our students and staff like never before.

After much discussion and weighing our options, the Technology Department have recommended Instagram as the district's flagship social media vehicle. We believe we have an environment well suited for Instagram as we have so many moments that can be captured best with photography. We hope that this endeavor helps to show Union county and the whole internet community the great work our staff does every day.

We are working closely with central office staff to clean and migrate all non-public school information data from our current resource to a new, more robust solution. We expect to have this completed by the end of 2018.

TRANSPORTATION:

The estimate of total yearly transportation costs was mailed to all participating districts on December 19, 2018. 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.

cc: Eric Larson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary