



Union County Educational Services Commission

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Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors September 4, 2019

WESTLAKE:

Enrollment as of August 15, 2019 Actual: 69 Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0	Referrals: 1 Intakes Scheduled: 1 Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: August 2, 2019	Emergency Drills: Lockdown –External Threat
Suspensions: 0	August 5, 2019

Westlake’s 2019 Extended School Year program was filled with many activities, field trips and exciting assemblies. Students worked on maintaining skills in academic areas such as Functional Math and Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education. Additionally, students participated in activities including arts and crafts, fitness, social groups and music, along with three in school assemblies.

In Language Arts students worked on skills such as reading and/or listening to a story or an article and answering comprehension questions. Students also worked on asking and answering Wh questions. Further skill development focused on using correct capitalization, punctuation and word usage and using vocabulary words related to the various articles read to generate sentences.

Mathematics Lessons consisted of working on functional money skills for all students. They counted groups of mixed coins and bills, counted equivalent amounts of money and using a menu or price list, solved money word problems, and practiced making change. Students also continued to work on solving addition, multiplication and subtraction problems.

Science and Social Studies Lessons are areas that students grow and learn through group lessons and hands on experiments. During the summer program students read about “The Dangerous Animals of Summer”, “Counting Sharks” and “The Wonderful World of Snakes” using Time For Kids and Scholastic magazine articles. They defined and used corresponding vocabulary to answer questions and completed several art projects related to these articles.

In Social Studies students read about Antarctica and learned about the different science stations on that continent. Using a map, students located the different countries that conduct research on the continent of Antarctica.

The behaviorists and the social worker, in conjunction with the classroom teachers, worked with students in peer social groups. The students participated in lessons about communicating with others appropriately and identifying strategies to communicate their feelings, needs and wants to others. They identified a curriculum called “Zones” that visually assists students to identify their emotions in zones and identify strategies to self-regulate their emotions. This summer, it has been an effective curriculum and strategy to assist and manage some challenging behaviors.

To keep school spirit ongoing throughout the summer, students enjoyed themed Fun Days such as Crazy Hat Day, Superhero Day, Favorite Sports Team Day and Wacky Sock Day. All students attended a field trip to the Linden Lanes Bowling Center as well as experienced three in school assemblies. Brian, the Nutrition Magician taught the students about healthy eating through the use of fun magic tricks. The Wonderful World of the Zonda Dance Group encouraged students to stay active, positive and kind, while performing hip hop dance, and demonstrating comedic and musical skills. Finally, Music Technology presented an interactive assembly about music and how technology has changed and enhanced modern music.

Students participated in Physical Education three times a week and engaged in various “summer” physical activities such as corn hole/ladder ball, tag games (hula hoop tag/freeze tag), and mini-golf.

All the students benefited from attending the Extended School Year program by participating in scheduled related therapies and maintaining the academic, social/behavioral and communication skills necessary through the maintenance of IEP goals and objectives, instructional supports and skill development.

We are currently preparing for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year. Staff and class assignments have been mailed out. We will begin with 69 students since one student moved on the last day of school. Most staff are returning for the new school year but we are still hiring paraprofessionals for September. Back to school night will be held on Thursday, **September 26, 2019** for parents. We are looking forward to an exciting new year!

Westlake Mission Statement

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

LAMBERTS MILL ACADEMY:

As of July 2019 LMA Actual: 37 LMA District - Non-NP: 37 New Point Specialty at LMA: 0 Changes: <u>8</u> Entered: <u>7</u> (Non-NP) <u>0</u> (NP) Pending: <u> </u> Exited: <u>0</u> (non-NP) <u>1</u> (NP) Referrals in July: 6 Intakes Scheduled: 6 Completed: 6 Acceptance Letter Sent: 6 Sending District Accepted LMA placement: <u>2</u> Placement Pending : 1	Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: 1 July Fire Drill on 7/23/19 Security Drills: 1 July 18, 2019 - Lockdown Drill Suspension out of school: 0 In School Suspension: 0 HIB: 0
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Administration

The month of July 2019 has been exciting as we have began and implemented our Extended School Year (ESY) for this summer. We have set a new high record with attendance and enrollment as we have 37 students on roll, with 30 students having attended the ESY program this month so far. We welcomed 10 new students to LMA this summer.

This month, we truly focused on social bonding and acclamation to the Lamberts Mill Academy program and regimen. Most of our new students, who are attending Lamberts Mill in September, 2019-2020, have opted to begin during the ESY program. This helps to provide a smooth transition once the school year begins. During July, our new students interacted with the curriculum and project-based learning, met and befriended current LMA students, were introduced to LMA faculty and the Trinitas clinicians. New students were also exposed to the traditional schedule that is followed generally by our high school students, inclusive of electives and clubs, including intense therapy during the school day, utilizing on-call therapeutic services, daily operations, and encountering behavioral and academic expectations.

To enhance social bonding for the summer, many of the themes across curricula were focused around the Zones of Regulation. During Lifeskills, the therapists, teachers and paras incorporate the research-based zones of regulation into their daily therapeutic check-ins. The Zones of Regulation are designed to be taught by anyone who works with adolescents who struggle with self-regulation and emotional control, which helps out especially beginning in the mornings with greeting and encountering the students before their academic day begins. Once the academic day begins, students found the Zones of Regulation intertwined throughout their studies in both math and language arts. This has shown fruitful as students have created posters and labels to help themselves identify their current emotion (zone) and begin to self-regulate. We have seen tremendous success as students begin to identify their mood, needs, and self-advocate for themselves with little or less impulsive behaviors.

Our weekly field trips have also increased the social bonding and acclamation into the LMA milieu. This month, we traveled to the movies, Yestercades, the Cheescake Factory, and Fire Me Up (pottery studio). We still have two remaining trips to the TD Bank baseball field and bowling. During the trips, students are invited to bond with one another, develop trust, compassion, and alliance with others. While exploring a new or favorite activity, students learn how to foster healthy friendships which can be used as an additional safety net during their time here at LMA. We can see our new students are already fitting in and adding to the positive school culture we are sustaining at Lamberts Mill Academy.

CROSSROADS:

Enrollment as of August 9, 2019

Actual: 41

Changes- Entered: 0 Exited: 0

Fire Drills: August 1, 2019

Referrals: 1

Intakes Scheduled: 1

Accepted: 0

Emergency Drills: August 5, 2019

Extended School Year

The Extended School Year (ESY) was in session from July 1st through August 12th. This has been the fourth consecutive year that the school embarked on a six-week extended school year program. Forty-one students attended the six-week program geared to improving skill development across all domains. In addition to academic instruction and therapeutic intervention the students enjoyed community-based field trips throughout the summer.

Current and new Crossroads School staff collaborated to create weekly themes for our extended school year that consistently promoted problem-solving, project based learning and good old-fashioned fun. The first weekly theme focused on our National Holiday, the fourth of July. Students were guided by our staff to participate in three different stations related to Independence Day. Students made patriotic slime, engineered a red, white and blue straw building and designed a firework salt painting to celebrate the holiday.

During ESY the students had many positive experiences. On one of the hottest days of the program the students enjoyed creating their own shaved iced treats from Ken Linthicum, who is the owner of a Kona Ice Truck. Mr. Linthicum provided free treats to the students and staff of Crossroads School. Our students and staff are extremely grateful for his kindness and generosity.

On July 30, 2019, the Westfield United Fund led by Executive Director, Mrs. Deirdre M. Gelinne, once again allowed our school community to participate in the annual "Rain Gutter Regatta". The Westfield United Fund partnered with the Cub Scouts of America to host this event at Crossroads School and provided our students with boats to decorate, assemble and race with their friends. The students decorated their wooden boats aligned to our jungle themes and eagerly raced the boats down the Rain Gutter. The students learned about competition with their fellow students and all children displayed excellent sportsmanship throughout the festivities. This event has become an extended school year tradition that our students and staff love and look forward to throughout our regular school year.

The Community Based Field Trips provided opportunities for students to develop skills in a natural environment setting. Our middle school students visited Shop Rite and purchased the supplies that were

needed by to conduct the weekly thematic projects. Classroom Teacher, Mr. Richard Horn, spearheaded these efforts and ensured authentic learning experiences for our middle school students.

Our culminating event of the extended school year program was held on Monday, August 12, 2019. Crossroads School Principal, Reed Leibfried, Crossroads Supervisor, Melissa McLaughlin, and Union County Educational Services Commission Director of Special Projects, Josh Bornstein cooked a wonderful lunch for our staff and students as a small token of our gratitude for the outstanding and meaningful 2019 extended school year.

Two ESY staff new to our school acknowledged the positive experience they had while working at Crossroads School this summer. Mrs. Jessica Alarcon, Occupational Therapist, noted that she “found the program very organized, caring, team-oriented and safe”. Stacey Kodack, who will be joining our team in September reported, “The thing that has stood out most to me was the dedication of each and every person here to do what is best for the students as far as individual growth. The students’ needs always very clearly come first here at Crossroads and it is a complete group effort to ensure that what needs to get done is getting done.”

HILLCREST SOUTH:

Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) will start the 2019-2020 school year at nearly full enrollment (106 out of 108). We will also be implementing a new school wide initiative to enhance the climate and culture in order to promote student ownership of our school and increase a positive learning environment. This will include all staff and students in partnership with Hillcrest Academy North Campus administration and staff. This program will focus on attendance, academics and grades, conduct, substance abuse and education, with an overall emphasis on the social and emotional health of our students. The social worker and guidance counselor will develop individual Student Development Plans (SDPs) that will focus on the specific aforementioned goals. Attendance Matters! and Grades Matter! Committees will meet to review student progress and to address all areas of concern in an attempt to assist each student to meet their individual SDPs.

A full day professional development is planned for Hillcrest Academy staff that will be facilitated by Dr. Balsamello and Mr. Marquet. All staff will be incorporating a social emotional and character development initiative school wide. Dr. Balsamello, Mr. Marquet, and Elizabeth staff organized interviews at Elizabeth Academies in May, June, July, and August to fill as many seats as possible left vacant due to the 2019 graduates. Interviews are being finalized for a science/ biology full time teacher as well as a maternity leave replacement for Ms. Duarte/ social studies and we are hopeful that these positions will be filled soon.

HILLCREST/NORTH:

Enrollment as of: 8/23/19 Actual: 87 Changes: 2018-2019 graduates/drops and 2019-2020 referrals have all been accounted for.	Referrals: work in progress Drills: NA
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We are pleased to report that 89% of our 2019 graduates will be attending a two/four-year college, post-secondary education programs, or the military in the fall. The 2019 Senior Recognition Dinner and Awards' Night were big successes and added to our tradition of "recognizing students when they are succeeding."

Both Hillcrest Academies interviewed and accepted over seventy students from Elizabeth Public Schools to replace students from last year's graduating class. Intake appointments are still ongoing and a waiting list will be developed over the next several weeks once the few remaining slots have been filled.

A New Student Orientation took place on August 22nd with twenty-six students and their families. Mr. Marquet made a 30-minute presentation outlining expectations and opened up a dialogue to ensure clarity and comfort. Students and families then toured the building and filled out necessary paperwork.

A newly designed "Improving School Climate and Culture" school-wide initiative has been developed this summer focusing on improving student personal and academic outcomes. Components of the improvement program are; attendance, grades, substance abuse prevention and education, social-emotional learning and character development, and developing "S.T.A.T" (Students Taking Action Together).

Maintenance to the building has been a priority during the summer hours. The building has been painted, floors have been sanded and finished, rooms have been organized, and small projects have been completed. The building looks and feels ready to open. HAN is looking forward to another great year!

NONPUBLIC:

The Nonpublic Services Department continues to implement IEP Direct Service Plan Writer for all student service plans. IEP Direct Service Plan Writer streamlines and ensures compliance of student service plans. The Nonpublic Services Department has been collaborating with districts within Union County to finalize IDEA-B proportionate share allocations associated with educational services for nonpublic school students who qualify for supplemental instruction for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

Nonpublic Schools have received their state allocations for Nursing, Technology, Textbooks, and Security. The schools are successfully moving forward with completing spending plans for technology and security. The plans will be submitted for board approval and purchasing. All the Nonpublic school nurses have been assigned to their respective school and will begin to provide health services on September 3, 2019.

TRANSITION:

Work Readiness Academy Anticipated Student Enrollments: 12 (Max 12)

Project SEARCH-Overlook Medical Center Anticipated Student Enrollment: 9 (Max 9)

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

The Work Readiness Academy operated another successful Extended School Year program during the summer of 2019. The program welcomed 8 new students who used the ESY program to help ensure a successful transition to joining the full-time WRA program in the Fall of 2019.

Some of the highlights from this summer's ESY program included:

- Students participated in internship experiences three days per week at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, New Jersey Sharing Network, ShopRite of Clark, Walgreens of Springfield, Dreyer Farms in Cranford, Marshalls in Clark, Maxwell's Furniture Restoration in Mountainside, and Bob's Store in Springfield.
- During their "training day" in the classroom, students operated a drink delivery service for central office staff at 45 Cardinal Drive. The students practiced communication skills by soliciting orders, completing order forms and collecting money. They then traveled to a local Dunkin Donuts to place orders. Upon returning to the Commission, students delivered drinks and then sent follow up emails with invoices listing the transactions. The students also charged a small delivery fee. At the end of the summer, they used the profit to fund a special trip to a local frozen yogurt shop.
- This summer the program took community trips to the Somerset Patriots, BJ's Wholesale, the Short Hills Hilton Hotel, Echo Lake Park, Nomahegan Park, the Bridgewater Commons Mall, and VIP Honda.
- The students participated in a weekly yoga program offered by Ashrams for Autism.

Seven out of eight students who graduated the Work Readiness Academy in June 2019 are now competitively employed. One student applied and was accepted to the Project SEARCH program at Overlook Medical Center.

The Work Readiness Academy targets students with disabilities (ages 17-to-21) who are in need of 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 will be welcoming its 4th cohort this September. Nine student interns were selected this past May from an application pool of 20 candidates.

This summer, the new class of interns and their families participated in our program orientation session and attended a welcome reception at Overlook Medical Center. During the month of August the interns attended a one-day travel training orientation class under the direction of Louis Hoffman and his team from the New Jersey Travel Independence Program (NJTIP) at Rutgers. The students then worked one-on-one and in small groups to practice the travel route from their respective homes to Overlook Medical Center utilizing New Jersey Transit buses and trains.

The program officially begins on September 5th.

6 out of the 9 interns who graduated from the Project SEARCH-OMC program this past June are now competitively employed. The other three are actively job-seeking and we hope to have them employed in the coming months.

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.

In 2019, UCESC officially became a vendor for Pre-Employment Transition Services through the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). This summer UCESC provided Job and Career Exploration Services to a handful of students. This eight-hour module is delivered in a one-on-one setting and helps students begin the process of completing activities and informal assessments to identify their strengths, interests, and preferences related to possible employment options. Additionally, several students participated in a Pre-ETS funded “Work-Based Learning Experience”. This 20-25 hour module enables students the chance to experience an unpaid internship at a local business where they learn entry-level job skills and expected behaviors appropriate for employment.

TRANSPORTATION:

Bidding for fall routes has been completed and the department is ready for another year of filling the transportation needs of the students of Union County. Three hundred fourteen (314) routes have been bid and 184 have been renewed. These routes travel to more than 160 different schools. In addition, late requests are arriving every day which will be run on an emergency basis and bid at a later date. Ten (10) routes were established to Nonpublic schools transporting 339 students.

The extended school year was just completed. Four hundred twenty three (423) routes were established which transported more than 1,000 students to 119 different schools. Twenty-six (26) districts were serviced. This volume of work marks the busiest summer season yet in the transportation department.

The Commission provided transportation services to the Union County Summer Camp held at the Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside. The Commission provided transportation to and from the one week program for 13 students residing in 8 Union County school districts.

TECHNOLOGY:

The IT Department has successfully rolled over PowerSchool and new registrants are being entered into the system. This year will be very formative for our new Student Information System as we build its multiple aspects, especially the reporting capabilities, to meet our needs.

The Atlantic multifunction printer rollout has been completed. All staff have been supplied with personal identification numbers to improve security as well as ease of use. Now a staff member can send a print job and pick it up at any copier around the district. These machines are capable of new features including AirPrint, Mobility Print (improvement on Google Cloud Print), full scan to email operability including Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and direct scan to Google Drive.

We have deployed the printer management software PaperCut. This will give us much needed sight into printer usage as well as allow us to create printer use policies that will save us money on ink and supplies.

Working with multiple departments, we have built out the schools' PowerSchool schedules and setups. This includes the breakdown of the day, bell schedule, attendance, homerooms, and more. We will continue to work on this throughout the year as we tailor it to the individual schools' needs.

cc: Eric Larson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary