



Union County Educational Services Commission
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(Att. 2)

**Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors
 February 6, 2019**

WESTLAKE:

Enrollment as of January 23, 2018 Actual: 67 Changes: Entered: 1 Exited: 0	Referrals: 3 Intakes Scheduled: 2 Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: January 23, 2018	Emergency Drills: Shelter in Place
Suspensions: 0	January 3, 2019

Funding from a UCESF building wide grant was used to successfully expand the existing Westlake ADL room into a more defined apartment space for our students to practice independent living skills in a natural environment. It is always rewarding to be a part of a grant committee that directly benefits our students. The new laminate flooring is in the process of being installed by LMA students and already beginning to transform the classroom into a polished living space.

Girl Scouts sold candy items to raise funds for materials to make a bird feeding station in a dedicated tree located in the Westlake picnic grove. The scouts threaded circular oat cereal onto colorful fuzzy pipe cleaners and tied to the tree branches in time for winter when bird food is scarcer. The girls look forward to meeting with one another and greatly enjoy the socialization that scouting provides.

The Boy Scouts are currently working on their Disability Awareness badge and will begin working on the Nature and Golf badges as the weather warms up.

The prom committee is in the beginning stages of planning for this year's prom. The theme is "Under the Sea". Initial contacts have been made with Goldman Sachs in hopes they will financially support us as they did last year and provide volunteers to assist with the setup the day of the prom. The Prom will be held Friday, May 3, 2019 this year.

The Westlake Dance Team is in full swing after break preparing for our next event. J.M. our team captain of the Westlake Stars continues to work with his peers to create choreography that can be modeled and taught to each student. Students decided to choose a more complicated dance sequence for January in hopes to perform it at our upcoming basketball game. For the first time they practiced following along with a video model and then they were able to fade the visual and complete the dance on their own. Students meet weekly to practice.

This month, Westlake middle school students went on two new CBI trips. Students ages nine through thirteen will have the opportunity to visit Acme Supermarket and the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Library. Students will be purchasing items to sell and run our Westlake "Wolves Den" school store. Also, in January, Mrs. Convery's class returned to Runnells and presented the residents with brand new Bingo cards that they bought with the proceeds of their business. Runnells residents were very happy to receive the bingo cards as

their current cards were very damaged and old. Everyone used the new cards during their weekly bingo game and the students were very proud that they could make the residents smile.

Language Arts: In Mrs. Fernandez's Language Arts class, students are learning descriptive words and using them to describe common objects in their environment. Students continue to work on their specific programs which include, identifying community safety signs, utilizing the Edmark reading program, sight word recognition, and identifying emotions and actions.

Mr. Carten has been exploring the writing process by working on sentence structure with students. A co-op learning experience has been developed with Mrs. Flores from LMA and her students each Thursday. The LMA student come and read a story and the class then discusses what events happened in the story. It has proven to be a wonderful social opportunity for both Westlake and LMA students by increasing opportunities for questioning and discussion between them. Students are reading novels including; "The Return of the Catman", by author Anne Schraff.

Math: In Mrs. Porchetta's math class, students are working on comparing objects and graphing xy coordinates. Each student came up and placed their magnet in the correct spot to demonstrate understanding. They are also learning about graphs through interactive lessons on the Smart Board.

Science: Students are very excited to start a Science unit discussing the Earth's Climate. Students are studying climates of the past. (Ice Age). They watched a short video on how the Ice Age began. The video reviewed how the climate changes the Earth and how scientists study those changes.

Food Science: Last week Mrs. Palmer's class made coffee and pumpkin bread to serve the Jersey City Directors of Special Services. During Food Preparation the students have been making different soups. They have made French Onion soup, Vegetable soup, and Potato soup. They are learning how to safely cut vegetables with knives and choppers. They are also practicing sautéing the vegetables.

Social Studies: In social studies, students are working in groups to answer questions based on current events. This week they will be learning about the life of Martin Luther King and how his beliefs still effects us in a positive way. They have also been working on holidays (New Years) and map skills. (Identifying symbols map, globe, street water and compass MM map key).

On January 31st, Mrs. Convery's class will be attending a play entitled "The Freedom Train". The play is about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. The play will be a nice introduction to the study of Black History during the month of February.

PE: Currently in Physical Education, students are enhancing their knowledge of the sport of Hockey. They are actively engaged with their peers to understanding safe practices while participating in games and activities that utilize specific motor skills. Some of the students remember how to hold a hockey stick correctly and how to catch, pass and shoot on a goal. Students do need extra attention while playing in games to be aware of their surroundings so as not to cause harm to their peers. Some students do need prompting to remain on task. Mr. Moss's goal is to teach the students how and why, expose them to the sport they can play, watch, and enjoy with their friends and families and support the local professional hockey teams.

Health: Students are starting to understand a new word, 'stress'. Mr. Moss starts with playing a game with students which allow them to see that stress can be controlled and avoided. Students are learning about triggers and coping strategies to best support them when they are feeling stressed. Nurse IJ has completed a health lesson on Adequate Dehydration – Drinking Water and currently, students started a new lesson about dental hygiene.

Sign Making/Engraving machine: Students continue to learn how to use the Scott engraving machine to make name plates for new staff all around the Commission. The machine can make various types of signs. Students are working on making some key chains to sell at the school store.

Horticulture: In horticulture, Mrs. Capizzi's class finished up with planting and selling Amaryllis during the holidays. Currently, students are working on garden plans for planting in the garden in spring time. They are selling Carnations for Valentine's Day and started growing lavender to make soaps and sensory bags to sell.

Post Office/Print Shop: In the Print Shop, Mrs. Pajewski's students are exploring the jobs associated with the print shop (copying, collating, filing, laminating and more). They have completed laminating jobs for staff and are receiving jobs from the main office (copies and mail delivery). Students continue to write letters to each other and mail them in the Westlake mail delivery.

Sweet Shoppe: During the holidays, students made over \$600.00 at PSE&G selling their chocolates and breads. The students enjoy going out to sell their items, especially when the customers tell them how professionally the products are packaged. Students also made \$219.00 at Wagner Farm. The Farm thanked us for selling our candy and bread there as they make a profit as well. On the last day before vacation, Mrs. Palmer's class went around to all the classrooms and offices and sang carols. The students were very proud of themselves and the other classes sang with them. With all the money the students made, Mrs. Palmer treated the students to a Chinese luncheon. During the New Year, students are making candy for a sweet sixteen party and for a conference Mr. Kowalski is going to. They are also getting ready for St. Valentine's Day.

Jewelry: In the jewelry vocational workshop, students are organizing materials after nearly selling out of their entire inventory during the holidays. Currently, students are working on products for the Mother's Day and Valentine's Day sales.

Fabrics Plus Shop: The students are working on completing personalized wooden home décor signs. They took orders from the Commission during the Holiday Sale in December and are currently working on making these signs. They also started producing more wooden signs for the Overlook Hospital gift shop this month. The students were focused on how to use a hammer properly and nailing the saw tooth picture hangers into the wood. They are learning many different steps in making and selling items.

Life Skills: In Life Skills, this year, the students worked on completing the checking unit. The students were required to write out two checks. Throughout the pretest and posttest, the students required some assistance and discussed the importance of completing all the different parts of the forms correctly.

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 the 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 demand, decorating, purchasing orders, accounting, shopping lists, and visiting other schools on a cart). Students also had the opportunity to visit one of their local stores, the ACME, and practice generalizing some of the skills they had previously learned. Students shopped for their school store using their inventory data and surveys from staff and students. This experience has tied into student math programs where students continue to use money in naturally occurring situations (i.e. money ID, counting, addition, subtraction, using a register, survey data, reading graphs, and accounting).

Therapies: Speech: This month in speech, the therapists conducted ADL groups targeting both expressive and receptive language skills through various activities: making play doh, obstacle courses and a following directions activity. Therapists worked closely with teachers to make materials needed in the classroom to assist with student communication (e.g. activity schedules, visual scripts, etc.). They continued to work on SGO's and made any modifications necessary to ensure students are meeting their goals. As a department they have discussed potential opportunities for future professional development and ways we can collaborate to better assist students with social skills. In addition, therapists met/reached out to parents to discuss student progress during parent teacher conferences.

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, one PT group and two PT monthly consultations.

During one of our monthly consults we continue to assist the classroom teacher with choosing appropriate motor break activities for our students. We discussed which exercises are working and which need to be adjusted.

Our weekly PT group is continuing with Yoga and demonstrating steady progress. We meet every Tuesday for one hour (in combination with our OT). We work on motor planning and bilateral coordination as we perform various yoga sequences and practice breathing exercises. The students in this group are getting very used to the routine of entering the room, taking out a mat, following along with the yoga sequences and cleaning up at the end. They are combining motor skills with communication goals by utilizing their iPads during the session. 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 is being monitored on two formal balance assessment tools; the Timed-Up-and Go (TUG) test and the Pediatric Berg Balance Scale (PBBS). 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 we have three occupational therapists working at Westlake (2 full-time OTs) and 1 part-time OT who works on Wednesday and Thursday.

This month the OT department continues 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. The therapists measure the student's performance and progress through use of task analyses that are aligned with AFLS assessment.

The OT and Speech departments collaborate to develop hands on activities for their ADL support groups. Activities this month included making playdoh, toast and hot chocolate, following simple visual and written recipes, and a scavenger hunt that incorporates following written/picture clues to complete a seasonal puzzle as a group.

The Life Skills classes continue to be very successful through hands activities and the use of integrating iPads that have been programmed to go along with the activities, allowing the students to make choices, label items used/actions completed, and to communicate with their peers.

Yoga group continues weekly (co-treating with PT). Mrs. Edelstein uses the Musical Yoga Adventures CD allowing us to work on social skills, ADL skills (removing shoes, pouring water, rolling up yoga mats) and motor skills (flexibility, balance and motor planning). These students really seem to enjoy yoga and are making progress. Technology is integrated into these sessions through the OT iPads that have been

programmed to help students follow along with the songs, make choices, label items used/actions completed, and communicate with their peers.

Social Work: Group and individual counseling sessions have resumed meeting since returning from the holiday vacation. Several students exhibited some difficulty acclimating to their school routine after being home, but have since adjusted with the assistance of supportive counseling and staff team effort. We saw a spike in student behaviors in the weeks leading up to the break and the weeks after returning. In both group and individual counseling, we discussed the holidays and the break from school. For some students it is a time of enjoyment and relaxation. Others prefer to be in school and were not looking forward to time off. After returning, several students had difficulty readjusting and we discussed strategies in counseling to help ease the transition. Several families voiced similar issues at home and asked for assistance.

The class of 2019 is preparing for the next phase in their lives, to the best of their abilities, by discussing their upcoming graduation in June. Graduation is met with mixed emotions about leaving their familiar environment. Parents are in the process of following through with the various steps of the Transition process necessary for entrance to an over 21 day program or to sheltered employment.

Efforts to circulate a card of support and collect funds for a student's extended family that was affected by a tragic fire earlier this month proved successful. In such devastating times it is comforting for the family of our student to know that the school community cares about their loss and is willing to rise to the occasion when called upon to do so.

Dr. Amy, school referring psychiatrist, visited several times and progress is being made on several of our most challenging cases. We have helped several families by administering medication here at school and several others by recommending an evaluation for medication or a change in current prescriptions. Most of our families have been working with us as a team to achieve the best results.

The Social Workers assisted many families this month by gathering donations, assisting them getting reenrolled after moving, helping them prepare for upcoming moves, and supporting them with the application process for guardianship, Performcare, and transportation services outside of school.

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's 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 team meetings for IEP as well as IEP meetings and Administrator/behaviorist meetings. Behaviorists attended and participated in preplanning and IEP meetings

for LS. Behaviorists have also participated in a meeting this month with the consulting Psychiatrist, Dr. Amy. During these meetings, behaviorists have provided behavioral data, current strategies and observational notes for students.

Behavior intervention plans and updated strategies have been written this month for four students. These Behavior Intervention Plans were created in consultation with the classroom teacher and any other pertinent team staff members (e.g. OT, mobility specialist), and after direct student observation by the behaviorist as well as assessment regarding the function of the behavior which the teacher completes at the request of the behaviorist.

SLE/Job Academy Work Program: Two Westlake students began SLE sessions at the Can-Do Cafe this month. Student R.W. had two orientation sessions before the holiday in December. He was highly motivated and extremely proud of his assignment into the Job Academy. He demonstrated meticulous attention to details, listened carefully to instructions and was eager to follow through on each of his assignments. Student S.K. is scheduled to begin his SLE assignment on Monday, January 28. To help him cope with the change in his routine and create a smooth transition to the Cafe environment, this student will have an opportunity to go to the Cafe on Wednesday afternoon, January 23. A structured learning experience was developed based on Mrs. Goodson’s observation of the student in his class with Mrs. Shaw and Mrs. Edelstein. She created a Visual Task Manual for the Cafe Operations he will be assigned. The manual visually shows the steps for each of the tasks the student will be expected to perform.

Additionally, a third student will be participating in trial SLE sessions at the Cafe after returning from the Holiday break. He has been all smiles and constantly comments about how happy he is to be able to go to the Cafe. During his two trial sessions, James has demonstrated consistent performance in carrying out his tasks, ability to ask questions when he needs clarification. He has demonstrated excellent understanding of the importance of customer service and is comfortable interacting with customers.

We currently have thirteen students (11 Westlake/2 Lambert’s Mill) in the Job Academy. All students are making progress toward achieving the goals stated in their SLE training plans. Students are engaged in Post-SLE reflection discussions immediately following their SLE assignments at the worksite so that can immediately recognize their accomplishments and identify what they need to do to improve. The use of the Chromebook for these reflections has been an invaluable resource. Our students leave their SLE sessions motivated and empowered to begin envisioning themselves as future employees.

LAMBERTS MILL ACADEMY:

<p>As of January, 2019 LMA Actual: 35 LMA District - Non-New Point: 31 New Point Specialty at LMA: 4 Changes: <u> 5 </u> Entered: 4 Pending: <u> 1 </u> Exited: <u> 1 </u> Trinitas Hospital : Bedside Instruction: 34 (inpatient) Day Program: 42 Approved-Agreement signed: 55 Classified:29 Regular Ed: 26</p>	<p>Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: 1/23/19- 1:45pm Security Drills: (N/A) Suspension out of school: 2 In School Suspension: 0 HIB: 0</p>
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Referrals in January: 4 Intakes Scheduled:4 Completed: 3 Acceptance Letter Sent: 3 Sending District Accepted LMA placement: 2 Placement Pending : 2	
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Administration

During the month of January, we have been focusing on Transitional Planning, setting SMART goals, and individualizing next steps for our senior students. In collaboration with the Jewish Family Services, who have been meeting with the seniors each Tuesday, we are able to prepare our senior class for life after Lamberts Mill Academy. Students have been actively searching for appropriate placements for post-graduation. This includes, but is not limited to, community colleges and universities, vocational and technical schools, and job placement. Students are incorporating knowledge of SMART goals from the January MOSAIC curriculum to help guide them to real-life, sustainable goals for the upcoming future. In MOSAIC, students have already created SMART goals, and this month they are able to revisit, measure, and alter the goals to make them more achievable. These same goals are then used as the foundations for career goals and/or higher educational goals for seniors to discuss with the Jewish Family Services representatives. Some students have already filled out college applications and are awaiting acceptance letters. Others are considering which schools and/or career-paths are best for them. There is an upcoming presentation from Union County Community College on January 31, 2019, where students are afforded more opportunities to delve into the various offerings of the school. We are hoping for a 90% or higher college acceptance rate for the 2019 senior class!

Upon receiving the grant to renovate the Westlake ADL room, students were afforded the opportunity to interact on a group project, create daily goals, and measure successes as they collaborate on multiple vocational skills. While developing technical skills, students also learn patience, turn-taking, unity, how to build friendships, encouraging others, and self-worth as they complete the tasks jointly. We have already finished the flooring project and have begun to paint the walls. Students are extremely excited about the design and are looking forward to the next project to complete in the ADL room. Overall, we have seen a significant decrease in the number of reported “behavior” incidents with the project-based learning and vocational approach to mathematics and career education classes. Students have displayed more empathy, unification, and solidarity amongst the groups.

Academics

CET: Career Education and Technology students have been working on credit and credit card applications. They looked at the associated fees and the positive and negative aspects of not maintaining a consistent pattern of responsibility.

Computer science discoveries students have been using HTML tags to let the computer know what different pieces of content are stored in the web page. We are in the process of telling the computer that some text is a paragraph and that part of a website is a body. As we move forward, students will learn more tags and see more examples of how this language helps us add structure to our development.

Students continue to go to the Clark Nursing Home to participate in a community activity that benefits both the students and the residents. The nursing home visits bring joy to the residents while helping our students develop social/emotional skills and a level of sensitivity to our aging seniors.

English Language Arts & Literacy: During the month of January we focused on argumentative writing and informational text. We explored the immigrant controversy in America today through current event articles, determining and describing how an author advances the point of view or their purpose. Students had grand discussions around how they saw a point of view drive a text in their group's novels. This concept continued next with viewing the reaction Lin-Manuel received at "An Evening of Poetry, Musical and the Spoken Word" from the White House. The takeaway was how important it is to choose our words, to have positive support and to follow our passions. Finally, students were very pleased and excited to receive the book "Hamilton the Revolution", signed by the author, Jeremy McCarter, with a personal message to the LMA ELA&L students.

Additionally students embraced Art appreciation and literacy month with a depiction of literature art works and creations of Alphabet books we are donating upon completion to a shelter for children.

Social Studies: US History I finished its review of pre-civil war America. This included the differences in the economies, politics, and resources. Next, we have entered the Civil War period. This was a very busy time for our country. We will move on to Reconstruction. US History II students learned about the 1920's and the prosperity it brought. We then moved to the Great Depression, Hoover and FDR, and the New Deal.

Civil Liberties in the 20th Century has tracked the Civil Rights movement, last studying the non-violent efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr. World History has begun studying the start of Islam and will move to Christianity and Judaism.

Science: In biology, we spent some time exploring membranes with an egg experiment (shrinking and expanding the membrane with various solutions) and playing with bubbles. In Earth and Environmental, we have been discussing rocks and have spent some time exploring different rock samples in the classroom. We are now starting to investigate mining and its effects on the environment. In Forensics we are learning about different fibers and hair, and how it can and cannot be used as evidence. Chemistry students are deep into understanding chemical bonds. We will soon be getting out the M&Ms again to make sure we understand the delicious concept. We are looking forward to fun field trips coming up, including learning some technology from the Apple store!

Mathematics: Students in all Mathematics classes have been participating in different steps and phases of renovating the Westlake ADL room W06. Students have begun to take on different 'roles' of the project with planners, designers and skilled laborers. Students have been applying skills learned in the Math classroom to the renovation of the room. They have been measuring the room to find total square footage for the flooring, along with using the perimeter formula for irregular shapes for the baseboard. Finally, students have been using the surface area of 2-dimensional shapes to find how many gallons of paint are required to paint the walls. The students have been motivated and have been learning about how to lay floor and to install baseboard flooring. This also gives them the unique opportunity to give back to the students at Westlake. Looking at the future phase of this project students will be using architectural drafting supplies to sketch out different configurations of the room while using mathematical skills to make the sketches to scale.

Spanish: This month students are finishing the unit Daily life: "*La Vida escolar y las Tradiciones*" in Spanish class. Students took a summative assessment to measure what students have learned at the end of the unit. In addition, students created a well-organized research project about "*Las Tradiciones*" in the school/ home in order to describe their favorite tradition in Spanish and then illustrate each tradition. Projects are posted on the bulletin board outside the Spanish room.

Through interdisciplinary instruction and activities, students have learned different ways to integrate social studies while role-playing "*El viaje alrededor del mundo*". Students were able to use a map to locate

different countries and research about different traditions in Mexico, Ecuador, Spain and others. Students engaged in conversations, expressed feelings and emotions, exchanged opinions and compared and contrasted different schools from the Spanish-speaking countries and American country. Additionally, in the area of social emotional learning, students have been exploring the reading and writing process by working on sentence structure in Spanish.

Students also participate in a co-operative learning experience with Mrs. Fernandez' and Mr. Carten's classroom at Westlake School every Thursday. The students read stories and then discuss the events in the story. The activity has been very positive from both sides, allowing Westlake students to enjoy the stories while providing opportunities for all students to socialize and interact in a friendly environment.

Physical Education and Health: January was a busy month for the students at LMA in Health and Physical Education. We started the New Year off with the Fitness Unit following workouts such as stability ball training, step aerobics, and mindful meditation. We are now participating in the Badminton Unit for the remainder of the month. Badminton is an extremely popular activity for the students at LMA and at the end of the unit students will be participating in the 3rd Annual LMA Badminton Tournament. Last year's tournament was a great success and we hope to continue the tradition for this year. Students were also treated to a special class trip to Linden Lanes to go bowling. Fun was had by all and students who have demonstrated exemplary behavior.

For Health we have just started to begin the Body Systems Unit. Students have been learning about the importance of knowing all their systems such as the skeletal system, muscular system, digestive system, and so on. We will be covering every body system and the importance of **As of January, 2019**

LMA Clinical Department: January 2019 kicked off with reflections of goal setting from the previous calendar year and resolutions for the New Year. We discussed the importance of revisiting previous goals that were set as well as establishing new realistic goals. The students discussed their SMART goals and were encouraged to build on their social skills by sharing with their classmates. Students engaged in group discussion on healthy communication skills and their ability to effectively communicate with others given the changes in society due to today's technology. Lastly, select students have been assisting Mr Lopreiato in the ADL room in order to build on their strengths and increase their social skills, working with classmates that they typically would not interact with outside of school. Not only is the goal to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence through highlighting their talents, but also to practice healthy interpersonal effectiveness skills and team work, and demonstrate respect for one another.

New Point Specialty- Convery/Fort-Hollstein

There are 14 students on the unit for the month of January 2019.

The students discussed and celebrated the life and times of Martin Luther King Jr. and viewed the mini-series King. The students also did lessons on the idea of nonviolence and how to achieve measures through peaceful demonstrations. In addition, the students also studied the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. This will continue in February during Black History Month.

Ms. Fort continued to collect poetry, art and short stories for the annual Get To The Point. This student publication is due out in June.

Students continue to present Current Events twice a week. They are graded, based upon a template and the students of New Point have been making steady progress. The writing is becoming more informative and concise.

The Union County Consumer Affairs Department visited New Point on January 11th. They discussed

consumer fraud and why to fill-out warranty cards from goods. We may visit the Union County government center in the Spring.

Social Action Club: The students worked the Union County Food Pantry on January 25th. They took orders over the phone and prepared orders for families in need. This is the 11th year of the Social Action Club serving the residents of Union County.

Trinitas:

Special lessons this month focused on honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Younger. Students read picture books about his life. Third and fourth graders read a Scholastic News article (Jan.7, 2019) “My Grandpa Changed America.” In an interview with Yolanda Renee King, they learned how she was giving speeches, and how they can “make a difference.” Older students read excerpts from Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Accompanying skills sheets focused on analyzing primary sources, reading a timeline, and critical thinking. High school students were moved by a photograph of Dr. King speaking to students at Southside High School in Newark on March 27, 1968.

CROSSROADS:

Enrollment as of January 25, 2019 Actual: 44 Changes: Entered: 1 Exited: 1	Referrals: 1 Intakes Scheduled: 1 Accepted: 1
Fire Drills:	Emergency Drills:

Allison Gebler’s Class, Room 102- The thematic unit focused on reviewing winter weather changes and New Year New Me skill building activities through review of classroom routines, arts and crafts, and individual skill development of functional daily life routines.

In the area of English Language Arts, students completed hand-crafted cards for staff members that have been absent. Each student demonstrated choice-making skills by deciding the materials to use from an array of visual options. Review of the letters in the alphabet and days of the week was completed during Circle Time activities and songs.

In the area of Math, students completed a review of geometrical concepts by repeating snowflake cutting activities done during the month of December. Multiple activities involving snowmen allowed for lessons involving size, sequencing and counting. Students were also introduced to new fine motor exercises in their daily Activity Schedule Bins: sorting shape buttons, sorting a variety of objects by color and demonstrating 1:1 correspondence skills by matching identical images.

In the area of Science / Social Studies, students continued to review the weather patterns seen throughout December and January. During Circle Time, students selected appropriate clothing items necessary to dress Mr. Frog and chose accessories needed for him to survive snowy weather (shovel, gloves, hat, scarf).

Students progressed in their individualized goals: Niall has advanced in his PECS training program from simply acknowledging his wants via his communication binder, to manding his wants with a communication partner. Tanzania has returned to her level of prompted full sentence communication, which she previously mastered last year. Alex has begun to initiate basic social interactions and occasional eye contact with peers during group activities. Kairo is being introduced to phonics, sight word reading and simple addition, in school and through homework coordinated with his family. The best part of this month was celebrating Alex’s 9th birthday!

Room 102's Star Student, Tanzania, accomplished significantly improved completion of her New Year New Me Goals: preparing and microwaving her own lunch with minimal prompts, wearing her shoes when asked and remaining in group activities for more than 50% of the time.

This month's field trips included Imagine That and Clark Gym. It was the first month in which all students attended both trips. During their trip to Imagine That, the students experienced a variety of pretend play situations and practiced appropriate cafeteria behavior (requesting items, exchanging money, waiting, remaining seated while peers completed their meals). Students in Room 102 enjoyed the pirate ship and slide the most.

The class will continue to work on returning to the level of classroom rules and routines compliance students had reached prior to winter break. Room 102 is looking forward to Pajama Day, Football Gear Day, and the 100th day of School next month!

Consuelo Alzate's Preschool Class, Room 103- It has been another exciting and rewarding month for our preschool class! The "Winter" thematic unit has kept this class busy and engaged in learning throughout sensory, movement, visual and performing arts.

In Science, the children learned about body parts by creating their own snowmen, utilizing a variety of materials to identify the eyes, nose and mouth.

During circle time, children demonstrated positive social skills by greeting peers, reciting the pledge of allegiance, listening to teachers and following verbal directions.

In the area of social development, students have learned to socially interact and play cooperatively by making choices using PECS, sharing toys with peers and taking turns.

Individually, all children made significant progress toward their goals. Lyla has achieved her goal of toileting. She is now understanding and aware of her needs and initiates going to the bathroom independently, she is no longer wearing diapers while commuting back and forth from school. Sebastian is enhancing his food intakes by eating a variety of fruits that includes oranges, apples and grapes. Jose is now on Phase 2 of PECS training and soon he will be introduced to phase 3. Ezequiel is learning and mastering phase 1 of PECS training.

Briana Gallo's Class, Room 104- The focus of January is winter and weather. In the area of English Language Arts students are participating in letter recognition and word recognition. Almost all of our students are also using the Edmark program. In the Area of Mathematics, students are working on rote counting and 1:1 correspondence by using TouchMath. They are also working on copying and building structures. In the area of Science / Social Studies, students are identifying weather and participating in dressing our class frog everyday. In the area of Social Play, students are working on sharing and working together. The students are paired together and participate in games, such as, Break the Ice and Giggle Wiggle.

Room 104's Star Student is Kevin, who has been doing great in the area of tacting and answering questions. He is also starting to request more often for desired items.

Anna Garrison's Class, Room 105- The first unit discussed was the celebration of the New Year. Each student created a craft that displayed their New Year Resolutions and Manny C. was able to independently tell us about his resolution! With the winter season upon us, the class discussed the weather we tend to see during this time of year. They read several books on snowmen, and "Sneezy" was the class favorite.

An important unit discussed this month was Martin Luther King Jr. Students learned of his importance to our country and the amazing accomplishments he has achieved.

Room 105's Student of the Month is Eseosa! He has done an amazing job at following directions and mastering his work academically. He has made tremendous progress since the beginning of the school year and continues to work hard every day.

Stephen Goham's Class, Room 106- This month's theme focused on Martin Luther King, Jr.; discussing equality, rights, and friendship. Students observed, explored, and identified others' similarities and differences, and practiced the importance of social skills with their friends.

Another thematic unit studied was states of matter. The students' identified and observed water in a solid, liquid, and gaseous state. Vocabulary associated with these concepts include freezing point, boiling point, melting point, heating, cooling, temperature, thermometer, etc., as well as mathematical concepts such as degrees.

Academic areas of instruction include phonics reading (short vowel sounds), reading fluency & spelling, reading comprehension, and dolch sight word recognition. Students continuously review prepositions, actions and verbs, story sequencing, and word/objects associations.

In the area of VB-MAPP, students participated in manding (requesting items/object), tacting (labeling people, actions, objects), visual perception (sorting categories and/or matching associations), and building 3D structures.

Room 106's Student of the Month is Jacob! Jacob enjoyed learning the states of matter. When engaged in science experiments involving the heating or freezing of water, he was able to apply new vocabulary to discussions. Jacob is able to state and identify water in different forms and shows excitement observing their changes.

Lindsay DeNigris' Class, Room 108- This month room 108 is working on several different thematic units. Students completed a writing sample about what they did over the break. While some students wrote their responses, others selected pictures to help communicate what they did, who they saw, and what they ate over the break. They also read an adapted book about New Years. After each page, a student was asked to select the matching picture and place it on the page; following up with wonderful craft to go along with the book, that included the students choosing their own New Years goals.

After New Years, the class focused on the change in the weather now that winter is in full swing. The students have been learning about and discussing all the different things you can do in the winter and the clothing we need to wear to keep warm. They talked about several arctic animals using our adapted books. The students then created a penguin craft where they were able to use their fine motor skills to rip paper and glue it on to look like snow. The students engaged in making a snowflake out of pretzels and marshmallows while following a recipe. They really enjoyed this activity, especially when it came to eating!

Room 108 is currently focusing on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. This has opened up the opportunity to talk about how students can positively interact with their friends. They have been working on sharing, playing with peers, and independent play skills. This month has focused on their independent work schedules and following picture schedules to promote independence. The students really love all of the new sensory bins, which include water beads, rice, beans, pasta, and cotton balls.

Christina Witte's Middle School Class, Room 109 - In January, one of the theme-based science lessons focused on good cold weather hygiene. During our middle school science lessons, students learned through

hands-on experiments how germs spread and how to protect yourself from them. Using different color glitter for each child and hand lotion, the children were able to track their germs, identifying the color of the person they originated from and see how germs transfer from person to surface to person without even touching other people. They conducted experiments on how to wash their hands correctly so that all the germs come off, using different water temperatures, washing techniques, soap and no soap, etc. They also went on a scavenger hunt around the school and classroom to find “germs” on common germ surfaces.

Our Middle School students have been working on different skills related to community-based instruction in the classroom, as they relate to navigating the supermarket successfully. These skills include classifying grocery store items into grocery store categories (e.g. butter = dairy; pretzels = snacks), learning grocery store specific vocabulary and phrases, reading signs and labels, shelving items, etc. During their community-based instruction trip to ShopRite this month, the students were able to practice these skills in the real world. Although integrating these different skill sets in the real world is often very challenging, the students are demonstrating meaningful progress and some parents even report the same at home. Elaina stands out in particular, as she has been working on paying attention to people around her, while attending to her shopping task at hand. She has been working on identifying strangers, friends and community-helpers as they relate into our Circles Social Skills curriculum; she was able to independently identify strangers and the appropriate actions to display (e.g. red circle = strangers = don't talk to strangers).

Room 109 has started using some new morning and afternoon routine classroom schedules this month. Aside from doing their morning work during arrival, which includes academic reinforcement of skills, independent tasks and grooming/ self-care skills, students are now also taking more responsibility for classroom routines. On a rotating basis, each student performs a classroom task, such as cleaning the desks, disassembling tasks, setting up the schedule, etc.

Susan Parenti's Middle School Class, Room 110 - Students learned the importance of Martin Luther King, Jr. and read a short story on his biography. They had a class discussion about friendship, kindness, acceptance and how hard he worked for freedom. To follow up with this lesson, students created a booklet and completed a fill in the blank.

Community Based Instruction- The class went to the Clark Library where they used computers to search for books through their database. Students wrote down the call number and followed the signs in the library to locate the books. Students also went to the Clark Shoprite to work on conversational skills, waiting skills, reading a shopping list and locating items in the store.

Natalia Amador's Middle School Class, Room 111- Students learned about Martin Luther King Jr. by reading books, watching videos, and working on different projects. 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. So far, students have worked on completing Ellison orders, sorting magazines, doing laundry, collecting recyclables, taking utensil orders and kitchen inventory. This month, they are working on office supply orders and restocking the soda machine.

Mrs. Amador's goal for this month is to teach her students how to follow an independent task schedule with minimum to no assistance. She hopes to foster in them a sense of accomplishment, along with a sense of independency.

For science and social studies, the middle school teachers have been rotating classes to teach thematic units. This month's thematic units include: Martin Luther King Jr., The Water Cycle, and learning how to identify the setting, characters, and main ideas of a story.

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. 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. DJ is learning how to use flashcards as a study method for multiplication and definitions. He is also working on reading comprehension and fluency. Luis is working on his communication skills outside of the classroom- following directions that require him to interact with others, and typing.

Speech Department- Students have continued to make progress in their speech and language goals. Two of our preschoolers, Jose and Lyla, are continuously imitating short, CV and CVC words. Jose and Ezequiel are now beginning to discriminate pictures in phase 3 of PECS. The students are increasing their abilities to stay on-task in speech and are demonstrating interest in many activities.

Hope Weinstein continues to accompany the students to the Clark Library to enhance their learning through STEM activities. Jessica Pinzon has attended two field trips (Imagine That and Kidz Village) and has worked on increasing the students' exposure to vocabulary in these active settings. Hope continues to conduct MakerSpace activities every Tuesday afternoon with each class. She ensures that the activities are themed, when appropriate. Eileen Carrano conducts group activities that include answering questions, learning vocabulary regarding the weather/seasons and an active motor component. Jessica has created new therapy materials to incorporate into group and individual therapy. She has purchased snowman-themed and winter-themed books to work on winter vocabulary with the students.

Occupational Therapy Department- During the month of January, the OT department was busy completing group activities to decorate the front hallway with a Penguin display. This activity involved fine motor, as well as visual skills. The groups also focus on "waiting skills", "turn taking", "requesting", and "direction following."

Our "figure eight" track was put up on the wall outside of the OT room. Students are encouraged to use this to work on body mid-line crossing, upper extremity coordination, and visual focusing. They trace the track with the left and the right hand separately.

Miller/Square - Holly Reuven is currently working on our schedule and plans for our upcoming visit with Dr. Paul Callahan, our Miller Method consultant. He will be spending Thursday, February 7th at Crossroads School visiting each classroom to work with our students and staff. During our Staff Development Day on Friday, February 8th, he will be joining us to present information on the Miller Method, as well as collaborating with each classroom team based on the previous day's observations and work. In addition, we have scheduled a 90 minute Video Conference for our Parent Support Group with Dr. Callahan on February 21st- following his visit to Crossroads.

As part of the intake team, Holly participated in one student intake this month along with our Behaviorists. Twenty-three students are receiving (including one new student) Miller Method direct services on the Elevated Square to work on skills; including self and body awareness, communication, social interaction and problem solving. Holly continues to conduct Video Conferencing twice a week with Dr. Paul Callahan - collaborating on individual students.

Physical Therapy Department- 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. We are awaiting district response for a potential addition of another student to our regular PT caseload.

Our students continue to demonstrate progress during their physical therapy sessions. Eseosa had a challenging first half of the year during his PT sessions behaviorally. However, this month he has shown amazing improvements and is now more focused and attentive during his sessions. Rashid continues to practice bilateral coordination exercises with a “movement break” program in his classroom throughout the day. Seamus is demonstrating increased use of his iPad during his PT sessions allowing for more participation. All of our students with PT continue to work towards their IEP specific goals this month during their sessions.

HILLCREST SOUTH:

<p>Enrollment as of 1/25/19 Actual: 105 (as of 2/1/19) and Sp. Ed. seats are full. Changes: Entered: 13 Exited: 1 for violation of contracts and 1 moved out of state. Suspensions: 4. 1 for Possession of CDS, 3 for bus conduct, 1 for aggression & destruction of school property.</p>	<p>Intakes Pending General Ed.: 2 Intakes Pending Sp. Ed.: 0</p>
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Ms. Gronert, guidance counselor, Dr. Balsamello, principal, and Mr. Marquet, principal of Hillcrest Academy North Campus went to Elizabeth to interview and welcome new students. Ms. Gronert worked to audit their transcripts and created an individualized schedule for each student. She worked with Dr. Balsamello and Ms. Gilchrist, social worker, to acclimate the new students into the culture of Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS). The guidance counselor continued to monitor the progress of the students taking credit retrieval courses to ensure successful completion. In addition, Ms. Gronert has continued to monitor the Union County College (UCC) ALEKS Bootcamp program with Ms. Ferrari, math teacher, and worked with UCC to administer the Accuplacer. The guidance counselor continued to work with the social worker to ensure each senior has a post-secondary plan and is following their academic plan to graduate.

On February 1, 2019, semester II and marking period III will begin. Ms. Cherville, Spanish teacher, and Mr. Reichman, Science teacher, will transfer to HAN and HAS will receive Ms. Scheetz, Art teacher, and Mr. Grez, Science teacher.

HAS seniors were hard at work satisfying their required community service hours through working on the Freerice program and many other community outreach activities. The HAS Community Service Program (HASCSP) honored the memory of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through participating in a Week of Service. During the week, Dr. King’s most famous quotes were read, allowing students to reflect on their significance in their lives today. Students continued to reflect on Dr. King’s commitment to serving others by hosting a food drive and fundraisers to benefit the Community Food Bank of NJ. The week’s activities culminated with students visiting the food bank for a service day in order to help families in need throughout Union County.

Ms. Gilchrist facilitated the Tuesday Spirit Day with student volunteers and there has been a 1% increase in attendance overall. Ms. Gilchrist attended the monthly DCF/HIB meeting, has completed reports, and monitored students as well as identified new students for specialized services. The social worker continued to track the seniors, identified those who no longer attend Saturday school, and may need independent study to graduate in 2019. Schedules have been altered and all students and families have been notified with the news that Elizabeth will no longer allow HAS students to attend the Saturday School program. A running list of students who had been removed and have had their graduation delayed has been shared with all relevant staff.

Students in Mr. Reichman’s chemistry classes focused on a unit about Nuclear Chemistry. One skill they’ve learned involved analyzing multiple symbologies used to represent different isotopes and using the results to

predict whether the isotope will undergo one of the five types of radioactive decay. They can also use the concept of half-life to calculate the amount of radioactive material left in a sample after a certain period of time. Besides problem-solving about radioactive decay, Mr. Reichman's chemistry students also engaged in discussions using their Speaking Social Skills about many aspects of how radioactive processes affect them and the world around them. Discussions have included topics such as the Marie Curie's research and discovery of radioactive elements and the role of women in science; research and use of nuclear weapons in World War II; the pros and cons of nuclear power compared to other sources of energy; and use of radiation and radioactive isotopes in medicine. In the final weeks of the marking period, Mr. Reichman's students will use classroom technology to run educational simulations of nuclear fission reactors as a fun way to get insight into the engineering aspects of nuclear power.

As part of the forensics curriculum the class learned about DNA and were involved in a card game to assist them to understand nucleotide pairing rules. DNA fingerprinting, fingerprinting, ridges, and latent fingerprints were reviewed in the class. An activity to help the students comprehend the topics included inflated balloons to determine the patterns and minutiae points. The class then compared their data to US statistical data of fingerprint pattern distribution. The class also learned how to dust, lift, and use various techniques to obtain fingerprint evidence. The class finishing assessing Lip prints, Chromatography, as well as crime scene analysis and solving crimes. This month students also learned about blood types and blood basics. The students observed what red blood cells looked like under a microscope and did a blood type activity.

Ms. Cioffi's English courses started the Unit 2 of the English curriculum. During the month of January students have shifted from reading a majority of fictional text to nonfiction and informational texts. Students first reviewed the basics of summarizing important facts and details and identifying the central/ main idea of texts. Students have also reviewed the elements of a strong argument and identified each element in written arguments. Future lessons for this class include evaluating arguments and then writing their own arguments utilizing the elements of a strong argument.

Ms. Holden's students read and analyzed Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech. In conjunction with the above reading, students also viewed a video of Dr. King delivering his historical speech. Students also wrote their own "I Have a Dream" speech. Students especially enjoyed listening to and analyzing a rap version of Dr. King's famous speech. Some of the essential questions discussed and written about in class include the following: 1) What brings about social change? 2) What motivates people to succeed? 3) What motivates you? 4) What is meant by "peaceful resistance"? 5) If the world had not known Dr. King, what would it be like today? In addition, students also worked on increasing their skills in understanding the elements of an argument and determining the validity of claims and counterclaims.

Ms. Cherville's Spanish learners worked on the last unit of the semester. In this unit, they studied about healthy and unhealthy habits. Through a variety of reading, writing, and speaking activities, they have made comparisons, descriptions, and interviews. Spanish speakers have been working on periodicals and read a variety of articles and current events online and in Spanish newspapers. They also worked on critical thinking skills and new vocabulary.

In Ms. Duarte's USII classes students explored the origins of WWI by studying the growth of militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism. This knowledge was then applied as students made their case for which reason they felt was the strongest force in the onset of the war. Students then began to explore the war itself by reading and viewing scenes from *All Quiet on the Western Front* and studying primary sources that detailed trench warfare. This understanding led to looking at the implications of the war in the United States through a study of the 1920s, the changes in the time period, and the continuities that persisted through society. In Economics students have been studying the way in which businesses operate as they gear up to

create their own business projects. This study has centered on the factors of production, the ways in which the government regulates business, and the study of the free market economy.

Mr. Hill reported that during the month of January 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, and 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 Revolutionary War and Declaration of Independence, making connections to discover how these events and documents led to the foundation of America. USII History students analyzed how various push-pull factors including WWI, post Civil War White Supremacy as expressed through Jim Crow laws, lynching and voter suppression, led to a decades-long mass exodus of Black Americans from the South known as the Great Migration. Modern World students analyzed primary and secondary documents related to the rise and fall of the Incan and Aztec empires, period-related inventions, and the intended and unintended consequences the introduction these elements had within the western colonialist/imperialist framework of the time.

The vast majority of students advanced in their weekly drills on fractions in Ms. Ferrari's classes. Many students have shown growth on these exams which was a good confidence builder for the students. In addition, the algebra students demonstrated growth in reading, comprehending, and evaluating word problems. This confidence should help them as they move onto more a standardized test in the later part of this year and on their unit assessments. The skills the algebra students worked on included: solving inequalities using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division; solving multi-step inequalities, solving compound inequalities, solving absolute value equations; solving absolute value equations and absolute inequalities and graphing linear inequalities in two variables. The skills the geometry students worked on included: triangles and angles; using angle measure of triangles; congruence and triangles; proving triangles congruence by SSS, SAS, ASA, and AAS; isosceles, equilateral, and right triangles; and triangle and the coordinate plane. In addition, classes utilized the UCC Bootcamp's ALEKS program. The teacher provided a traditional lesson in the front of the classroom, and then the students completed an assignment in the ALEKS program that directly related to the lesson. Ms. Ferrari has diligently kept up to date with the six students she has been assigned that are in the Credit Retrieval Program.

Mr. Sobieniak's students in Algebra II classes learned more properties of polynomials and polynomial functions. They also learned some properties of quadratic functions and how to factorize quadratics. Students in Probability and Statistics classes learned more about measures of dispersion. They learned how to calculate and some properties of the mean absolute deviation, variance and standard deviation. Students were investigating many real life applications problems. The students in Success Seminar/Math Strategy class utilized Khan Academy to improve their algebraic skills. Students of all mathematics classes used Khan Academy to improve their algebraic skills on Fridays.

The students in Mr. Barone's Physical Education classes have completed their unit on basketball. Students competed in games such as a "3-Point Shootout" and games of "21". These games were great because the students utilized all their skills that were taught and practiced during class. When in the Fitness Center, the students have been continuing with workouts and games of ping-pong and billiards. Health classes completed a unit on the digestive system and were introduced to a unit on the skeletal system. Students learned about the differences between tendons and ligaments and potential injuries to them. In addition, students learned about the different types of bones in the body.

Ms. Rubin assisted with daily 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. A number of new students started at HAS again this month and the nurse is in the process of obtaining current health information from the sending academies. Annual reports for the Health Department were completed on January 7 and sent to the appropriate agencies. The UCESC nurses met with Mr. Kowalski on January 8 to discuss the new Standing Orders for Narcan from Dr. Frank. UCESC policy is still being compiled for Narcan delegates. On January 9, Ms. Rubin assisted the substitute nurse who was covering Westlake School, since she was familiar with many of the students there. On January 17, at the HAS faculty meeting, Ms. Rubin presented an information session to HAS staff about the new Narcan orders and procedures. Ms. Rubin and Ms. Ferrari ran the School Store a few times each month during lunch periods. The students assisted with selling items and gaining community service hours. We have initiated an incentive to give the student school store credit (towards a purchase) for perfect attendance each week, and it seemed to have boosted school spirit even more. In health class, the students had lessons about the skeletal system. Lessons will be continuing about the skeletal system followed by the muscular and nervous systems in the coming weeks.

The students in Mr. Barone’s Physical Education classes have completed their unit on basketball. Students competed in games such as a “3-Point Shootout” and games of “21”. These games were great because the students utilized all their skills that were taught and practiced during class. When in the Fitness Center, the students have been continuing with workouts and games of ping-pong and billiards. Health classes completed a unit on the digestive system and were introduced to a unit on the skeletal system. Students learned about the differences between tendons and ligaments and potential injuries to them. In addition, students learned about the different types of bones in the body.

The response to the school store has been most favorable among students and staff. The HAS School Store Committee has been very active and enthusiastic about selling their products. The first order of spirit wear items arrived and were being worn by students and staff daily. The HAS School Store Committee students earned community service hours as well. Students were pleased when they were rewarded with HAS bucks to make purchases due to good attendance.

HILLCREST/NORTH:

<p>Enrollment as of: 1/25/19 Actual: 88 Changes: Entered: 3 Exited: 1</p>	<p>Referrals : 8 students have been interviewed and will start on 2/1/19 Drills: Fire Drill: 1/8/19 Lockdown: 1/24/19</p>
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In the month of January, students in Economics class simulated opening a checking account at a bank. First, students read and analyzed the article “Your Bank Account: 10 Questions to Ask” from Bank of America’s Better Money Habits program. From that information, students listed the five aspects of a checking account that would be most important for them to evaluate when choosing the right account for them. Characteristics they researched included interest rates, proximity of the bank to their homes, and whether or not the bank charges fees for transfers or ATM use. Students compared offers from several banks and finally were asked to explain the checking account they chose.

The Probability & Statistics classes have transitioned from box and whiskers graphs to standard deviation to examine the dispersion of data. The box plots give a clear visual of the dispersion whereas calculating the standard deviation gives a defined value. Students have calculated the variance and standard deviation both by calculators with charts on paper and also by using Google sheets. Even if they never calculate Standard

Deviation in their future jobs, they will surely encounter using Google sheets for keeping track of data. All the functions they are learning can be applied in almost every field they will encounter.

The Geometry class is working on proving triangles congruent through theorems, postulates and visuals. They are practicing writing proofs with reasons for each statement. This is the lifelong lesson that is critical to any career. You have to be able to back up what you say with valid statements accepted as truths. The logic of geometry can be applied in the humanities as well by citing evidence in an essay or discussion.

The Success Seminar class starts each week by examining their Engrade reports. They also write a positive and a “needs improvement comment” in their journals. It encourages self-reflection and responsibility. As part of the math strategies, they complete a Frayer model on a different geometry vocabulary word each day. Then they work individually on skills they are lacking.

Algebra classes have been learning all possible methods of solving Systems of Linear Equations. Although the Graphing Method was a great review of Algebra 1, and the Substitution Method was helpful in reviewing solving linear equations, the Elimination Method was decided to be the most efficient way to solve systems of linear equations. Students are now able to solve many real life problems with two unknowns, in multiple ways, with multiple representations.

The 2019 year started with the last group of seniors starting the ALEKS software from Union County College in their Success Seminar class with Mrs. Machado. Hillcrest Academy-North has already begun to see improvements in their pre- and post- scores for the Accuplacer College Placement test as a result of implementing ALEKS as part of the new Success Seminar Math Boot camp curriculum.

In English, students are learning about main idea and supporting details, along with providing textual evidence to support. Students are learning to distinguish fact from opinion. Students are learning about how fake news has taken over our lives and why we are susceptible. Students are also learning how to verify and combat this phenomenon.

In Creative Writing, students are starting each class writing a story for ten minutes. We started the short story unit. Students continued their setting focus by reading “Red Riding Hood” and they rewrote the ending multiple times using different aspects of time. Students focused their writing on characterization. We read “The Scholarship Jacket”, and they created a character chart for the main characters. Student then wrote two short stories, both building character development.

In Health class this month, the students continued the Human Reproduction unit. Topics completed were birth control methods, sexually transmitted infections, and emergency contraception. The students also watched a short video entitled “How to tell your partner you have an STI” followed by a class discussion. PE students continue reaching their fitness goals and learning about making healthy choices.

The month of January found Biology, Forensic Science, and Computer Science continuing their exploration of content. Biology students completed a project that had them applying the principles of adaptation and to a saving the world scenario. Next month, Biology students will begin studying biomes and discovering the evidence for co-evolution. Forensic Science students finished their inquiry into the disturbed minds and acts of serial killers through the completion of a “Serial Killer Cereal Box” project. Both Forensic and Computer Sciences classes successfully completed their course. The new computer science curriculum, while challenging, was engaging and students exceeded our expectations.

In Social Studies, students have been focusing on “what drives people”. During the month, students focused on how geography, economies and power drive people forward. Students continued to improve in their internet capabilities specifically with the virtual classroom ‘Schoology.’ Students honed their ability to

academically read primary documents. Students were able to work upon these skills by looking at how the eastern coast of the United States was geographically made up; this led students on a quest to figure out why certain regions had different economies. This quest led students to question the needs of slavery and why people argued for it. Students also learned about indentured servitude and how it affected 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 paper.

In the month of January, Hillcrest art students were challenged to create designs on record albums which reflected opposite themes. Students were introduced to the history of record albums, what media they recorded and how they are made and played. Students were challenged to create mixed media designs and to use the artistic skills they learned this year and were confident in using. Students were given an old record that had been primed on one side where they could paint, collage, glue and draw on. Some used the shiny black of the vinyl as a backdrop in their designs while others incorporated the shape of the record. Some of the opposite themes the students designed were nature and industry, night and day, good and evil parts of the self, and earth and heaven. The projects that were made were hung in the main hallway in the front of Hillcrest North.

The social worker has begun to see the DCF students as well as other students identified as needing social work services due to difficulty in class or a 5530 offense in the 2018 - 2019 school year. She is facilitating morning advocate meetings Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in addition to being available for teacher meetings whenever necessary. On January 15th, Alessandra, a musician from Music for All Seasons came to school for an hour long assembly which was enjoyed by all.

This month, Ms. Gronert, Dr. Balsamello, and Mr. Marquet went to Elizabeth to interview and welcome new students. Ms. Gronert worked to audit their transcripts and create an individualized schedule for each student. She worked with Mr. Marquet and Ms. Goldenberg to acclimate the new students into the culture of Hillcrest Academy North. The guidance counselor is continuing to monitor the progress of the students taking credit retrieval courses to ensure they are successful. In addition, she has continued to monitor the UCC ALEKS Boot camp program with Ms. Machado and work with UCC to administer the Accuplacer. Ms. Gronert has been working alongside the staff of Hillcrest Academy North to plan and prepare for their Annual Career Day at the end of the month.

NONPUBLIC:

The Nonpublic Teachers participated in the first part of their Professional Learning Community. The activities were presented by a nonpublic teacher based on the book *Teach Like A Pirate*.

IDEA funds were processed and billed to districts through the month of December.

Additional security allocations were released by the NJDOE. The additional funding was disseminated to the nonpublic schools.

The Nonpublic School Nurses met to review the NJDOE Nonpublic Nursing Guidelines.

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** are wrapping up their first semester internship experiences. Students are placed in one experience two days per week and a second experience one day per week. Next month they will be rotating into new experiences.

Highlights from the classroom this month included:

Mock Interview #1: Students developed answers for common questions asked on an interview. The students practiced their answers in a Mock Interview, at which time they also had their answers recorded on an iPad. This allowed the students to perform a self-assessment on how well they answered the questions, and how confident they spoke.

Developing job descriptions to use on a job application: Students developed job descriptions by identifying action verbs to explain what responsibilities they have at their present internship sites. These descriptions were then added to their practice applications. These practice applications will be a great source of reference when the students fill out real job applications.

Health Class- Drinking Alcohol: Students learned about how alcohol affect one's body and mind, how to make smart decisions when drinking alcohol, peer pressure to drink, and how to say 'No' when dealing with peer pressure to drink.

Google Sheets: The students developed an understanding of how Google Sheets can be used to stay organized. Additionally, they practiced using the various functions on Google Sheets, created their own page on a shared Google Sheet, entered their "Step It Up" information, and added up each months steps that are tracked on a daily basis using the LETSCOM Fitness Trackers handed out in class.

How to be concise: Students developed an understanding of the importance of being concise when writing a resume.

Other Highlights:

Cranford Strength and Fitness Club-Students identified the muscles being used and logged their workouts which consist of completing 4 different exercises (12 reps, 2 sets each) then participating in a cardio workout on treadmills, ellipticals, stair steppers, and stationary bikes.

Field Trips:

Westfield Library- Students visited the Westfield Library to be made aware of the various resources they have in their communities, and learned about the various jobs at this particular library.

This month we also 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.

Ms. Purdy also arranged for a guest speaker from the NJ State Bar Association to provide a presentation to the students in the WRA entitled, "Disclosing and Your Rights at 18 Years Old." The presenter covered topics such as self-advocacy, disclosure, and transitioning to adult life.

Ms. Purdy has also been busy developing individual behavior improvement plans for students based on specific feedback and concerns from staff, as well as making referrals to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

In Life Skills enrichment students learned XXX

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, student 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 his month included:

Smoking Prevention - the students received a presentation from Monica Gilles and Jeri Jacobson from the Respiratory Center at Overlook.

How to Keep Your Job (be on time, listen to and follow directions, and work efficiently)

Understanding the job application process and creating a "cheat sheet" of important information needed on all applications

Updating Resumes

Interview Do's and Don'ts

Online Safety

WRA Social Worker JoAnn Purdy taught a lesson on disclosure to the interns.

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

In late January, the Project SEARCH program was featured on "Jersey Matters". UCESC's Director of Special Projects Josh Bornstein sat down for an interview with Larry Mendte.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GMOvxOcy1M>

Our next Open House event will be held in late February.

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

TECHNOLOGY:

The Technology Department has retired our physical Edumet environment entirely. The virtual replacement of our original server is healthy and the system is functioning better than ever before. The physical server is powered down and can now be either reassigned for another need or simply recycled.

We are working with a team of administrative staff to migrate our non-public student information system to a better alternative. The team has set a date to changeover to the new system next month and expect better functionality and, most importantly, superior support.

The local file share servers have been an obstacle for a very long time. Several administrative staff have moved to Google Drive to replace the need for local file shares however some staff prefer keeping their data off of the cloud. The UCESC Technology Department respects nothing more than the integrity of our staff's data and we work diligently to ensure not only its safety but also its unfettered accessibility. Rather than migrate shares to a new server which would interfere with multiple teams' workflows, we have integrated a technology called Distributed File System (DFS). This allows for us to create a pooled file share resource consisting of multiple servers and thus provides us an avenue to retire older physical servers while maintaining 100% uptime access to our critical data. This continues to be a work in progress but we have made great strides in not only addressing a pressing need but also once again future-proofing our district's IT infrastructure.

The print server continues to be an overworked system and we have increased its resources to address the problems in the short term. However, as we have investigated further, we believe the issue may be within the construction of the virtual environment. We are researching ways to improve the traffic flow and have a plan to rebuild the networking portion this summer.

To accommodate multiple features in our domain and to prep for the long awaited retirement of our 2003 servers, we have raised our forest functional level to 2008 R2. Amongst all of the benefits of this change, most importantly this improves the encryption level through which our data travels. This protects our internal resources especially student information and employee data.

TRANSPORTATION:

The estimate of total yearly contract payments will be distributed to the bus companies holding contracts with the Commission on February 8, 2019. It will be included with their paychecks. This is a report similar to the one distributed to the participating districts and serves the same purpose for the bus companies.

The cold winter thus far has resulted in no closings or delayed openings or early dismissals. Nonetheless, much of the winter season remains so there is still time for weather related disruptions to occur.

This year is another busy one for the Transportation Department. Exceeding last year's pace in revenue, the department is trying hard to keep up with the demand. Many of our contractors are already working at full capacity and with the critical shortage of drivers still having a major impact, obtaining quotes on new routes is becoming more difficult with longer lag times between submission of requests and implementation of transportation. Nonetheless, only a few students are still waiting for a ride.

With the signing of assembly bill A-4345 into law, requiring bus drivers and aides to undergo safety education programs twice per school year, the Coordinator is investigating how to best implement this new mandate. With a varied and lengthy array of topics that must be covered and very little guidance on how this

information should be disseminated, the Coordinator feels that a professional approach is warranted which will benefit districts and contractors alike.

cc: Eric Larson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary