



Union County Educational Services Commission

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Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors January 8, 2020

WESTLAKE:

Enrollment as of December 19, 2019	Referrals: 2
Actual: 67	Intakes Scheduled: 1
Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 1	Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: December 12, 2019	Emergency Drills: Lock down Internal Threat
	December 3, 2019

Our holiday music show was held with each class performing various holiday songs and Mr. Cerria, our music teacher solo performances. The students practiced for several weeks and the highlighted song was “the twelve days of Christmas.” Parents, staff and students all sang together for a festive holiday show. The students in Mrs. Palmer’s class also developed a dance routine for the Christmas concert and showcased Cynthia’s singing ability.

CBI trips

The students continue to enjoy their Community Based Instruction trips. The term “department” was discussed when at Target, each student was given a worksheet with names of different departments on it and pictures of what would be in each area. As the students went through each department, the students had to circle the picture of the correct item. Students continue to visit sites such as; ShopRite, Clark Commons, and Target. Students have made some purchases for the classroom or staff members.

Language Arts

This month, Mrs. Capizzi’s class went on a field trip to NJPAC to see the Jungle Book. The students really enjoyed getting to see the play after having read the book in class together during reading group. They were able to identify the different characters and parts of the story from what they had read.

Math

In math students are grouping items, patterns and skip counting. We are also updating programs to reflect progress or modifications needed. The upcoming jewelry sale will give us an opportunity to work on functional math skills.

Science

Students in Mr. Carten's class are discussing the earth's rotation, the night sky and the difference between a full moon and a crescent moon. The students are following the Foss science units that provide hands on resources to assist them in learning the new concepts taught.

Social Studies

Mrs. Attlesey's class is learning about the various winter holidays and how they are celebrated in several cultures. Students traced a big map of NJ and started working on a "New Jersey" booklet. Mrs. Convery's students are studying the history of the celebration of Hanukkah. The illustrated book "On Hanukkah" was read to the students. They enjoyed reading about the history, symbols and food associated with the holiday. This week we are going to read a simple, illustrated book about Kwanzaa. The book explains in simple terms the timeframe, history and symbols of the holiday that honors African-American culture.

Physical Education

Currently, students are learning about the sport of football in a month long unit. This month, they will work together with Mr. Moss to develop, practice, perform, demonstrate and maintain skills in all leisure, recreational, and modified games which are integral to enhancing their abilities within the physical education setting. Students will be able to translate their understandings and their skills to each unit throughout the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. They are taking part in various games and activities to enhance their hand-eye coordination and develop the student's ability to throw and catch as well as utilizing these skills in future games, sports, and activities. At the end of each class, students self-assess their skills by high-fiving exit signs as they each exit the gymnasium. Signs help the students identify how many steps they moved during that day's activities; 0-499 steps, 500-999 steps, and over 1000 steps.

Health

Through educational websites and articles for kids; each student is completing activities to assist their understandings and learn about how and why it is necessary to eat and drink healthy foods and liquids.

Currently, students are active and engaged in a 'MY PLATE' unit. Nurse IJ and Mr. Moss have many photographs of foods and liquids printed and cut out to allow the students to identify which food belongs to which group in 'MY PLATE'. Each class will work together to identify each category of 'MY PLATE'. During the entire activity, students are going to be prompted to identify each food group. Based on the abilities of students in each class, they will be asking and answering questions which will enhance their communication skills and learning through teaching the subject matter to their peers.

Art

Students have been studying some of the elements and principles of design. This month students have been looking at how artists use line and shape to make their work.

Students studied line by reading the book "The line that Wiggles". They then explored many different kinds of lines that artists use in their artwork. Students then practiced making several different lines and using them in a tapestry collage.

Students made snowy day collages using an assortment of squares, rectangles, and triangles. They began by looking at artwork by Grandma Moses to understand how she used shape to make houses. They also looked

at how Grandma Moses placed the shapes to give depth to her paintings. They practiced purposeful tearing of paper to make snowy hills, placed and glued shapes, and added line (* that they studied previously) design with construction paper crayons. Finally they added snowflakes with paint and q-tips.

Next, students used repetition of line and shape to make Poinsettia Prints. This was an introductory lesson on printmaking. Students used circles, rectangles, trapezoids, and petal shapes to make their pot full of poinsettias. They also used some of the lines that we have studied to decorate their pots.

Vocational

Sign Making/Engraving machine: The machine can make various types of signs. All students are exposed to sign making and the different skills needed to master this task. Students are now working on the mechanics and measuring of the signs. Students continue to make key chains to sell for the upcoming holiday sales.

Horticulture: Students are excited to sell Amaryllis plants again this year that they planted from bulbs and watched grow. Students have been working hard planting, watering and caring for these plants to get them ready for the sale. They are starting to bloom nicely.

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

Sweet Shoppe: On Dec. 4th, Mrs. Palmer's class went to the Commission to sell candy. In the beginning of the month several parents called and ordered candy and student's also completed a 75 pop order from First Children's. On Dec. 16th the students went to PSE&G to sell candy, bread and pillows. As usual the students sold out of many of their homemade products. They are now getting ready for the school sale for this Thursday where students will shop for their own families. On December 18th we had our Christmas Sweet Shop and all of the students and staff at Hillcrest Academy South came to the Sweet Shop for cake and hot chocolate. Westlake students served them and had an opportunity to socialize with peers from HAS. Next week, Mrs. Palmer's class was invited to bring students to HAS to vote on the classroom doors at Hillcrest South. They will also have pizza given to them from HAS for voting and the HAS students will then serve the Westlake students.

Jewelry: In the jewelry shop, students are learning how to make bracelets, earrings, key chains and necklaces. The students seem to really enjoy the program and find the activities to be both motivating and calming.

Dream Decor Shop: Students had a fantastic sale at the Overlook hospital during the vendor sale as well as the commission sale this month. The students continue to work on 30 personalized trays for the holiday sale as well as various personalized wooden signs such as welcome home and sports themes. They continue to design and make top notch quality home décor signs that could be sold in a store. Mrs. Shaw continues to partner with Overlook Hospital gift shop where they purchase our signs and sell in their shop.

Retail: Students participated in the annual holiday sale at PSE&G. As usual, the employees were generous to our students by buying the many gifts the students had prepared. The sale was a huge success! We sold over \$600 worth of items, practically everything was purchased by the employees at PSE&G. Every dog

biscuit, candy bar and chocolate candy dish was sold. The holiday sale for the students was also schedule. We have stocked up on inexpensive items for the students to purchase that cost a dollar or two. In addition, the students in our vocational group have earned \$5.00 in their vocational shops. They will receive the money on the day of the sale.

Therapies

Speech

This month we have completed ADL groups that worked on a variety of skills including: cooking (mac & cheese and holiday cookies), following written recipes and filling out recipe review sheets. We also worked on following directions containing prepositions while completing an obstacle course and using picture schedules to complete apartment tasks. We also worked collaboratively in groups to target pragmatic skills of students through a variety of activities (go fish, guess who?, headbanz, and apples to apples). We worked on PLC goals and teacher-led study groups to create materials to participate in Community Based Instruction. We made materials for many communication tasks (go-fish cards, holiday cards, social stories, etc.) Ms. Pepe attended a conference titled: “De-Escalate Meltdowns and Diffuse Explosive Behaviors in Children and Adolescents”.

Physical Therapy

Currently we have two physical therapists working at Westlake School. One therapist works three days a week and one works one day a week. We have 22 students receiving physical therapy with a total of 30 individual sessions, 2 groups and 2 quarterly consultations.

Our students are enjoying the use of our new “PT Progress Wall” in our therapy room. On this wall we are tracking progress towards our students’ IEP goals. This wall allows for self-assessment, enabling the students to track their own progress and watch as their numbers increase.

Some of our students have made notable progress this month towards their goals. D.V. doubled the amount of consecutive dribbles he can perform with one hand. K.A. (a student with limited mobility and walker use), is now walking up to 10 minutes on the treadmill in our gym. T.B. has demonstrated nice progress with walking with only one Lofstrand crutch instead of two and narrowing his wide gait.

We continue to incorporate our large tree mural in the motor room during our PT sessions. Our students are busy hanging snowflakes on the tree while doing obstacle courses and other gross movement activities such as squatting. Overall our students are progressing nicely with their PT goals and objectives.

Occupational Therapy

Currently we have 3 occupational therapists working at Westlake (2 full time OT’s, 1 part time OT who works Wednesdays). ADL and motor rooms are organized and being used by all therapists for sessions.

We continue informally assessing all OT students and developing goals and objectives for upcoming IEP’s. We have met with several of the teachers to address the sensory needs of the new/former students and provide sensory strategies and issue necessary equipment. Along with the speech therapists, we have developed the curriculum for the ADL Support Group.

The Life Skills classes which include students from Mrs. Pajewski, Mrs. Porchetta and Mrs. Attlesey's classes, continue to be implemented. This month the group activities focused on apartment skills, hygiene skills, and following a simple visual and written recipe to make instant macaroni and cheese. OT Ipad's have been programmed to go along with these activities, allowing the students to make choices, identify items used, and to communicate with their peers. We also contributed to the 2019 Westlake Holiday show by completing fine motor activities with our students who have fine motor IEP goals, to make paper snowflakes and stars which served as a holiday decoration.

Social Skills

Students are working on learning about the Zones of Regulation during Social Skills groups. They have been identifying their feelings and sharing what zone they are in throughout the day. Activities with the zones like Bingo and twister are just some of the activities used to help students understand the zones. This month our character trait is helpfulness. Students have been discussing how they can be helpful to others during our school day.

Social Work

Twelve IEP/preplanning meetings were held since last month and new goals and objectives written and progress discussed. Counseling groups were co-lead to demonstrate integration of the Zones curriculum into the sessions. Meetings with Dr. Amy, referring Psychiatrist, have been productive in assisting parents to better understand how medication can help target symptoms that can interfere with their child's overall functioning. Many parents of special needs students have concerns with whether to medicate their child or to not medicate. Some students already prescribed medication have required adjustments in order to help them better function at school and be more available for learning. We have been working with several families to help locate prescribing physicians accepting new patients since Children's Specialized Hospital no longer accepts new clients over the age of 17.

The upcoming holidays have created some tension for a number of students who anticipate the break from their daily routine. The majority of our students do well with predictable and consistent scheduling. Extra counseling sessions have been needed throughout this month to manage any related anxiety.

Behaviorist

The behavior department has been involved in many different capacities this month. Westlake's Registered Behavior Technician continues to be involved with data collection and input, assists in creating classroom visual supports and materials, is an integral member of our crisis team. She also participates in classroom consultation alongside the behaviorist in various classrooms who require additional behavioral support.

The behaviorists have continued to hold 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. 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 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 are shared with staff through the Google Drive.

Behaviorists have been active members of many pre-planning meetings for IEPs as well as IEP meetings along with participating in Administrator/behaviorist meetings this month.

There have continued to be behavioral issues within the school that have prevented students from participating in CBI trips this month due to safety reasons. These students are working on work readiness and transition skills within the structured school setting to prepare them for the Community. Many behavioral issues have resulted in several students working individually in the behaviorist’s office at various times. The behaviorists have worked with these students as well as offered feedback to the classroom staff about these students. The behaviorists have also continued to regularly be involved in parent and district/case manager contact as needed. This has been done via phone, in person meetings as well as emails.

The behaviorists have also participated in a meeting this month with the consulting Psychiatrist, Dr. Amy. During these meetings, the behaviorists have provided behavioral data, current strategies and observational notes for six students. There have been consults completed informally in many classes with new students, or students who either have an increase in various target behaviors or a change in behavior or needs. The behaviorists have also consulted in classrooms with new staff or staff members who are in need of continued training on various student-specific techniques for various reasons.

Crisis calls occurred this month with 11 students. The Zen Den continues to be a valuable tool to use to de-escalate students and to proactively prevent various aggressive episodes. However, despite this successful de-escalation occurring regularly, several crises requiring restraints occurred this month.

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:

<p>As of December 2019</p> <p>LMA Actual: 45 LMA District - Non-NP: 41 NP Specialty at LMA: 4</p> <p>Changes: <u> </u> Entered: <u> </u> (NP) <u> </u> NP Pending: <u> </u> Exited: <u> </u> (non-NP) <u> </u> (NP)</p> <p>Trinitas Hospital: Bedside Instruction: 29 (inpatient)</p>	<p>Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: 1 December Fire Drill on 12/12/19 Security Drills: 1 12/3/19 - Lockdown (internal threat)</p> <p>Suspension out of school: 10 In School Suspension: 3 HIB: 3 Referrals in December: 8 Intakes Scheduled: 5 Completed: 4</p>
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Day Program: 49 Approved-Agreement signed: 60 Classified: 32 Regular Ed: 28	Acceptance Letter Sent: 3 Sending District Accepted LMA placement: 2 Placement Pending : 0
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Administration

This December our LMA staff and students have been very busy. I'll start out with our Yestercades trip. Yestercades is a classic arcade museum that provides a historical gaming experience for all participants. The types of games that are available are the classic arcade games (Pac-Man, Street Fighter etc) as well as pinball machines of all shapes and sizes. This fun experience gives a glimpse into the past and enables students to compare and contrast the difference between the technology that was used in the past and the technology that is currently used.

Also in December our teachers were trained on one aspect of our new Student Management software. Our school has recently started training on Power School, and the Power teacher module was recently incorporated into our teacher training. Power Teacher is the grading portion of the student management software that helps teachers to easily manage daily classroom activities such as taking attendance, entering grades, communicating with students and parents as well as posting assignment details.

Later in December our students visited the Grammy Museum in Newark. The goal of the trip was to educate our students about the history and the cultural significance of American music, and to inspire them to explore and create new forms of music using the roots that have existed in our country for centuries. The Grammy Museum provided innovative programming, cutting-edge interactive activity and exciting exhibits that our students thoroughly enjoyed.

Every month our staff members host a monthly community meeting where they present academic awards to students who have demonstrated academic achievements. The academic categories consist of most improved student, honors, high honors and honorable mention as well as student of the month. Each student receives a certificate and additional behavior points that can be used in the school store.

Last but not least all of our staff members came together to provide our students with a goodie bag for the Christmas holiday. During a staff meeting our staff formed an assembly line where we stuffed treats, snacks and a holiday card into a decorated sling bag. During dismissal our staff handed out the presents to our students while they got onto their busses. We all hope that this little holiday gesture reminds our students that they are always in our thoughts and that we wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Academics

Middle School

Students have been working on the computer looking at various applications that exist and documenting what their own app will include based upon their preferences and what the options are. We have been looking at the reason why some people create their own site and what is included and how ideas are included. We also used the UCESC.org as one of our resources.

Students continue to work on pre-algebraic solutions. The pre-algebra has reintroduced the concept of the orders of operations. Many lessons have been modified to facilitate students' ability to complete assignments with problems successfully.

Our focus was on Metals and non-metals in Science. Students have been able to locate metals and nonmetals in the periodic table. Vocabulary was one of our focuses as there was a need to help students with basic definitions. Students were also identifying the properties of metals and nonmetals. We have been looking at some articles that helped solidify our theories of metals, nonmetals.

In Social Studies the middle school has been working on active citizenship and the rights and duties that come with active citizenship in the classroom, school, and local community levels. The students have been introduced to civic responsibilities at the community and state level and have worked on persuasive writing projects about the rights and duties regarding civic responsibility on the community level.

In English Language Arts and Writing the middle school has been working on the narrative text *The Hate U Give* and specifically character analysis, retelling the story indicating key details, and identifying specific details to answer key questions. The students continued to work on main idea vs. theme and identifying the difference. They also worked on figurative language within the narrative text and determining the meaning of the figurative language used. The students participated in writing an argument or persuasive essay using an organizational structure with a theme and citing accurate, relevant evidence to support their claims.

High School

English Language Arts & Literacy

Students have concluded their first unit for the year with Argumentative essays. They expressed how accomplished they felt as it was a more in-depth project than they have experienced. We had our conferences where students were able to reflect on their skills and make academic goals for the next marking period. Additionally, students have been working on writing a concise and cohesive response to literature through guidance from our English department's use of the RACE writing strategy. We have seen our student's responses be well organized and supported with textual evidence giving their voices credibility.

We began facilitating students in making morning announcements at LMA. Students created a morning announcement script, and have practiced their public speaking skills each day. The announcements are a collective of all the LMA community activities, inspirational thoughts, content area facts, and student shout outs of encouragement. The morning announcements help to create a culture of caring and growth.

Social Studies

Social Studies continues to look at important events over time. US History I continues to study the Revolutionary War and the early days of American Independence. US History II has been studying the Roaring Twenties. We will soon move towards the Great Depression, its impact on our society and the struggle to recover.

World History has moved into the look at Ancient Greece and their contributions to the world. We will then move on to the next age of civilization growth. 20th Century Civil Liberties has reviewed the Civil Rights Movement up through 1965 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

Social studies had three special events in addition to our class routines. Alice Hallanan, a former member of the NJ Attorney General's staff, joined us and made a presentation about the 19th amendment. This was the amendment that granted women the right to vote. The presentation began with a role play that included student Mary F. After the presentation there was also a time for questions and discussion.

Provided by the Union County Board of Elections, LMA had the use of a voting machine for a day. This election pitted our current president and Joe Biden as candidates. Students voted on a state of the art touch screen machine that had the real feel of an election day. We were surprised by a visit by Union County Freeholder Kim Mouded. She joined us to watch the vote and also offered a view on local government, her job, and Union County to two social studies classes. The students were nicely engaged and Ms. Mouded's presentation was spirited.

Science

December was a fun month in Science. Biology classes made cell models out of clay and used computer skills to create pages of a book to accompany the model. We finished the model by making slime as the cytoplasm. Forensics classes did presentations about their projects on wrongfully convicted individuals and they were fantastic. They spurred a lot of discussion about Forensics, as well as justice and society as a whole. Chemistry students whipped out duplo play blocks and explored chemical formulas. Environmental students are currently working on 3D projects about the natural resources of their chosen states. All students are spending the week before break exploring our classroom critters, the Bess Beetles. We generated lots of questions about the bugs and their behavior and are spending the week creating experiments to see if we can answer them. So far, we've realized that DOING science is hard and trying to answer one question usually leads to many more questions.

Mathematics

For the month of December all Senior students attended a field trip to visit the campus of Universal Technical Institute (UTI). While visiting the campus and receiving a tour they learned about the need for more skilled technicians as the economy, and online shopping expands. Students were able to see a variety of different trades being learned at UTI including: auto mechanics, diesel mechanics, HVAC and refrigeration, and hydraulic mechanics. Not only did students get to see the campus, but they were able to take part in interactive lessons including following diagnosis manuals, and working with different components of a hydraulic system. Students received information regarding training at UTI, and future career placement along with expected salary guides.

Students in Geometry class have been working with special triangles, mainly right triangles to get a good understanding of the Pythagorean Theorem. Using the interactive Smartboard students were able to model abstract problems, and apply them to word problems in which the Theorem is needed to find a missing measurement. Having the Interactive Smartboard allowed students to measure both sides and angles to determine when and how to use the Pythagorean Theorem.

Students in the Consumer Mathematics course spent this month learning about jobs that get paid based on service. Discussing why certain careers require a tip (gratuity) and exploring if they are interested in a career like that. Students spent time creating a project in which they used restaurant menus, and created mock bills. They then worked on how to find the subtotal, the tip and the grand total. Students were able to use the 'jigsaw' method by sharing their work with one another, and having each other complete sample problems based on their selected restaurant menu.

Spanish

This month students are working in the unit “*La Vida escolar*” in Spanish class. Students took a summative assessment to measure what students have learned so far about the unit to enhance my teaching and students learning. In addition, students worked on different projects in which they had to create a well organized research about “*Las Tradiciones en la escuela*” in the school/ home in order to describe their favorite tradition in Spanish and then illustrate each tradition. They are finishing the project called “*Mi Calendario*”. 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 “*Las escuelas alrededor del mundo*”. Students were able to use a map to located different countries and research different Spanish traditions. Students are able to engage in conversations, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions and compare and contrast different schools from the Spanish-speaking countries and American country.

Students also participated in the co-op learning experience with Mrs. Convery and Mr. Carten classes at Westlake every Monday and Friday, The students read stories and then facilitated discussion about the events of the story. The feedback about this program has been very positive. Both Westlake and Lamberts Mill Academy students are benefiting from the experience.

Physical Education and Health

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

Just recently the students were treated to a wonderful field trip to the facility Top Golf. Students learned about the game of golf and were able to take part in the activity. Top Golf is a state-of-the-art and high-tech driving range located in Edison, NJ. TopGolf is a game that anyone can play (and win). Students scored points by hitting micro chipped golf balls at giant dartboard-like targets on an outfield. The closer they got their ball to the center or ‘bulls eye’ and the further the distance, the more points they earned. Students were outstanding and very well behaved.

The school also participated in the 4th Annual Lamberts Mill Academy Turkey Trot. The 5K has become a hit and the students and the staff all love to be a part in the activity. Students walked/ran 5 kilometers around the parking lot the morning before Thanksgiving while listening to music and having fun. We even had visitors from other Commission schools join us for the walk. The event was a great success!

LMA Clinical Department

The month of December began with some group changes for the students leading into great discussions regarding change and how we handle change in our everyday lives. The students seemed to transition nicely into their new groups with each group developing a level of group cohesion.

We continued discussions about appropriate boundaries leading into our topic of healthy relationships. Students were able to identify the positive relationships in their own lives and various situations that can be improved in current relationships. We wrapped up the month of December helping students prepare for the

holiday break. We spent a significant amount of time talking about how to prepare for the time off and focusing on making healthy choices.

Trinitas

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

Younger students have decorated the halls with original stories posted on giant snowmen. The teachers have joined with other staff in bringing gifts for the children on the inpatient units, which will be distributed on Christmas.

NewPoint Specialty

Enrollment as of 12/17/10: 15 residents

Students at LMA-4

This month we focused on Global Warming, Current Events, Math basics and Integers, US & World History and other academic subjects. NPS residents have enjoyed holiday visits from: Jersey Sons, Ms. Nadine, Director of Trinitas Regional Medical Center Board and Ms. Nubia Wilson, author of The Survivors Club, (survivor of sexual abuse). Students focused on how to write thank you notes using descriptive details and the importance of acknowledging the people who take their time for NPS.

On December 12th the students went with Ms. Mary to the Hillside Food Bank, where they packaged pasta that will help 3,000 families.

The teaching staff have collaborated and worked on their SGO’s

CROSSROADS:

Enrollment as of December 19, 2019 Actual: 44 Changes:0 Entered: 1 Exited: 0	Referrals: 3 Intakes Scheduled: 3 Accepted: 1
Fire Drills: 12/19/19	Emergency Drills:12/15/19

The Crossroads School community participated in Holiday activities throughout the latter part of the month of December. These fun-filled activities culminated with a joint celebration between our Crossroads Staff and the Parent Teacher Organization which took place on December 20th, 2019. Students, staff and parents enjoyed numerous activities as well as a special individualized experience with Santa!

Christina Witte’s Classroom Achievements

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

The students all enjoyed their field trip to LifeTown village, where they experienced an indoor ‘village’ with stores, such as a pet shop, a movie theatre, ShopRite, book store and nail salon, as well as different offices (doctor’s office, dentist) and a sensory room and playground especially designed for children with special needs. The students used real money to buy ‘services’ or products in this context. Some students really enjoyed renting large tricycles and bikes, others got their nails painted or looked at the animals in the pet store. While the playground and sensory room was a highlight for most of the students, a highlight for us was taking several students into the doctor's office and the dentist. Even though it took Jill a long time, she eventually sat in the real dentist chair and brushed model teeth. Gautham even got himself weighed and measured in the doctor's office and sat on the examination table.

The students are also continuing their pre-vocational jobs in our school and this month our class is working on Ellison Orders, sorting and delivering Scholastic Magazines, as well as doing school laundry. In addition, my students continue with their daily jobs, including feeding the birds in our window bird feeder.

Natalia Amador’s classroom achievements

For the month of December, we learned about the different holidays we all celebrate within our country. We learned about Chanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Our class has continued to work on strengthening their pre-vocational jobs by completing the many tasks here at Crossroads and by attending community based instruction at Westlake school. So far, we have worked on completing Ellison orders, sorting magazines, doing laundry, collecting recyclables, and this month we are working on utensil orders and kitchen inventory.

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

All students continue to work on their direct instruction and VB-MAPP goals. Josh, Uthmaan, DJ, and Luis have been making progress on their new reading program (SRA). Robert is working on categories, building simple sentences, and skip counting. This year they are working on fostering those independent skills that will help them be successful in the future when they move on to high school.

We had the pleasure of attending a trip to LifeTown. LifeTown is a 53,000 square foot fully inclusive and accessible center that offers a myriad of opportunities for recreation, education and therapeutic play aimed at providing a comprehensive slate of programming for individuals with special abilities and their families.

The goal of this trip was to give our students the experience of being in an actual community and interacting with others in an appropriate manner. Before buying anything or going into any of the businesses, students got to walk around the shops and locate every place on the map. They also had to go to the bank, fill out a withdrawal slip, and received \$12 for spending at LifeTown.

Lindsay DeNigris classroom

To begin the month of December, we started our snow unit. Students learned all about snowflakes and how they form through the books *Snow* by Gabrielle Dixon and *Snow* by Uri Schulevitz. We discussed and shared what we like to do when it snows and we sorted things we can do, eat, and wear when it is cold and hot out. We also made a fun snowflake snack. Students followed a visual recipe to put together pretzel sticks and marshmallows to make a snowflake. We also read the book *Snowmen At Night* by Caralyn Buehner. Students then engaged in making a snowman and writing what they would do if they were a snowman at night.

After our snow unit, we started learning about Hanukkah. We read an adapted book and students made their very own menorah. Students then engaged in playing the dreidel game. This was a lot of fun and we loved listening to the dreidel song while we played.

Once we were done exploring Hanukkah, we moved on to our gingerbread man and Christmas unit. We read really fun books and completed activities to explore Christmas and its many traditions. While we're busy learning we had a new friend in our class watching over us. Our "Elf on the Shelf" flew in from the North Pole to make sure we all make it on Santa's "Nice" list. The students were also busy being elves and making ornaments to bring home as gifts!

Allison Gebler's Classroom

In Allison Gebler's class, Room 102, the thematic unit focused on winter weather changes, December holidays and positive social interactions with peers through Social Studies, Science, art projects, and a variety of Occupational Therapy Integration with Miss Dina, our classroom OT.

In the area of English Language Arts students completed letters to Santa, using an array of skills involving tracing, cutting and pasting visual supports. Students selected pictures identifying how they have been helpful this year (to review this month's UCESC Character Trait of the Month). These pictures were included on their letters to Santa, along with visuals of some basic gift categories they would like to receive for Christmas. Students decorated holiday cards for their families and reviewed the many possible family members they each have at home, using visual supports and PECs.

In the area of Math students completed crafts and games, to celebrate Chanukah, each of which included an assortment of counting, color matching, turn taking and 1:1 correspondence aspects. Students used fine motor skills alongside guided counting during the Dreidel game. They were also introduced to geometric shape concepts through the creation of multiple shapes within snowflake cutting activities.

In the area of Science / Social Studies students completed a daily review of the weather patterns they have seen throughout the month, selected appropriate clothing items necessary for winter weather and learned about different tools used during the fall and winter seasons (rakes for leaves, shovels for snow). They also reviewed other major holidays that are taking place over winter break this year including, Kwanzaa and New Years Eve. A review of these holidays was completed using adapted books, cartoon song videos, and arts and crafts.

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

In the area of individualized goals: Niall has begun to show independence in classroom routines such as preparing and microwaving his own lunch. Jianna has shown some improvements in her listener responding skills during functional requests such as "sit down for ____". Sebastian and Dilan have been accepting and compliant with the introduction of their new PECS books, which also incorporate a visual schedule and token economy.

Room 102's Star Student, Dilan, has worked very hard at toilet training with minimal accidents. He is practicing his bathroom routine throughout the day and will begin learning to use his words or visual prompts to acknowledge when he needs to use the restroom.

Our class will continue to work on individualized independence outside of the classroom: delivering messages, complying with hallway rules and maintaining expected positive behaviors during specials.

Room 102 is looking forward to celebrating the start of 2020 next month!

Susan Parenti's Classroom Achievements

Students read a story about Hanukkah, the Jewish holiday which is celebrated for eight days. We discussed the meaning of the menorah with the students. The menorah is a special candelabrum with 9 candles. Each day an additional candle is lit. The ninth candle is called a shamash. This candle is generally in the middle and set higher from the other 8 candles to separate it from the rest. It is the only candle that is supposed to be used for light. We went over key vocabulary words to describe the holiday. Students listed 3 things that describe Hanukkah and we made paper menorahs.

The students learned the different types of special foods that are eaten during this time. The traditional food is fried in olive oil to represent the miracle of the burning oil lamp. They enjoyed potato pancakes, doughnuts stuffed with jam, and fritters. The students followed a recipe to make potato pancakes called latkes.

Students read a story about Kwanzaa. The students learned that it lasts seven days from December 26th to January 1st. This holiday is mostly celebrated by African-Americans in the United States. We discussed the wooden candlestick holder which holds 7 candles and what each candle represents. There are seven main principals, one for each day of the celebration.

The students learned that Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ and is on December 25th. There are lots of ways that people celebrate Christmas. Most people get together with family and exchange gifts on Christmas morning. Many people attend church services either on Christmas Day or Christmas Eve.

Christmas decorations are a big part of the holiday. People decorate their homes with festive lights and winter decorations. They also usually put up a Christmas tree and decorate it with ornaments and lights. The students made Christmas gifts for their parents and wrapped them.

Occupational Therapy Monthly Report

The month of December has been a very busy month. The OT department continues to host Laura, an intern from Quinnipiac. In addition, there were a record number of IEP reports written as well as attendance at the IEP meetings, while continuing to cover treatment sessions. Activities during the month include holiday themed activities develop fine motor, visual motor and organizational skills. A social and interactional component is always included into all of the therapy sessions. Participation on the Holiday Committee proved to be fruitful, with many events planned. The OT department also participated in the Holiday Door Decorating Contest, and as usual incorporated our theme into treatment sessions.

Kim and Laura presented at the Parent Education/Support Meeting Workshop on December 11, 2019. Our topic was: “A Sensory Approach to Autism”.

HILLCREST SOUTH:

Enrollment as of 12/20/19 Actual: 91	Intakes Pending General Ed.: 10
Changes: Entered: 4 Exited: 3	Intakes Pending Sp. Ed.: 1

The Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) staff and students participated in a Homeroom Christmas/Holiday/ Winter Door Decoration Contest during the month of December. Throughout the month, time was allotted for everyone to cooperatively develop a layout, organize the materials required, then create the door. Westlake students from the S.A.V.E. judged the doors on 12/18/19 then had a pizza lunch with the homeroom winners the following day. Results for the first, second, and third place winners were announced early on our Instagram page then in the Daily Memo on 12/19/19.

Ms. Gronert, shared guidance counselor, had a student mid-point check in for the first semester to monitor the progress of each student’s credit retrieval progress. Ms. Gronert met with administration and the school social worker to update them on the students who have made minimal progress and how staff could motivate students to meet their goals. Ms. Gronert met with Mr. Savoia throughout the month to comb through any discrepancies to ensure accuracy. Ms. Gronert continued to interview and accept new students and acclimate them to the environment at Hillcrest Academy. The guidance counselor will continue to meet with all of the students and ensure they are on track to meet all of their social, emotional, and educational goals.

The HAS Community Service Program (HASCSP) Frosty’s Friends committee held its 11th annual fundraiser in order to raise money to purchase toys for the statewide toy drive sponsored by Jersey Cares. Our annual “Random Acts of Kindness” committee was formed for the purpose of performing small gestures of kindness to benefit the communities that we serve. Fundraisers were held to support the committee’s elf-like activities. Through their efforts, we were able to provide holiday cards to the American Recreational Military Services organization for our troops overseas and to provide a holiday toy for a child served by the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation. The Hillcrest Singers are in their 10th year of spreading holiday cheer. Students volunteered their time and talents to sing holiday songs and spread cheer to the residents of Runnells Long Term Care Facility, Genesis Nursing Home and Children’s Specialized Hospital. The HASCSP concluded their annual “gently used” coat drive to benefit Jersey Cares. This year’s drive was quite successful as we collected over 30 coats to donate. We would like to thank everyone who supported this worthy cause by giving the gift of warmth to those in need.

Tuesday Spirit Days focused around the holiday season. Ms. Gilchrist, the school social worker, attended the monthly DCF/HIB meeting for enhanced services for identified students. She has completed the BIS pre-test for all involved students. Ms. Gilchrist also helped facilitate the Westlake Cafe weekly visit for eligible students. The social worker continued to track the seniors and identified who made progress in the lunch credit retrieval program. Participation was mandatory if a 2020 graduation date was the goal. Parents/guardians were also notified to seek assistance for the students who may be faltering. Ms. Gilchrist continued to be instrumental in collaboration with the guidance counselor. Together they counseled the students individually and in small groups.

Ms. Rubin, the school nurse and health teacher, assisted with student entry and exit procedures on a daily basis. The nurse made student absence calls for each student. Ms. Rubin saw an average of 15 students per day. The nurse continued to update health files daily with screenings for the current students and new students. For the new students, the nurse followed up with receiving A-45's from the sending academies. The HAS nurse provided coverage at Westlake school on 12/12/19 when they did not have a substitute. The nurse and Mr. Barone continued to share coverage of the additional seventh period physical education/health class. In health class, the students learned about the components of a healthy relationship, which included communication, compromise, caring as well as current events in health.

The vast majority of students have advanced on their weekly drills on fractions. Many students have shown week over week growth on these exams. In addition, the algebra students have shown week over week growth on reading, comprehending, and evaluating word problems. The algebra students completed unit three. They were assessed on the following skills: plotting points on a coordinate plane, graphing linear equations, graphing equations on a calculator, graphing intercepts, finding slope and rate of change, graphing using slope-intercept form, and graphing linear functions. The geometry students also completed unit three. They were assessed on the following skills: parallel lines and transversals; proving lines parallel and parallel lines on the coordinate plane. The homeroom/first period showed tremendous group effort in creating their winter themed door. The students voted on the door design, worked cooperatively and put forth a great deal of effort. They have received a tremendous amount of praise from students and staff. For a field trip, the algebra I students visited the Liberty Science Center. They attended a 90 minute workshop in the Makerlab where they received firsthand experience about how science, technology, engineering and mathematics are connected. The students were also able to experience virtual 3-D experiences.

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

Students in Ms. Holden's English classes reviewed the language arts skills learned in unit one. Students then took an online assessment test for unit one. Students continued to improve their writing skills by completing four argumentative essays. In addition, students read a short excerpt in Scholastic Magazine entitled *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens and compared the excerpt to a movie excerpt of the classic.

Ms. Cioffi's English classes continued to practice the content and skills from the unit 2 English curriculum by continuing their reading of nonfiction and informational texts. Students learned about various ways to structure a text and analyzed the way authors chose to organize and structure their ideas. Classes learned how to analyze nonfiction and informational texts by creating PAPA squares where students identified and analyzed the author's Purpose, Argument, Persona, and Audience. After learning the skills and content in unit one of the English curriculum, students completed the unit one English Common Assessments on Google Classroom. The assessment will be graded so the teacher can assess growth and knowledge of these skills in her students. For the remainder of the month, students are analyzing and reading historical documents along with other supplemental texts that share a similar theme or message. Students will use

their analysis of these texts and will write an essay in which they outline and make comparisons to a historical document and an article that share similar messages to its audience.

Ms. Cherville's students worked on holiday family traditions and activities for the target language in her Spanish classes. They identified related vocabulary, modal auxiliaries and the present progressive. They used the structures and vocabulary in meaningful settings. A variety of texts and a couple of videos were utilized to practice language and identify culture. Spanish speaking students worked on creative writing. They read story books and wrote their own version of one of them. They also reported current events in the target language using technology.

Ms. Wrzesinski's U.S. History I students finished their 13 colonies unit and completed the excise tax portion of the unit. The topics included: Colonial Industries, Colonial Economy, Triangular Trade, Bacon's Rebellion, Join or Die Movement, Road to Revolution, proclamation of 1763, excise taxes, sugar act, quartering act, the Stamp Act, the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, and Common Sense. The U.S. History II students concluded their WWI unit and started the Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance. Topics included: Main Causes of WWI, Neutrality, Wilson, Official Declaration of War, Background on WWI, Ferdinand Assassination, Trench Warfare and Weapons, Treaty of Versailles, Wilson's 14 points of peace, Workplace during WWI for women and African Americans, Great Migration, Harlem Renaissance. The Modern World History students completed their Industrial Revolution unit and started their imperialism unit. Students discussed the following topics: Introduction to British Industrial Revolution, IR image analysis, Urbanization, life of workers, agrarian revolution, different inventors and inventions, the spread of industrialization, natural resources and introduction to imperialism.

Mr. Deo's USII classes 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 patterns and trends of the stock market by tracking stocks and creating a diverse portfolio of investments. This study has centered on the factors that cause companies to grow their profit share in the market, as well as using graphs and charts to track the progress of individual stocks.

Ms. Arora's Forensic science students worked on the physical evidence. They studied scientific evidence like hairs and fibers. They also watched video clips on the mysteries of crime having hairs and fibers as the main clue to solve the mystery and wrote their own opinions. In Biology, students worked on the Biomolecules. Video resources reinforced students to eat healthy food and realize how important good nutrition is for the human body. Students in credit retrieval have worked on their assignments. Ms. Arora's homeroom had the highest attendance average for the last eight weeks and the teacher hopes that trend will continue.

Mr. Reichman's Chemistry students have been continuing their discovery of the weirdness of quantum mechanics and how it applies to chemistry and our knowledge of the structure of the atom. This includes the contributions of de Broglie, Heisenberg, and Schrödinger to the current quantum model of the atom. In Forensics, Mr. Reichman's students have been learning about fingerprints, including how they are

classified and collected. HAS's Computer Science students have been working on developing their own personal web pages as they learn more and more ways to use the HTML code that dictates how websites are presented by web browsers.

HILLCREST/NORTH:

Enrollment as of: 12/20/19 Actual: 94 Changes: 4 new students to start on 1/6/20	Referrals: work in progress Drills: Fire Drill: 11/25/19 Lockdown 11/25/19 *Security Guard Absent
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During the month of December at Hillcrest Academy North, Student Development Plans (SDPs) were completed and we have started to split students up into groups based on their identified SEL goal. Our "Advocate Meeting of the Month" focused on emotional regulation and was such a success that the staff have requested a follow up meeting to get more in depth. Our seniors are preparing for graduation, and as part of this effort we spoke to all classes on their credit retrieval progress. As always, we updated attendance weekly for staff to review with students on Friday mornings. Music For All Seasons provided their second program, made available to us through the HEART Grant. Alessandra Small, a musician from Jersey City, and an alternative high school graduate, performed a 45-minute set which included participation from various students.

In the month of December, Mr. Van Cleef's social studies classes started preparing for the 2020 Presidential Election. Students accessed the website www.ISideWith.com and took a survey that shows them which presidential candidate their views most closely align. From there, students researched their top two candidates based on issues that meant the most to them. They used information to write a response about which candidate they are preparing to back in 2020.

In US History 2, students focused on World War I, specifically how and why the United States joined the war. Students learned to question how and why a war such as this occurred. Students did this by breaking down primary source documents focusing on the bigotry faced by Irish immigrants in the early 1900s. This research led students to question the concepts of race and where we as a society are today.

The Probability and Statistics class have been creating and interpreting scatter plots. As a special project, they created a visual for the actual number of absences and their grades to look for a correlation. First they compared two period classes in math with the line of best fit. Then they created a scatterplot of all four math classes to compare results with a larger sample space. A huge graph is on display for all students to recognize that "Attendance Matters."

The Geometry classes have studied parallel and perpendicular lines and the relationship of the angles formed by a transversal to the lines. Skills from Algebra are used in solving for the values that make the lines parallel. In addition, they are reviewing the slope of a line to determine the relationship of two or more lines. They are now classifying triangles and exploring congruent triangles.

We had another extended advocate meeting with our students this month. The topic was emotional regulation. The students are responding well to the program and remain involved in their SDP's through reflection and discussions. Grades and attendance were also discussed individually with their advisors.

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

In English, students expanded on what they have previously learned (RACE) to the five paragraph essay. Students are focused on claim (writing a thesis) and expanding on evidence and analysis for the essay. Students also learned about credible sources and how to figure out if their sources are credible.

In English, students completed a comparing and contrasting essay project in which they had to research two songs, movies, or shows with a similar theme and identify the connection and find examples from each piece. Students then had to write an essay that contained a claim connecting the two pieces, cite two pieces of evidence, and provide sufficient analysis for each piece of evidence. Students also engaged in a small research project and evaluated their sources using a method to determine the source's credibility, reliability, authority, and purpose. Students wrote two paragraphs on their research topic and had to cite their information using the MLA format. Most recently, students are in the process of taking the Unit 1 English Assessment on Google Classroom.

During Creative Writing, students are starting each class answering creative questions. Students focused on setting for their short story. They are writing a story (based on a prompt) where the setting has an immense effect on the plot and characters acting as an [antagonist](#). Students are using previously learned skills of planning, drafting, revising, and editing to complete the narrative.

Every Monday in LA Strategies, students independently read their independent reading book and choose a journal question to write a reader response in their journal. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the class reads an article, poem, or story from CommonLit.com, and answers questions and has a class discussion about the reading. On Wednesdays, there is a grammar lesson and practice questions. Students also practice grammar by completing MadLibs stories and sharing aloud. On Fridays, students reflect on their weekly attendance, behavior, and grades, and set goals for themselves.

The yearbook committee has selected positions for the yearbook's photographer, artist, page designer, and writer. Drafts for the yearbook front and back covers have been drawn and are being revised with Ms. Mendola and Ms. Scheetz. The yearbook writers have begun brainstorming for the senior story, and the page designers have been listing suggestions and modifications for the layout. Yearbook members have also created Google forms to be completed by seniors to submit their senior quotes, favorite movie quotes, and superlative choices.

The health office is running smoothly. The nurse continues to manage the day-to-day activities in the health office, assess student health complaints/needs and continue to obtain immunization records. In Health class this month, the students learned about fertilization and conception, fetal development in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd trimesters. The students also learned about problems that can occur during pregnancy such as fetal

alcohol syndrome, low birth weight, substance abuse during pregnancy, gestational diabetes, spinal bifida and Down's Syndrome. Physical Education classes continue to work toward reaching their fitness goals and finished a unit on basketball. The students are now working on a wiffle ball unit.

The month of December found Chemistry, Biology, and Forensic Science students continuing their quest to master their applicable Next Generation Science Standards. Chemistry students continued their exploration into the atom by learning about quantum numbers and how to determine the electron configurations of specific elements. Biology students learned about the large biological molecules carbohydrates, proteins, and nucleic acids and their roles in living organisms. Forensic Science students learned how to analyze fibers and hairs and to identify and match an unknown sample using a microscope. Next month, Chemistry students will begin their analysis of the periodic table. Biology students will begin studying membranes and enzymes. Forensic Science students will begin their studies of blood spatter analysis.

During the month of December, the guidance counselor had a mid-point check in for the first semester to monitor the progress of each student's credit retrieval progress. Ms. Gronert met with administration and the school social worker to update them on the students who have made minimal progress and how we were going to motivate the students to meet their goals. Ms. Gronert met with Mr. Savoia throughout the month to comb through any discrepancies to ensure accuracy. Ms. Gronert continued to interview and accept new students and acclimate them to the environment at Hillcrest Academy. The guidance counselor will continue to meet with all of the students and ensure they are on track to meet all of their social, emotional, and educational goals.

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

NONPUBLIC:

The Director and Supervisor of Nonpublic Services continue to meet with the Nonpublic School administrators at their schools to discuss the following:

- Scheduling
- IDEA Services
- Child Find
- Delivery of services: pull-out vs. in-class
- Mandated teacher trainings

Teachers met for their monthly PLC meeting and continued presenting a new chapter of their book study *Teach Reflect Learn*.

The Non-Public Nursing program is running in all of the Nonpublic Schools in Union County. The Non-Public nurses assist in maintaining health records (A-45) and complete specific basic screenings for students in grades K to 12.

The Non-Public Schools are successfully receiving their individual textbooks and technology orders based on the school's allotted allocation for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

TRANSITION:

Work Readiness Academy Anticipated Student Enrollments: 11 (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)

Some of the highlights from the Work Readiness Academy in the month of December included:

In recognition of “Helpfulness” as the character trait of the month, the students identified ways to help others and how to know if others do not want help. They also volunteered at the Community Food Bank in Hillside, NJ.

Students identified Career Clusters of interest and a variety of jobs within that Career Cluster. They have also researched what kind of training and skills are necessary for that position.

Students continued to develop answers for common job interview questions to prepare them for mock interviews and real job interviews in the future.

Students identified needs they have and how others can help them, how they communicate, and their future plans. This information will be used to create a Person Centered Planning Brochure that will be shared at each student's Transition Planning Meeting to be held in the beginning of 2020.

Also this month students performed Community Service on a field trip to the Community Food Bank in Hillside, NJ where they bagged pasta to be distributed at various food pantries.

As part of their “REC Lasagna Business” students developed shopping lists, went to ShopRite to purchase the items, and filled 17 lasagna orders for the holiday season.

Students visited Strength and Fitness in Cranford twice this month where they worked out performing four different exercises, with three sets of each. They also devoted time to using various cardio machines.

The WRA held its annual Student Holiday Party on Thursday, December 19th. The students took the day off from their internships to celebrate the holiday season with their peers and our staff. The party featured snacks, a game of Family Feud, karaoke, dancing, and a fun Yankee Gift Swap!

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 welcomed its 4th cohort this September. Nine student interns were selected this past May from an application pool of 20 candidates.

In the classroom the interns spent most of December working on basic financial literacy skills necessary for employment and independent living.

The students learned:

- There are benefits to using a financial institution
- Opening a checking or savings account and keeping good track of money
- Knowing how to write a check correctly is fundamental to good money management
- A budget is a tool to help you meet your financial goals
- Work ready individuals must have the skills to read and understand statements when paying bills

The students completed their first internship rotation this month. They will begin their second rotation after we return from winter break. Project SEARCH holds a “workshop week” in between each internship rotation. During this workshop week the interns worked on job seeking skills including developing a resume that provides a summary of experiences, abilities, skills, and accomplishments. They also learned that in order to make a good impression, it is important to be prepared for job interviews. Practicing mock interviews is a great way to be prepared for the real thing.

Time was also devoted during workshop week to practicing critical life skills. Thanks to a grant from the Overlook Foundation, the program purchased supplies to help teach the interns how to properly do laundry and iron clothing. The grant afforded funds to purchase laundry baskets, detergent, dryer sheets, ironing boards, irons, a folding table, and change for the coin-operated Laundromat in the 10 Overlook Road apartment building adjacent to Overlook Medical Center.

The program also took two community trips this month. They visited TD Bank in Summit to generalize their learning about financial literacy and money management. They also returned to World of Happiness Ballroom Dancing.

Just before the holiday break, the program held a ceremony at Overlook to recognize their completion of the first internship rotation. As part of the ceremony, the interns received their official Project SEARCH-Overlook Medical Center polo shirts.

Project SEARCH held two open house events in the month of December. The first was for local school districts to learn more about the program. The second was for prospective students and their families. There will be a second round of open house events in February.

Seven out of the nine interns who graduated from the Project SEARCH-OMC program this past June are now competitively employed. The other two are actively job-seeking and we hope to have them employed in the coming months. Applications for the 2020-2021 program are now available.

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). UCESC is currently receiving referrals from the Union County DVRS office to provide Job and Career Exploration Services to students from school districts across Union County -- at no additional charge. 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, students are eligible to participate 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.

For more information, district personnel should contact their local DVRS representative.

TRANSPORTATION:

The estimate of total yearly transportation costs was mailed to all participating districts on December 19, 2018. This report is needed by the districts for budget planning and preparation and is mailed every few months. Costs fluctuate due to student additions and deletions and interim reports give participating districts a more accurate "snapshot" of their total annual costs. A similar report is also prepared for the contractors who work for the Commission.

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

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

TECHNOLOGY:

We have shifted from the original backup infrastructure to a newer more secure configuration.

The DFS project is completed and the environment continues to be more reliable and stable.

The IT staff are working to reduce latency in the virtual environment hardware. This will improve overall network performance.

We have phased out all outdated servers and replaced with up to date operating systems.

The new antivirus infrastructure is in place and synchronizing with the network.

The Technology Department is working to improve the new copier workflow to make it easier for some staff to manage.

We have completed a backup and disaster recovery plan and are continuing to improve it to reduce potential downtime.

cc: Eric Larson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary