



Union County Educational Services Commission

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Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors February 5, 2020

WESTLAKE:

Enrollment as of January 20, 2020 Actual: 65 Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 2	Referrals: 0 Intakes Scheduled: 0 Accepted: 0
Fire Drills: January 7, 2020	Emergency Drills: Shelter in Place
Suspensions: 0	January 15, 2020

During our CBI trips most students have been exposed to the community by going to ShopRite, Clark Commons, Bowling and Target. Students have made some purchases for the classroom or staff members. Some classes have expressed that Clark Commons is a difficult place to bring our students so we are beginning to substitute with opportunities to go to Barnes and Nobles. Students continue to go swimming at the YMCA in Scotch Plains/Fanwood on a rotating basis and really enjoy going.

DLM Testing is coming up in the next few months. Mr. Peneno has been hard at work identifying those students that will be testing, training teachers and assembling materials needed in order for things to run smoothly. He also has ensured that the iPads for testing are in working condition and will be functional once testing begins.

Zones of Regulation

Students are using Social Emotional Learning groups to identify different feelings in the “Zones” curriculum and how to problem solve when experiencing these different emotions. Students practice through video models and group discussions. Students create tool kits for how to appropriately have their needs met when feeling these emotions. The Zones of Regulation is being utilized across Westlake School with everyone using materials and the same language to teach students to identify and learn about their feelings.

Grants

Westlake was very fortunate to receive quite a few individual grants from the UCES Foundation. These grants will provide classroom teachers and students additional resources in a variety of ways. Also funded was the school wide grant for the Behaviorists to utilize a data collection catalyst for tracking behavior data. We are currently writing a grant for the Westfield Service League and hope to gain additional resources for our school store.

Language Arts

Mrs. Fernandez - In Language Arts students are learning descriptive words and using them to describe common objects in their environment. Students continue to work on their specific programs which include, identifying community safety signs, utilizing the Edmark reading program, sight word recognition, and identifying emotions and actions. Mrs. Convery's class has been working in a new life skills reading program, "Practical Practice Reading". The program consists of seven categories of real life information sheets and corresponding comprehension questions. The information sheets are full-color depictions of items the students would encounter in their real life, such as a milk carton, a shipping label or a box of dog bones.

Math

In Math the students have been reviewing counting by fives. This is helping them count real coins using the touch money method. We are currently counting nickels, dimes and pennies. Each student has made great progress in counting various combinations of these three coins.

Science

In Mrs. Shaw's class, the students started a new unit of Physical Science of Liquids. Using hands-on activities, the students investigated the properties and behaviors of liquids and described them with their own language. Mrs. Fernandez's class is learning about Koalas and their unique habitats. Students study what is happening in Australia and the recent fires. They are creating community-based projects to raise awareness about the Koalas.

Food Science

During Food Preparation class the students have been preparing sandwiches and Paninis that they can prepare and make at home.

Social Studies

The importance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day was reviewed in Mrs. Pajewski's class. The students made hanging mobiles identifying what their dream would entail. Students in Mrs. Shaw's class continued working on the unit of Life in Plymouth Colony. The students learned about the pilgrim's family dynamics and their different responsibilities. The students discussed family roles based on gender, how it would have been different if roles were not based on gender and the use of gender to determine specific roles today. In Mrs. Roble's class, students are learning about Chinese New Year and this is the Year of the Rat. They learned that there are 12 animals in the Chinese Zodiac. Mr. Carten's class is discussing current events. Students have talked about the impeachment process and how the process works. How there are checks and balances in the government so that no one branch of the government can become more powerful than the other.

PE

Students are climbing the Rock Wall during Physical Education classes. With permission from parents, students will be able to participate in Rock Wall Climbing by practicing multiple repetitions in order to develop coordination, strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness. Students will enhance their knowledge of rock wall climbing by repeating the techniques and cues in order to utilize these skills in future activities as well as enhancing their problem-solving skills. Students will demonstrate appropriate behavior throughout the lesson by encouraging one another, modeling and instructing anyone that is struggling with climbing the rock wall. The students will also be working cooperatively in order to achieve self-confidence and maturity. The students will be introduced to climbing by playing games and challenging one another to step onto the wall, to climb across, and only use certain color holds. At the end

of each class, students will self-assess themselves by high-fiving exit signs as they each exit the gymnasium.

Health

In Health classes students are learning about first aid and to understand how and why it is important to take care of their bodies. Students will learn the many signs of being unhealthy and what to do in case they need assistance. The students are using educational websites and articles to help them learn the importance of seeing a health care provider.

Art

We started off the New Year back in art class with a mixed media collage. We watched how many cities around the world welcomed 2020 with fireworks. Students selected a city's skyline and colored it in. They used their cutting skills to cut out their cities and glued them onto the paper. Next, they were reminded of a newly introduced technique, printmaking. Students used cardboard tubes to print fireworks above their cities.

As part of a continuation on the study of the color wheel, students have been making paintings using "Warm" and "Cool" colors.

Students looked at and discussed the color wheel and were reminded of Primary and Secondary Colors. They were then introduced to another way to group related colors: Warm and Cool colors. Students also looked through translucent colored paddles to see the world around them in a new warm or cool color.

Students were also introduced to a variety of painting techniques. They each made at least three paintings over the course of three weeks. One Warm colored painting, one Cool colored painting, and one combination painting. Finally, students watched a brief video in order to review these basic color theories.

Vocational

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

Post Office/Print Shop: In the print shop students continue to work on various tasks. We have changed classes with Mrs. Convery and Mrs. Attelsey a few times per week for this marking period. Mrs. Convery's class has been independent in job choices and completing many jobs partially independent in the Print Shop. Students have been working on various kits, data entry, laminating, copying and delivery

Sweet Shoppe: The candy business had to clean up the entire Christmas molds and pack them away. The students took out all the Valentine's molds. Mrs. Palmer will be taking the Valentine pops to Candy Land Crafts to sell this weekend. The business also made pops for a six-year old birthday party. The Sweet Shop has been open for business and we are very busy every Tuesday morning with students working and socializing during Café time.

Jewelry In the jewelry vocational workshop, students continue to make patterns for necklaces and bracelets. Currently, students are working on products for Mother's Day and Valentine's Day sales.

Home Décor Shop: Students started producing wooden signs for the Overlook Hospital Gift Shop orders. The students were also introduced to making barn wood (Weathered and Reclaimed wood) by using two

different stains and two different chalk paints. They continue to make and sell signs to staff and community members.

Life Skills: Students have many opportunities to work on life skills. In the classrooms the students learn how to balance a checkbook and save money. The students also use the apartment to learn skills necessary for managing laundry, washing and drying dishes and other important activities of daily living skills. During Community Based Instruction the students learn how to navigate through stores, swim at the YMCA and participate in leisure skills at the bowling alley.

Therapies

Speech

This month, the speech-language therapists are planning a workshop for the paraprofessionals in February. In ADL groups, targeting expressive/ receptive and pragmatic language skills, students made toast, hot chocolate, and playdoh. The students in small speech-language groups engaged in interactive games and activities focusing on turn-taking, social interactions, following directions, and conversational skills. In individual sessions, the students continued to work on SGO's and IEP goals. The themes explored in therapy were winter, snow, and MLK Day. The therapists also contributed to the students' IEPs and attended IEP meetings.

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.

The 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 promotes self-assessment as the students track their own progress and watch as their numbers increase.

Some of the students have made notable progress this month towards their goals. K.A. continues to increase his endurance and speed while exercising on the treadmill. A.F. is showing a significant improvement in exercise tolerance and is now increasing his repertoire of leg strengthening exercises.

Three of our students continue to enjoy a weekly relaxing yoga group. They are all improving their body awareness, bilateral coordination, balance and flexibility in a very enjoyable session. It is fantastic to see their progress with various yoga poses.

Overall our students are progressing nicely with their PT goals and objectives.

Occupational Therapy

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

The therapists continue informally assess all OT students and develop goals and objectives for upcoming IEP's. The therapists 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. Additionally, the therapists are currently working together with Ms. Joanna Porchetta to help create a professional development presentation on Sensory Processing/Sensory Integration in the classroom setting. The goal of this presentation is to provide teachers with useful information regarding the sensory needs of our student

population and how teachers can specifically apply these strategies in their classrooms. This presentation will be given during our next professional development day on February 17th. Along with the speech therapists, we have developed the curriculum for the ADL Support Group.

This month the Life Skills classes which include Mrs. Pajewski, Mrs. Porchetta, Mrs. Attlesey and Mrs. Porchetta students focused on apartment skills, hygiene skills, and following a simple visual and written recipe for hot chocolate and toast. 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.

Social Work

Student caseloads are requiring more time dedicated to direct case management in order to meet the complex needs of our students. Families of graduates are also in need of support to help guide them through the Transition process at this time of year. In some cases, due to the aging out of students, familiar agency care managers must discontinue services and new adult tiered personnel are assigned. These changes are often stressful for both students and their families necessitating direct social work assistance to access and link new support personnel. Nurse IJ has been instrumental in her ability to collaborate interdepartmentally with our child psychiatrist and social worker to obtain vital information to better serve our students.

A grant was funded to supplement the "Zones of Regulation" curriculum which was piloted during ESY and has appeared to be helpful to many students in understanding their own emotions and those of others.

The counseling coverage for Mr. Balassone during his leave has been extremely helpful as Ms. K has been able to step into the role and build a nice rapport with the students. Certain aspects of cases must still be attended to by staff familiar with cases involving collateral agencies and CSTs needing information.

Individual and group counseling sessions have been ongoing along with Pre-planning and IEP meetings. Joint phone conversations between the social worker, teacher and parent has been effective to offer additional information from a classroom perspective when discussing social, emotional and behavioral issues in cases where outside supports are needed.

Behaviorist

The Westlake's Registered Behavior Technician continues to participate in supervision under the guidance of Westlake's two BCBA's on a regular basis. She 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, and participates in classroom consultation alongside the behaviorists..

The behaviorists continued to hold biweekly meetings with all teachers. This month, behaviorists are included in the meetings that the administrators hold individually with teachers. These interdisciplinary meetings have allowed the behaviorists to receive direct feedback from the teachers regarding specific ways in which support or assistance is needed, while administrators are weighing in on student issues and providing suggestions. 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 the next meeting. The behaviorists share meeting notes with the teacher and administrators.

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, attended IEP meetings and participated in Administrator/behaviorist meetings this month. Strategies have also been reviewed and revised for a challenging student at this time, including training on the BIP for her new 1:1 paraprofessional. In class support modeling and a team/debriefing meeting have also been scheduled and conducted with both classroom teacher, administrators, and therapists. Behaviorist DS has also been involved in meetings for this student with consulting psychiatrist Dr. Amy, parents, and the case manager.

IEP meetings continue this month, and behaviorist CG has conducted an FBA and written a BIP for a student who has an IEP shortly. The Behavior Intervention Plans and strategies are created in consultation with the classroom teacher and any other pertinent team staff members (e.g. OT, mobility specialist), and after direct student observation by the behaviorist as well as assessment regarding the function of the behavior which the teacher completes at the request of the behaviorist.

There continue to be behavioral issues within the school that have prevented students from participating in CBI trips this month as well as behavioral issues which have resulted in several students working individually in the behaviorist's office or in the Zen Den with staff including the behaviorist(s) at various times. The Zen Den continues to be a valuable tool 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.

The behaviorists have also participated in meetings this month with the consulting Psychiatrist, Dr. Amy. During these meetings, the behaviorists provided behavioral data, current strategies and observational notes to Dr. Amy and the team in order to ensure the best possible strategies are utilized for student safety and academic achievement.

SLE/Job Academy Work Program

Student E.W. began his second SLE assignment on Wednesday mornings at ShopRite. He is assigned to the slot vacated by a student who moved out of district.

Individual Student Goals

Job Academy Program Goals require students to 1) work toward achieving *consistent satisfactory performance* in each of the employability skills categories and 2) demonstrate an ability to self-regulate their behavior in the workplace.

In addition to Job Academy Program goals, students also have individual goals based on their weekly performance progress reports. Returning from Winter Recess, students began reviewing their

“individual goals” and are participating in performance discussions with the SLE Supervising Teacher and their Job Skills Coaches.

SLE Student Worksite Evaluations

In compliance with the mandated SLE worksite evaluations, students must have discussions with their job coaches/worksite mentors regarding the quality of their SLE experience. To facilitate these discussions, Mrs. Goodson created a form, using the discussion prompts suggested on the NJ State Worksite Evaluation form. This tool is used to guide discussions with our students and to have a record of what was discussed for future student review and reflection.

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 January 2020 LMA Actual: 47 LMA District: Non-NP: 43 NP Specialty at LMA: 4 Changes: <u>0</u> Entered: <u>2</u> (Non-NP) <u>0</u> NP Pending: <u>0</u> Exited: <u>1</u> (Non-NP) <u>0</u> (NP)</p> <p>Trinitas Hospital : Bedside Instruction: 24 (inpatient) Day Program: 39 Approved-Agreement signed: 43 Classified: 19 Regular Ed: 24</p>	<p>Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: 1 January Fire Drill on 1/7/20</p> <p>Security Drills: 1 1/15/20 - Shelter in Place</p> <p>Suspension out of school: 9 In School Suspension: 0 HIB: 0</p> <p>Referrals in January: 12 Intakes Scheduled: 11 Completed: 11 Acceptance Letter Sent: 3 Sending District Accepted LMA placement: 2 Placement Pending : 8</p>
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Administration

We find ourselves busy in January. Our LMA students have started reading daily announcements which include the pledge of allegiance, a quote of the day and educational fun facts. Morning announcements is a new endeavor and we have Ms. Finver to thank for all of her hard work that she has put into getting our students ready to read the announcements. Ms. Finver has incorporated the morning announcements into her classroom curriculum. In doing so our students are given the opportunity to practice and hone their public speaking skills.

In addition to the morning meetings our students have been actively participating in our school trips.

During the first week in January our students took a trip to Howling Woods; where they were able to observe wild Wolves and learn about their history as well ask questions about their natural habitats.

During the second week of January our students participated in expeditionary learning as they visited the Liberty Science center. The Liberty Science Center is located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson near the Statue of Liberty. The Science Center houses 12 museum exhibition halls, a live animal collection with 110 species, giant aquariums, a 3D theater, live simulcast surgeries, hurricane- and tornado-force wind simulators, K-12 classrooms and labs, teacher-development programs, and the Western Hemisphere's biggest planetarium, the Jennifer Chalsty Planetarium and the Giant Dome Theater. Our students thoroughly enjoyed themselves and our teachers appreciated the ability to make the connection between classroom teaching and real life.

During the third week in January our students visited Raritan Valley Community College where they were able to participate in a fun learning experience that focused on observing the skies. Raritan Valley Community College has a space observatory that consists of three buildings: a domed observatory, a roll-off-roof observatory, and a utility building. The domed observatory houses a 16" Meade telescope. The telescope sits on top of a pier whose foundation extends two dozen feet into the ground. At the surface, the floor by the pier is slightly separated from the surrounding floor of the observatory to keep the telescope as steady as possible. The roll-off-roof observatory has a 14" Celestron telescope purchased by the Somerset County 4-H. In addition, the Planetarium has other portable telescopes in a variety of sizes that can be brought out for observing events. These include a 6" Dobsonian, 8" Dobsonians, 8" Schmidt-Cassegrains, a Coronado 90 H-alpha telescope for observing the Sun, and several Sunspotters, also for making solar observations. As always our students enjoyed this opportunity to learn about the cosmos and our teachers enjoyed being able to make a connection between the classroom experience and a real world experience.

Finally during the last week of January, our students will be visiting the NJ state theatre. The State Theatre is a nonprofit theater, located in New Brunswick, New Jersey. It has seating for 1,850 people. Designed by architect Thomas W. Lamb in 1921, it is one of the oldest theaters in the State of New Jersey. Our students will be provided an opportunity to enrich their lives and add to their personal experiences by being able to visit a theatre that presents the finest national and international performing artists. Our students will take part in arts education programs that are designed to inform and hopefully build future audiences that will participate in the performing arts.

Academics

Middle School

This month, students have been working on mastering essentials in math. Students have been exploring their math skills for at least 20 minutes per day with the hope of gaining success. They have been showing improvement in completing their one minute speed drills and are applauding themselves for their efforts. We will continue to work on improving their times and completing the assignments within the class period.

In science classes, we have been working on Newsela scientific articles. They have been getting accustomed to scientific language and science in our everyday life. We have been having deep discussions about current events such as the Australian fire and its effects on the world at large. We have also been working on textual understanding and using context clues to build a clearer and more developed idea of what science means beyond a classroom.

In Social Studies, we have been working on Active Citizenship and the rights and duties that come along with active citizenship within the classroom, school, and local community. The students have been

introduced to civic responsibilities at the community and state level as well as persuasive writing about the rights and duties regarding civic responsibility on the community level.

In English Language Arts and Writing, the students explored narrative texts and worked specifically with 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. The students participated in an assessment on figurative language and finding the meaning of figurative language examples within the narrative text. The students completed a persuasive writing assignment using an organized structure with a theme while citing accurate and relevant evidence to support their claims.

High School

English Language Arts & Literacy

Students have begun Narrative reading and writing Unit II. We began by identifying the important parts of story elements through the use of a story graph. We then read a mystery, “Sonata for Harp and Bicycle” by Joan Aiken, where students shared if *Truth could be Changed* as they notated varied narrative elements comparing narrative writing aspects to argumentative writing. We began focusing on theme responding with concise writings by using the RACER strategy. Additionally, we began looking at the author's purpose in fiction and have been analyzing themes in written text, podcasts, and media texts. Students are working to write their own narratives starting with creating a character as we look at the various aspects of characterization.

Social Studies

Living history has certainly been a clear description of active and meaningful conversations that have filled time in Social Studies. The Middle East situation brought great fear about a new war. We jumped back in time and briefly looked at the Cuban Missile Crisis; another time when it seemed the world could be on the brink of war. Our students have not felt this level of fear before and it certainly opened lines of conversation and discussion. The Impeachment process of President Trump has also brought out many strong feelings and has clarified for many of our students the role of our Congress in managing our nation and the importance of each citizen.

In our routine studies, we find World History students looking at the government in South America and the role that revolutions have played in the development of their countries. Students in 20th Century Civil Liberties have studied the Civil Rights Movement of the US and will soon compare it to other struggles in our world.

US History I students continue their look at the Civil War. Careful review of the battles and leadership will predict the outcome of the war and the course for the nation. The study of WW I finds the US History II students reviewing the causes, impact, and outcomes for the world as a result of the ‘Great War.’

Science

The new year finds us busy in Science class. Forensics students are learning about using insects to solve crimes. It is decidedly low-tech and gross, but fascinating. In Biology, we are exploring carbs, lipids and proteins, which offers a great opportunity to snack on all of them while understanding what they do in our bodies. Our Environmental students are exploring things that pollute the water and will wrap up the unit by creating a giant polluted water feature and then strategizing how to clean it up. Chemistry students are

learning atomic structure, which always means using M&Ms to represent protons, neutrons and electrons. In December, we did a virtual field trip with Sea Turtle, Inc., a group out of South Padre Island, Tx. We went live with a guide who discussed the impact of water pollution on sea turtles and we got to take a live peek at some of the turtles they have rescued. Later this week, we are headed to the Raritan Valley Community College planetarium to see a show on Black Holes with an added show about light pollution.

Mathematics

For the month of January students taking Algebra classes have been getting interactive lessons with assistive technology. Students have been learning about graphing linear and quadratic equations and functions, and have been learning how to work with the TI-84 graphing calculator to check their work, and to perform multiple functions such as tracking intercepts, and finding axis and vertex of different graphs. Students were also able to watch instruction via the Smartboard, and model different problems on the Smartboard to help instruct peers.

Students taking Geometry learned about how to ‘transform’ different points and shapes over the coordinate plane system. They learned how to rotate, reflect and slide various points and shapes, along with finding mathematical patterns to manipulate the ordered pairs. This content had plenty of interactive activities, including using the floor as a coordinate plane system and students demonstrated where a rotated would be. They also chose different logos, and reflected them using art light boxes to show different reflections over different lines. Finally, students demonstrated knowledge of slides by creating their own instructions of getting to point A to point B on a street map that was overlayed on the coordinate plane system.

Spanish

This month students are finishing the unit Daily life: “*La Vida escolar* ” in Spanish class. Students took a summative assessment to measure what students have learned at the end of the unit to enhance teaching and student learning. In addition, students worked on different projects in which they have to create a well-organized research project about “*Las Culturas Hispanas y la Escuela*” in the school/ home in order to describe their favorite culture in Spanish and then illustrate each school. Projects are posted on the bulletin board outside the Spanish room. Students are able to engage in conversations, express feelings and emotions, exchanged opinions and compared and contrasted different schools from the Spanish-speaking countries and the United States. The student co-op learning experience with students in Mrs. Convery’s and Mr. Carten’s classes at Westlake every Monday and Friday has been beneficial for all the students. After reading different stories the students from both classes enjoy discussions about the events and characters in the book. This activity creates a wonderful opportunity for social interaction and disability awareness.

Physical Education and Health

January was a busy month for the students at LMA in Health and Physical Education. We started the new year off with a week-long Fitness Unit by partaking in miscellaneous workouts such as yoga, step aerobics, and mindful meditation.

We are now participating in the Badminton Unit for the remainder of the month. Badminton is an extremely popular activity for the students at LMA and at the end of the unit students will be participating in the 4th Annual LMA Badminton Tournament. Last year’s tournament was a great success and we hope to continue the tradition for this year.

In Health class, students are learning about the hottest topic right now: Vaping and E-Cigarettes. We began the unit learning about the adolescent brain and how easily an addiction can form. Now we are covering the addiction of nicotine and then moving on to the dangers of Vaping and E-Cigarettes.

LMA Clinical Department

We welcomed the students back to the new year, 2020 and discussed goals for the second half of the school year. Following this each life skills group targeted the topic of conflict resolution skills. We began by engaging the students in discussions of how they define a conflict, with varied answers and viewpoints on this topic. After defining what conflict means to them the groups were able to share their experiences of how they have resolved conflicts within their lives. Some students shared that they were very open to conflict resolution, feeling like it was helpful and productive, whereas others acknowledged that they avoid it completely. Each group was presented with multiple case scenarios involving a certain dilemma that needed to be solved. The students were invited to explain their point of view on how they would handle it, leading to some healthy group discussions among students demonstrating their use of appropriate social skills.

Trinitas

Social Studies lessons focused on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and why we honor him on the third Monday in January. Younger students read picture books about his life. A Scholastic News article, "My Grandpa Changed America," interviewed Yolanda Renee King, a fifth-grader, who is giving speeches on issues she cares about. She spoke at a march about stopping gun violence. She also wants to help the homeless and protect the environment. Yolanda believes kids can make a difference. Students read excerpts from Dr. King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech, answered the critical thinking questions that followed, analyzed primary sources, and read timelines. They reviewed pictures of Dr. King giving a speech at a high school in Newark in 1968, and a mural dedicated to him at the school named for him.

NewPoint Specialty

Enrollment as of 01-27: 14 residents at NPS

Students attending LMA-4

Students are engaged in all NJCCS according to their IEP at New Point. This month we focused on Global Warming and effects on the land, oceans, and atmosphere. Current Events are completed weekly as they relate to students or their interests. In Math, students are working on integers and introducing consumer math skills. In US & World History, the students are covering the Holocaust and the events that took place at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The focus on this year's theme for Black History Month, "African Americans and the Vote", recognizes the struggle for voting rights among both black men and women throughout American history. Additionally, each student completed a report they presented on an important historical figure.

The students will be going on January 28th to MOPAC (Morristown) to see Mayhem Poets. The students have been working on writing poetry to music in class and the show will reinforce their effort. On January 15th and 29th many of the students went with Ms. Mary to the Hillside Food Bank to volunteer by making sandwiches and boxing up food that helps feed families in NJ.

CROSSROADS:

Enrollment as of January 23, 2020 Actual: 46 Changes: 1 Entered: 1 Exited: 0	Referrals: 3 Intakes Scheduled: 2 Accepted: 1
Fire Drills: 1/27/20	Emergency Drills: 1/28/20

Crossroads School Highlights/Accomplishments

The Crossroads School staff, students and parents returned from our Holiday Break feeling rested and ready to begin the New Year with hard work, dedication and passion for our collaborative, daily educational process!

Our classrooms celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day in a multitude of ways. Several classes used illustrations to demonstrate Dr. King's message of unity, including our middle school students who made "boxes of crayons," depicting the traits of kindness, friendliness and being nice to others. These illustrations are proudly displayed in the hallways of the Crossroads School. In addition, Crossroads Art Teacher, Mrs. Emily Caputo, and Crossroads Paraprofessionals, Mr. Raheem Anthony and Mrs. Lacey Sawyer, created a "diversity bulletin board," upstairs at the Commission Offices. Our staff worked closely with our students while engaging them and assisting in creating this amazing art work.

Crossroads students continue to practice skills within the surrounding communities and are afforded opportunities to experience real life situations on our community-based field trips. Trips to Clark Commons, the Clark Library, Westlake School and the Westfield Recycling Center all took place in the month of January. We are proud to say that every student at the Crossroads School participated in at least one community-based field trip during the month of January.

Our professional learning communities consistently met throughout the month of January with a primary objective of creating a meaningful and authentic February professional development day for our staff. Our speech therapy department will be presenting to our paraprofessionals on the topic of functional communication. Our occupational therapists will provide training to our certified staff on a writing curriculum titled, "Handwriting Without Tears," and our classroom teachers will continue their training in our new and improved reading curriculum, "SRA Reading Mastery."

Our Pre-IEP meetings continue to be invaluable for our staff to collaborate prior to our scheduled IEP meetings. This time allows the team to remain united and establish the positive interactions that the Administrative Team insists takes place during our meetings. IEP meetings are a time in which the Crossroads School community can share the positive interactions with our students and produce evidence of growth to the parents of our children and our Case Managers. Fostering a positive and professional working relationship with sending district personnel is essential to the overall growth of our program.

Allison Gebler's Elementary Classroom

In Allison Gebler's class, Room 102, the thematic unit focused on reviewing what our winter weather should look like, even though it has been so warm outside. Students practiced social skills they learned in the fall in order to model for our new student, Levi. We have all been having lots of fun reviewing classroom routines, creating arts and crafts projects, and facilitating individual skill development of functional daily life routines.

In the area of English Language Arts, students completed hand-crafted holiday cards for their families and friends. Each student demonstrated choice-making skills by deciding the materials to use from an array of visual options. Review of the letters and numbers were done during holiday songs, like 5 Little Penguins Jumping on the Bed. Students sang, watched videos, and danced during a variety of groups (OT Integration Group, Social Skills, and Circle Time).

In the area of Math students completed multiple activities involving snowmen, which focused on size sequencing and counting skills. Students were also introduced to new fine motor exercises in their daily Activity Schedule Bins: sorting shape buttons, sorting a variety of objects by color and demonstrating 1:1 correspondence skills by matching identical images.

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

Students progressed in their individualized goals: Niall has advanced in his PECS training program and now hands to a communication partner his entire sentence strip to make requests. Sebastian is now completely independent in his tooth brushing routine. Jianna has begun to request items, with support, using Proloquo. Dilan is gaining some independence in his toilet training routine (using a visual schedule and support from his aide).

The best part of this month was our new friend Levi joining us!

Room 102's Star Student, Jianna, is participating nicely in guided use of Proloquo. She is scanning her choices and selecting different food items she would like to request.

This month's field trips included Bowling and Clark Gym. Both trips were incredibly successful and all of the students participate. While bowling, students practiced OT skills, with the support of Miss Dina. They used hand-eye coordination, followed single step directions, worked on social skills like turn taking and remaining with adults while in the community.

Our class will continue to work on returning to the level of classroom rules and routines compliance students had reached prior to winter break.

Room 102 is looking forward to Football Gear Day, and the 100th day of School next month.

In Consuelo Alzate's Pre-School Disabled Classroom

The Crossroads Pre-School Disabled Classroom accepted our seventh student into our program. Five sending districts are now represented in our Pre-School Program. Our youngest learners continue to demonstrate consistent progress in all areas of their educational, social and emotional domains. We have had two new students enter our program in the last three months. Matthew M. continues to improve his communication skills as he is currently using full sentences to express his wants and needs.

Our Crossroads staff continues to foster a strong work-home relationship as our faculty strives to improve the toileting of multiple students. Student Jose S. and Ezequiel S. have been practicing communicating their toileting needs through their augmentative communication devices. Due to small successes, countless

practice opportunities and the tremendous rapport between our staff and the parents, the students are now officially toilet trained!

In Stephen Goham's Classroom

This month's theme focused on Martin Luther King, discussing equality, rights, and friendship. Students observed, explored, and identified others' similarities and differences, and practiced the importance of social skills with their friends. Another thematic unit emphasized the states of matter. The students' identified and observed water in a solid, liquid, and gaseous state. Vocabulary associated with these concepts included, freezing point, boiling point, melting point, heating, cooling, temperature, thermometer, etc., as well as mathematic concepts such as degrees.

Academic areas of instruction included reading (sight word recognition) and comprehension. Students continuously review prepositions, actions and verbs, story sequencing, and word/objects associations. In the area of VBMAPP, students participate in manding (requesting items/object), tacting (labeling people, actions, and objects), visual perception (sorting categories and/or matching associations) and building 3D structures.

Review and reinforcement of math concepts included identifying touchpoints, one-to-one correspondence, addition/subtraction, time, and money skills.

In Lindsay DeNigris' Classroom

This month we are working on several different thematic units. When we came back from winter break, the students completed a writing sample about what they did over break. While some students wrote their responses, others selected pictures to help communicate what they did, who they saw, and what they ate over the break. We also read an adapted book about New Years. After each page, a student was asked to select the matching picture and place it on the page. We did a wonderful craft to go along with the book that included the students choosing their own goals for the new year.

In January, we focused on the change in weather now that we're in winter. The students have been learning about and discussing all the different things you can do in the winter and the clothing needed to keep warm. The students completed a writing prompt about what they like to do in the winter and then drew a picture of them doing the activity. We also read *Sneezy the Snowman* which was a big hit. The book taught the students things that are hot versus cold as Sneezy either melted or stayed "just right" throughout the story.

This week we are starting our arctic animals theme. We will be discussing many different arctic animals through our adapted book and then will focus on penguins. We will explore the different body parts of a penguin, their life cycle, and general characteristics. Students will create a penguin craft to expand on their fine motor skills while they rip paper and will complete a writing prompt about penguins.

Additionally, the students will be learning about Martin Luther King Day. This will provide an opportunity to talk about how we can positively interact with our friends. Students have been working on sharing, playing with peers, and independent play skills throughout the school year.

In Aliza Feurestein's Physical Therapy Sessions

Currently we have one physical therapist working two full days a week at Crossroads School. There are 12 students receiving individual physical therapy (PT) services with a total of 15 individual treatment spots, one PT group and three PT consultations. This month a new student in our school was observed per teacher's request to determine if a formal PT evaluation is needed.

Our students are showing progress towards their PT goals and objectives as seen in this month's progress reporting. S.P. has shown nice progress with stair negotiation this month and is demonstrating a more age appropriate gait pattern on the stairs with less verbal cues. J.H. is showing better participation in PT sessions which is translating to improvements in areas such as the balance beam and jumping on the trampoline. G.S. and O.E. are enjoying PT push-in during their PE class which allows for more functional follow through of their goals.

Occupational Therapy

The month of January has been a very busy month. The OT department continued to host Laura, an OT intern from Quinnipiac University through her internship completion date of January 10th. Laura presented to the OT department a project based on a self-regulation program called The Zones of Regulation. She replicated the Zones of Regulation and created an interactive wall display for students to use to identify their emotional well being. Staff and students then pick activities to assist in getting back to the "Green" zone (regulated).

Final data collection for the therapy SGOs is now taking place. We added 3 new students to our OT caseloads and continue to monitor and adjust the students' sensory diets. Pre-School Disabled student Svea H. has joined the Crossroads Family earlier this month and is benefiting tremendously from her occupational therapy sessions.

The Occupational Therapists are actively planning and preparing an in-service on "Handwriting Without Tears" to present to the classroom teachers on February 7, 2020 during the professional development day. "Handwriting Without Tears," is an English Language Arts curriculum which assists staff and students with the writing and overall formation of letters and words. Crossroads administration is providing this professional development opportunity based on feedback from our staff requesting additional trainings.

Speech Department

The Crossroads School Speech department is continuing to provide professional development opportunities to our school community through the continued reinforcement of AAC core boards use across all school settings (e.g. classrooms, structured therapy sessions, and in the community)! Collaborative consultation times with classroom teachers and other certified staff provide invaluable opportunities to discuss functional communication strategies and techniques.

The first year Crossroads Speech Therapist, Catherine Serzan continues to thoroughly enjoy her Crossroads experience, diligently working with our students and parents in a plethora of meaningful ways. Speech Therapist, Jessica Pinzon continues to serve on the Scip Committee and has been instrumental in leading our school staff assisting the planning and preparation of our professional development days. Hope Weinstein continues to expose our students to Makerspace opportunities that are thoroughly enjoyed by our students. Elementary student Dilan B. continues to display tremendous progress expressing himself appropriately to his peers, parents and classroom staff.

HILLCREST SOUTH:

Enrollment as of 1/27/20 Actual: 98 Changes: Entered: 15 Exited: 8. 3 GED/ Work, 1 Peer Assault, 2 Staff Assault, 1 Moved, 1 Attendance	Intakes Pending General Ed.: 9 Intakes Pending Sp. Ed.: 1
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Ms. Gronert continued to monitor the credit retrieval process for all students, especially seniors to ensure their track to graduation. The guidance counselor has worked alongside Mr. Savoia to distribute the student’s PowerSchool username and passwords during their Success Seminar classes. A letter was mailed home to parents/guardians as well indicating their log in to their child’s PowerSchool account. Mr. Savoia and Ms. Gronert handed out letters to each student and thoroughly explained how to access their grades and navigate through PowerSchool. Ms. Gronert facilitated the Union County College Math Accuplacer where potential graduates completed the assessment to meet graduation requirements and prepare for their post-secondary goals. Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) would like to congratulate senior student, Axel B., who was accepted at Union County College in the Sports Management program.

The Tuesday School Spirit Day continued to be a success. Pajamas Day has always been a fan favorite. This incentive coincides with The Westlake Cafe as an incentive to participate in school spirit and help students stay focused on their academic programs.

Ms. Gilchrist, the social worker, attended the monthly DCF/HIB meeting for involved students. She has completed the pre-testing process. Additionally, she identified new students to participate in the grant. Ms. Gilchrist continued to confidentially meet with students to ascertain their clinical needs in terms of individual and group counseling. Students were randomly selected according to their SDPs and needs for either individuals and small groups were identified. This has been noted on the Attendance Matters!/ Grades Matters tracker that she updates daily.

The social worker continued to track the seniors and undergraduates who have been attempting to graduate in their cohort year. Ms. Gilchrist continued to modify and organize the Credit Retrieval Lunch Program. This afforded the opportunity for all students to meet their graduation requirements. The social worker supervised the student schedules as well as the teacher rotation schedule. Participation has been mandatory for all students expecting to graduate in 2020. Modified plans were constructed with the guidance counselor and families have been notified. Lastly, on January 20th the reschedule first marking period incentive trip successfully took 30 students to the movies. Students continued to vote the movies as their incentive and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

On January 14th, the Social Worker and the Principal chose ten of HAS’s top students to attend a private tour of the New Jersey Statehouse where they interacted with notable Senators Beach, Sweeney, and Rice. The was a great experience for the students who learned the inner workings of our government.

January was a busy month for the HAS Community Service program (HASCSP). HAS seniors were hard at work satisfying their required community service hours through working on the Freerice program and many other community outreach activities. Several students within the HASCSP expressed interest in helping the children of Africa who have been greatly affected by issues facing that country, such as hunger and poor education. As a result, these students hosted a *Cocoa for the Congo* fundraiser to benefit the Aid

for Africa Foundation. HAS shares in the world's sorrow over Australia's devastating bushfires. To help in some small way, students hosted a *Noodles for a Purpose* fundraiser to benefit the World Wildlife Fund and their efforts to aid the animals of Australia. We would like to thank everyone who supported these worthy causes. The HASCSP honored the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through hosting its annual MLK Week of Service. During the week, Dr. King's most famous quotes were read that allowed students to reflect on its significance in their lives today. Students continued to reflect on Dr. King's commitment to serving others by hosting a healthy food drive to benefit the Community Food Bank of NJ. Inspired by Dr. King's courage, students created the HAS Courage to Dream bulletin board currently on display as well on HAS's Instagram page. We invite you all to stop by and read our student's hopes and dreams for the future.

Mr. Reichman's Chemistry students have been learning about how quantum numbers track the location and shape of electron waves in atoms, and have begun writing electron configurations, codes that specify those locations. In Forensics, Mr. Reichman's students learned about hair and fiber evidence and have continued their exploration of real life practices of forensic scientists using digital resources. HAS's Computer Science students continued to develop their own personal web pages using more advanced HTML codes and will soon start using CSS to bring their skills into the 21st century. Mr. Reichman's group of Service Learning students will be donating wintertime clothes and other necessities to homeless people in Elizabeth.

Ms. Arora's Forensic science students worked with microscopes and DNA analysis through virtual and hands-on labs. They know each and every part of Microscope and were able to utilize it successfully. The Biology students worked on level of organization and cell division. They watched numerous videos and animations to assist in providing information pertaining to how one's body builds up from cell to organ system to a complete organism. Ms. Arora's homeroom continued to receive the majority of the rewards for the weekly attendance incentive.

Ms. Wrzesinski's history classes demonstrated critical thinking and analytical skills through the evaluation of primary and secondary sources. Sources included artwork, primary and secondary texts, and audio/video elements. The U.S. History I students finished their 13 colonies unit and expanded upon it by learning about the Revolutionary War. Such topics included the Battle of Lexington and Concord, Battle of Bunker Hill, the First and Second Continental Congress, key leaders involved, the breakdown and analysis of the Declaration of Independence and finally students started their introduction to the Constitution. U.S. History II students concluded their Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance Unit. Students then moved to the Roaring 1920s where they learned about prohibition, consumerism, limits on immigration and nativism, an increase in hate groups towards immigrants, and the conflict in schools on whether it was right to teach evolutionism or not. Students then learned about the stock market crash of 1929 that led the American people into the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Modern World History students completed their African Imperialism section. Students learned about the Scramble for Africa where many European countries claimed parts of Africa for themselves since they wanted the natural resources there. Students then looked at the treatment of Africans from the Europeans and Europeans fighting Europeans in Africa for specific land and resources (gold and diamonds). Students finally moved to British imperialism in India and this is where they are currently.

In the new year, students in Mr. Deo's US II classes explored the Roaring 1920's with multiple case studies that enhanced their understanding of American culture. Students began the early stages of a study on the

Great Depression that followed the economic boom of the 1920s. Students also reviewed and prepared for their second computer administered unit exams. In Economics, students used an online stock tracker to acquire insider information on strong buy and sell stocks. Students calculated percentages of growth and decline of stocks and focused on companies specializing in technological advancement, particularly 5g companies.

Ms. Cherville's students began to wrap up the first semester and the end of the course. The non-Spanish learners worked on answering 50 questions in which they demonstrated they were able to communicate at a basic level in the target language. The class also worked on the last unit and demonstrated proficiency in comparing activities, people, animals, and things. They also identified healthy and unhealthy activities. They read a variety of texts and answered comprehension questions. Spanish speakers worked on improving their vocabulary. The students worked on learning 60 new words. The last two weeks of the semester, they worked on reporting news in the target language on the following categories: crime, sports, science, technology, fashion and politics.

In commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, Ms. Holden's students read and analyzed Dr. King's *I Have A Dream* speech. In conjunction with the above reading, students also viewed a video of Dr. King delivering his historical speech. Students then wrote their own *I Have A Dream* speech. Students especially enjoyed listening to and analyzing a rap version of Dr. King's famous speech. Additionally, students worked on increasing their skills and understanding of the elements of fiction

Once students returned from winter break, Ms. Cioffi's English classes began working on Unit 2 of the English curriculum. Unit 1 was focused on reading and analyzing nonfiction and informational texts and learning skills based on those texts. The focus during Unit 2 has now shifted towards analyzing fictional texts and the skills based on those texts. During the month of January, students in English classes reviewed plot elements, how to annotate a text, characterization and theme. Students have written explanatory responses analyzing both characterization and theme in their independent reading books and short passages and stories in class. The written responses asked for students to cite textual evidence to support claims and provide analysis of textual evidence to support their answers. Students have also learned how to incorporate quote integration and transitional words and phrases in their writing. Future plans for this class are for students to learn about point of view, different types of conflict, figurative language, tone, and word choice, and learn to write narrative pieces. This will prepare students for the English Department Common Assessments which will be administered after the completion of Unit 2 of the English Curriculum.

The vast majority of students have advanced on their weekly drills on fractions in Ms. Ferrari's math courses. 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 4 then were assessed on the following skills: solving inequalities using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division; solving multi-step inequalities, solving compound inequalities, solving absolute value equations; solving absolute value equations and absolute inequalities and graphing linear inequalities in two variables. The geometry students completed unit 4 and were assessed on triangles and angles; using angle measure of triangles; congruence and triangles; proving triangles congruence by SSS, SAS, ASA, and AAS; isosceles, equilateral, and right triangles; and triangle and the coordinate plane. The Math Strategies UCC Bootcamp students in Success Seminar III completed a great deal of prep work for their initial test on the Accuplacer. One student passed and others came close.

Mr. Sobieniak’s students in algebra II classes learned more properties of polynomials and polynomial functions. They also learned some properties of quadratic functions and how to factorize quadratics. Students in Probability and Statistics classes learned more about representation of data. They also learned about histograms, box and whiskers diagrams, scatterplots, correlation and outliers. Students investigated many real life applications problems. The students in Success Seminar/ Math Strategy class utilized Khan Academy to improve their algebraic skills.

Ms. Rubin, the nurse, has assisted with entry procedures, including bag searches. The nurse made absence calls daily. The nurse has been seeing an average of 15-18 students per day. The nurse continued to update health files daily with screenings for the current students and new students at HAS. For the new students, the nurse followed up on receiving A-45’s from the sending Academies and updating their health files as they arrived at HAS. The HAS nurse provided coverage at the Westlake school on January 2nd and January 3rd when we did not have a substitute. The nurse and Mr. Barone shared coverage of 7th period PE/Health classes. The nurse was part of the school store initiative and has created spreadsheets and updates for school store credit for the students with perfect attendance for each week of school. She shares the responsibility of shopping for school store stock with Ms. Ferrari and Ms. Wrzesinski. In health class, the students continued to learn about the components of a healthy relationship, which included communication and listening skills

The students in Mr. Barone’s Physical Education classes were introduced to a unit on Volleyball. Students first practiced some of the basic skills which include the forearm bump, set, underhand serve and overhand serve. In addition, students reviewed the rules of game play. After practicing the techniques, the students went on to play modified games. In Health, students continued their unit on effective communication. The students learned about “i messages” which helped students communicate their feelings without putting the blame on someone else. In addition, non-verbal communication and active listening were other topics discussed during class.

HILLCREST/NORTH:

<p>Enrollment as of: 1/24/20 Actual: 90 Changes: 4 dis-enrollments (2 attendance) 1 new students starting on 2/3/20</p>	<p>Referrals: work in progress Drills: Fire Drill: 1/3/20 Lockdown 1/3/20</p>
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We are excited to report that our hard work of completing Student Development Plans has allowed the school counselor and social worker to start the SDP group meetings. Every student in the building is part of a small group focusing on one of the four SEL goals that the student self-identified: stress management, emotional regulation, substance abuse awareness or conflict resolution. They will meet twice a month with the social worker or school counselor to work towards these goals. Additionally, our morning meetings have started and each morning a staff member meets with the social worker and principal to discuss the students for whom they advocate. We are following up with students as needed to ensure progress and student success.

This month, Ms. Gronert continued to monitor the credit retrieval process for all students, especially seniors to ensure their track to graduation. The guidance counselor has worked alongside Mr. Savoia to distribute the student's PowerSchool username and passwords during their Success Seminar class. A letter was mailed home to parents/guardians as well indicating their log into their child's PowerSchool account. Ms. Gronert also began facilitating her Conflict Resolution group in accordance to our Student Development Plan.

Pepe Santana from Music For All Season provided a music program on January 14, 2020. This music program was made available through the HEART grant from the Union County Freeholders. It was a huge success and the students thoroughly enjoyed his performance.

The topic of our advocate meeting this month was "Substance Abuse Awareness" and Sean Foley from Prevention Links came to school to speak to all students on substance use

The Probability & Statistics classes have transitioned from box and whiskers graphs to standard deviation to examine the dispersion of data. The box plots give a clear visual of the dispersion whereas calculating the standard deviation gives a defined value. Students have calculated the variance and standard deviation by using Google sheets. Even if they never calculate Standard Deviation in their future, they will surely encounter using Google sheets for keeping track of data. All the functions they are learning can be applied in almost any field they will encounter.

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

The Success Seminar class has been given their passwords to access PowerSchool. Now they can reflect on their grades and look for missed assignments on their own.

This class also commemorated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by watching the video of his "I Have a Dream" speech while creating a graph.

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

The New Year started with Success Seminar seniors preparing for their last month before the Union County College Practice Placement Exam with Mrs. Machado. Hillcrest Academy North has already begun to see improvements in their pre- and post- scores for the Accuplacer College Placement test as a result of implementing a Math Strategies course as part of the new Success Seminar Math Bootcamp curriculum.

In the month of January, Economics classes learned the concept of credit and completed exercises that helped answer the question "which credit card (if any) is right for me?" Each student developed their own set of qualifications for a credit card based on their own lifestyle and needs. They researched different

credit card offers from various banks and compared what was offered to what they were looking for. In the end, each student was able to evaluate whether the various offers fit their own present and future financial needs.

In Health class this month, the students began the unit on the required CPR/AED instruction for high school students. It's a requirement for graduation. The students also completed a unit on Basic First Aid. The students learned how to stop bleeding, responding to someone who is choking, and having a seizure and treating a burn. They also read an article on the dangers of drugs and alcohol and discussed it as a class. In PE, students continued to meet their fitness goals and learn the skills outlined in the lesson plans.

Students in English class are starting the Narrative Story Unit. They learned about the elements of a narrative. They read "The Chaser", annotated it, and found the plot points on a plot diagram. Currently they are reading *The Cat in the Hat* and are annotating to find the different characteristics of the cat, fish, and children. They will then make a character chart, and write a character analysis based on one character using the chart. One English class has been learning how to conduct a Socratic Literature Circle where they will read short stories, then dialogue, and reflect upon them. Their first story will be *The Cat in the Hat*.

In Creative Writing, students are starting each class answering creative questions. Students are focused on characterization for their short story. They are writing a story (based on a prompt) where they are working on an intense character development before starting their drafting to get a real sense of who their character is. Students are using previously learned skills of planning, drafting, revising, and editing to complete the narrative.

The month of January found Chemistry, Biology, and Forensic Science students continuing their quest to master their applicable Next Generation Science Standards. Chemistry students finished their exploration into the atom by learning about quantum numbers and how to determine the electron configurations of specific elements. Biology students finished their studies of the large biological molecules carbohydrates, proteins, and nucleic acids and their roles in living organisms. Forensic Science students learned how to analyze blood spatters and to take that analysis and determine the location and movement of a bleeding victim. 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 fire and the basics of arson analysis.

NONPUBLIC:

At the Nonpublic Department meeting three teachers presented three chapters from the book *Teach, Reflect, Learn* to their colleagues. The presentation included interactive activities that teachers could utilize in their classrooms to improve student learning.

IDEA funds were billed to districts for December. The Nonpublic Department continues to be in need of teaching staff to provide additional services funded by IDEA.

All textbook allocations have been expended. Security and Technology Programs continue to spend down allocations in all the nonpublic schools. The Title I Program continues to run in the schools which received funding.

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

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 January included:

In recognition of “Courage” as the character trait of the month, the students answered the essential question of “How do people show courage?” The students also gained an understanding that “Everyday Courage” doesn’t necessarily require one to be a hero.

Students were introduced to the *Mike’s Crush* Curriculum with the essential question of “How can one have safe and healthy relationships?” Students participated in pre-assessments to determine what they know about healthy relationships.

Students have been practicing their interview skills on a weekly basis. They had the opportunity to participate in their second Mock Interview event of the year which helps them to gain experience and practice answering some of the most common job interview questions.

The students in “Group Microsoft” have started the *Roommate Project* with the essential questions “What kind of expenses do roommates share and how do they divide the costs?” Students gained an understanding that it is important to have a financial agreement between roommates before you move in together.

Students are gaining an understanding of how Google Sheets helps one stay organized and keep track of data. They are learning how to use the various functions of Google Sheets.

Also this month students visited the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City to learn about the different careers and job opportunities within the museum operation. They also had a chance to hear how other employees applied and gained employment at LSC.

As part of their “REC Lasagna Business” students advertised, took orders, recorded orders, developed shopping lists, and shopped for the items to fulfill Lasagna orders.

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 Work Readiness Academy is projecting to graduate five students in June of 2020. This month our staff facilitated “Transition Planning Meetings” with these five students and their families. The goal of these “person-centered” meetings was to allow the students the opportunity to self-advocate for their personal preferences related to post-high school goals in the areas of employment, continued education & training, living and social & leisure activities.

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.

January marked the beginning of the second (of three) internship rotations for the students. Overlook departments hosting internships during the 2nd rotation include: Primary Care Practice, Materials Management, Food Services, Emergency Department, Overlook Foundation, ISS, Patient Transport, and Patient Mobility.

We are excited to announce that one of our current interns (from Westfield Public Schools) has accepted an offer to be hired as a Patient Transporter at Overlook.

In the classroom the interns spent most of January working on employability skills and job search and interviewing strategies.

The students learned:

First impressions are always important, and never more so than on the work-front. The reality is - and will always be - that people make an assumption of you within the first few seconds you meet. This can include everything from the way you dress, to how you speak and your general attitude. At work, the first impression can not only impact short-term perceptions of you, but your long-term reputation and career success.

Integrity in the workplace comes in many forms, but above all refers to having upstanding character traits and work ethics including honesty and dependability.

In order to plan for a person's future, we must have an in-depth understanding of who they are. Creating a person-centered brochure will allow students to highlight their strengths, likes and dislikes, communication styles, areas in which they need support and their vision for the future.

Special events this month at Project SEARCH included: Chair Yoga, Self-Advocacy Project lesson on Self-Confidence, Ballroom dancing at World of Happiness in Summit, NJ.

Project SEARCH will be hosting a second round of open house events for prospective students and families 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 three 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 contract payments will be distributed to the bus companies holding contracts with the Commission on February 7, 2020. It will be included with their paychecks. This is a report similar to the one distributed to the participating districts and serves the same purpose for the bus companies.

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

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

Due to the continued high volume of late applications and changes in out of district placements still being received by the transportation department, we will be having a bid opening on January 29, 2020. Nineteen routes will be going to bid.

TECHNOLOGY:

The Technology Department is exploring new phone systems to upgrade our services. Considering the problems with our current phone service provider, we are only considering options that offer the most redundancy. Techspo will be an excellent opportunity to learn about cutting-edge technologies and make connections with new vendors.

After an extremely beneficial meeting at the Morris-Union Jointure Commission, we held a department meeting to sort through the multiple improvements that the hosts presented. We are creating road maps to several new projects that will improve the security and stability of our technology infrastructure.

We are working to improve security every day. This is not only referring to improving infrastructure security but also to improving our staff’s knowledge of cybersecurity. We are safest working as a team to protect our network from ransomware and other attacks.

cc: Eric Larson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary