



Union County Educational Services Commission

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Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Directors September 2, 2020

CROSSROADS SCHOOL:

Enrollment as of August 13, 2020
Actual: 48
Changes- Entered: 0 Exited: 0
Fire Drills: Distance Learning

Referrals: 2
Intakes Scheduled: 2
Accepted: 2
Emergency Drills: Distance Learning

Accomplishments:

Crossroads School Extended School Year was in session from July 1 through August 12, 2020. This has been the fifth consecutive year that the school embarked on a six-week extended school year program. Crossroads administration and staff actively participated in our inaugural virtual distance learning plan throughout our extended school year program. Forty-eight students actively participated during classroom instruction, therapeutic sessions, social skill opportunities and one on one sessions with classroom paraprofessionals. Although our program was a virtual distance learning platform, our students and parents were engaged throughout the Summer!

Crossroads Staff supported our students and parents on a daily basis. Social stories, thematic units and group lessons were created and implemented by our teachers, therapists, support staff and paraprofessionals. Crossroads Administration communicated with parents on a weekly basis with updates, program highlights and reopening plan information. Our Crossroads Pandemic Response Committee met twice during our extended school year program to discuss New Jersey Department of Education mandates as well as Union County Educational Services Commission reopening plan. Due to the national pandemic, community -based field trips were unable to occur to ensure student and staff safety. Many of the extra-curricular activities that normally took place during our live in- person instruction was unfortunately unable to take place. Despite limitations outside of our control, the Crossroads Staff did an outstanding job in supporting our students, parents and sending district personnel.

HILLCREST ACADEMY NORTH:

Enrollment as of: 8/14//2020

Actual: 51

Changes: 34 graduates!

Referrals: 8 pending referrals.

Drills: Last Fire Drill: 2/24/2020

During the month of August, our team of administrators developed our re-opening plan titled the Hillcrest Academy Reopening Plan: Circle of Seamless Teaching and Learning. Our Pandemic Response team met three times over the past three weeks and contributed to this plan in a myriad of ways. It was important to us, as a team, to ensure equity in the plan for teaching and learning regardless of what model we will open with in September.

In order to ensure that all students receive an equitable and equal education, irrespective if they are *hybrid in-person* at school (A Week), at *hybrid at-home* (B Week), or opted for the *distance learning option* schedule, all students in each course (USI, Algebra II, Chemistry, Creative Writing, Art I, Spanish II, PE/HE III, etc.) will receive the same lesson each day that includes the topic, directions, assignment, and expectations. Teachers will record themselves covering all required elements of the mini lesson video as outlined in the Hillcrest Academy Distance Learning Expectations #3. Students who are on a *distance learning option* AND who are participating in *hybrid at-home* learning will be directed to view the class's video before their scheduled virtual class (in a *flipped classroom* model) so that the time in virtual class will be used for students to communicate specific questions regarding their assignments and receive guidance/ feedback from the teacher. Teachers could show this same video to their *hybrid in-person* classes and supplement it with individual/ small group/ whole group support for each class. In all three cases, students will be presented with the same topic, receiving the same assignment with the same directions, and would be expected to produce the same proof of learning (the assignment), both in quality and length.

Examples:

Hybrid In-Person (A Week) Schedule Period 1 9:00am-10:10am

-Class is shown in the teacher's pre-recorded video.

-Teacher takes time to answer specific student questions individually/ in a small group/ whole group.

-Students are provided time to complete assignments.

-Teacher is always available and monitors progress.

Hybrid At-Home (A Week) Schedule Period 1 1:30pm-1:50pm

-Assignment is posted at 9:00am with the teacher's pre-recorded video. Students are directed to watch the video and read the assignments PRIOR TO meeting virtually with the teacher (flipped classroom concept).

-During the virtual class, students will communicate specific questions regarding their assignments and receive guidance/ feedback from the teacher.

-In addition, students can reach out to teachers virtually with specific questions as needed. Teachers are available at designated times for assistance.

Distance Learning Option

-Assignment is posted by 9:00am with the teacher's pre-recorded video. Students are directed to watch the video and read the assignments PRIOR TO meeting virtually with the teacher (flipped classroom concept).

-During the virtual class, students will communicate specific questions regarding their assignments and receive guidance/ feedback from the teacher.

-In addition, students reach out to teachers virtually with specific questions as needed. Teachers are available at designated times for assistance.

We continue to work with our Elizabeth liaison with referrals from the Elizabeth Academies. We expect many referrals over the next several weeks and hope to open full to capacity in September. We have “cleaned out” our school building to ensure that desks, and workstations are following social distance protocol and hand sanitizer stations have been strategically mounted throughout the building,

Last, but certainly not least, HAN had 33 students meet graduation requirements in the months of July and August. Many of these graduates have plans for college, training school, the military, and/or the workplace in the near future.

HILLCREST ACADEMY SOUTH:

Enrollment as of 8/21/20 Actual: 84 (1 tbd).	Intakes Pending General Ed.: TBD.
Changes: 25 Entered: 3 Exited: 22 (21 graduated, 1 moved).	Intakes Pending Sp. Ed.: Seats full.

21 out of 22 seniors graduated either in June or August of 2020. The one student who did not meet Elizabeth’s graduation requirements may be able to return to complete courses in order to graduate during the first marking period. Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) was provided intakes from three of Elizabeth’s Academies. All students were contacted, three were accepted via phone interviews, and our Elizabeth liaisons were notified for assistance with contacting the remaining students who did not respond to HAS’s requests.

Dr. Balsamello, Principal of HAS, worked cooperatively with Mr. Marquet, Principal of Hillcrest Academy North Campus, as well as with assistance from Ms. Dattilo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, to complete Hillcrest Academy’s (HA) portion of the reopening plan that was approved by our Board of Directors, the Union County Superintendent's Office, and finally the New Jersey Department of Education.

Additionally, Dr. Balsamello and Mr. Marquet developed reopening plans that will accommodate a full distance learning program, a hybrid program, and/ or a traditional program. Dr. Balsamello attended numerous meetings throughout the summer regarding the reopening of UCESC’s schools, the building located at 1571 Lamberts Mill Road and specifically HAS. HAS has been prepared for a hybrid schedule by providing appropriate social distancing in the classrooms, offices, and hallways. Dr. Balsamello continues to work with HAS’s Pandemic Response Team to research answers for staff questions, discuss procedures for all models, and communicate information to the other HAS staff.

LAMBERTS MILL ACADEMY:

As of August 2020 LMA Actual: 16 LMA District - Non-NP: 16 NP Specialty at LMA: 0 Changes: <u>0</u> Entered: <u>0</u> (Non-NP) <u>0</u> NP Pending: <u>0</u> Exited: <u>0</u> (non-NP) <u>0</u> (NP)	Fire Alarms: 0 Fire Drills: 0 Security Drills: 0
Referrals in June: 3 Intakes Scheduled: 3 Completed: 3 Acceptance Letter Sent: 3 Sending District Accepted LMA placement: 0 Placement Pending: 1	Suspension out of school: 0 In School Suspension: 0 HIB: 0

Administration

This Summer Lamberts Mill Academy participated in a creative endeavor. Although participation was very limited during our Extended School Year Program, the students and staff enjoyed the expeditions that they participated in.

The theme for the summer was Expeditions. Our staff focused on a different national park each week. At the end of the week, a video or virtual tour of the national park for that week was “Explored” by the students. Leading up to the end of the week our staff used their combined content areas to focus on a weekly project. All staff practiced the team-teaching model. Each teacher's assignment contributed to the final piece of the puzzle. Each teacher's lesson, assignment, assessment, etc. was used by the student to complete a final project. Our staff introduced material to their students using the five E's:

1. Engage
2. Explore
3. Explain
4. Elaborate
5. Evaluate (The final project)

It's important to note that our Expeditions weren't meant to just focus on physical places/destinations that our students visited. The theme expeditions were also meant to be an exploration of one's self. Our Literacy assignments, Life Skills and Social Skills all intertwined lessons and assignments that helped students understand themselves better. In addition, our students were taught the meaning of perseverance and commitment and how these values can lead to overcoming challenges in their lives. By assigning books like, *Rising Above*, *Hatchet*, *My Side of The Mountain* etc. We focused on physical expeditions as well as mental expeditions. All staff including Clinicians did their best to make sure that their lessons coincided with their coworkers and fit into the flow of the expedition of the week.

Project Details

Project Description:

By the end of this project, our students will have created a teacher stamped (passport) portfolio of their travels. This project is a collaborative project between all of the academic, non-academic teachers and Clinicians, culminating in an individual project that each of our students will turn in for a grade. The project will not just be a compilation of the work that our students are assigned, but it will serve to show a progression in the growth and the understanding of one's self. In addition to the personal exploration/expeditions that our students will embark on, our students will also explore six National Parks as a way to explore their natural world and to get a better understanding of nature, science, conservation, and history-all while having fun.

Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to Rise above?
- What steps does it take to persevere in spite of significant challenges?
- How does perseverance affect me?
- How does perseverance affect the world around me?
- How does perseverance lead to accomplishment?
- What are the common attributes among people who persevere?

Products and Deliverables:

- **“Who am I” student writings or poems**
- **“Who I want to be” student writings or poems**
- **Defined vocabulary words demonstrating an understanding of the word.**
- **Guided reading pertaining to the theme accompanied by written work aimed at enhancing critical thinking.**
- **Several activities geared toward the integration of Math, Science, History, Literature, PE, Social Skills, Life Skills, and Study Skills into the study of our National Parks designed to enhance the Social-Emotional wellbeing of our students.**
- **A passport (portfolio) displaying student work, materials, assignments, journal entries, completed assessments, artwork, lab reports, and other material evidence of growth and progress.**

Learning Goals:

Students will know:

- The names of six specific National Parks
- The location of six National Parks
- The Habitats of the six National Parks
- Important Highlights of each of the six National Parks
- Different things to do at each National Park
- The different terrain at each National Park
- What GPS is.
- What a Map is.

- What Geocaching is.
- Area, distance, doubling time, and average
- The definition of perseverance and what it means to rise above.
- How to read and comprehend specific literature pertaining to our theme
- How to write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- How to Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among specific claims related to our theme.

Students Will Understand:

- What the common attributes among people who persevere are and what steps it takes to overcome and persevere?
- That everyone can develop the qualities needed to persevere.
- That we learn things about ourselves through characters in literature.
- The importance of preserving our National Parks.
- The mathematics behind Global Positioning Systems, Map calculations, Geocaching, and how area, distance, doubling time, and averages are integral parts of our mathematical world and our everyday lives.
- How to use a Map
- How to use a compass
- The basics of orienteering

Students Will be able to:

- Locate their position using a GPS and a Map
- Read a Map and its key
- Calculate area, distance, doubling time, and average distance.
- Explain how perseverance leads to accomplishment.

ESY Staff Statements

Social Studies:

Our students visited and studied the six national parks that were part of the summer's theme. In each park we learned about its physical history, its resources and splendor that marked the significance, and the people who were supportive of it becoming a national park. We viewed first at a general frame of our national parks and their value to reserving beautiful and limited natural resources. Our lessons often revealed the political exchanges that encumbered each area. We discovered that in most cases there were developers and manufacturers who either wanted the land itself or the resources it held - from lumber to mining to potential for the generation of hydroelectricity.

We also looked at the key players for each area's development. These included Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot. We reviewed the methods that the parks were collected by the National Park Service - often in controversy and antagonism with local landowners and politicians.

Projects including map making, role playing news articles from those times, and comparing local, state and national parks. We are hopeful that next summer's ESY will include visits to these magnificent places!

Mathematics: Students were taught remotely utilizing Google Classroom for the ESY Program. The theme of this year's ESY program was National Parks, and mathematical concepts were integrated into each weekly, national park. The culmination of each week led to a 'virtual field trip' in which students explored the different national parks and discussed how abstract mathematical concepts can be applied to the parks. Some mathematical concepts that were tied and integrated into the ESY program include working with formulas, distance/time/rate, graphing on the coordinate plane system, and using scale and ratios to correctly read a map. In addition to receiving live tutoring sessions, students participated in daily, "DO NOW" questions which we are centered on outdoor/exploration skills.

NONPUBLIC:

The Nonpublic Services Department continues review each nonpublic school's reopening plan to ensure they meet the guidelines established by the New Jersey Department of Education. We are also reviewing our 192 programs to accommodate for the reduced funding from the DOE.

Nonpublic Services Department continues to collaborate with Union County districts to finalize IDEA-B proportionate share allocations associated with educational services for nonpublic school students who qualify for supplemental instruction for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Nonpublic schools were sent their state allocations for Textbooks. Orders are being processed. The DOE is late in releasing the allocations for Nursing, Security and Technology. It is anticipated that allocations for these programs will be released the last week in August. Once we receive them, schools will be notified of their allocations and nurses will be given their assignments.

TECHNOLOGY:

The IT department has multiple projects to ensure the best possible school year be it distance, hybrid, or full time. We are upgrading our internet speeds to 1gb up and down at all sites. We are implementing a VoIP phone system to move away from the multitude of issues stemming from POTS technology.

While all of the larger corporations were not able to provide Chromebooks until the Winter holidays, we were able to secure over 100 touchscreen, tablet convertible models for our students before the beginning of the school year.

Our asset management system has been an excellent addition to our infrastructure. We are cataloging all of our IT equipment starting with the staff and student Chromebooks. This is a tiered approach with staff onsite entering devices and remote assistance entering critical metadata.

We are vetting new vendors to refresh our aging wireless network. The wireless and switch upgrade of our network occurred 4 years ago, and it is ready for an upgrade. We are working to improve not only the performance but the overall technology of our network as there have been major improvements over this time.

TRANSITION:

Work Readiness Academy Student Enrollments: 11 (Max 12)

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

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

The Work Readiness Academy wrapped up its 2020 Extended School Year program this month. Due to the continued public health crisis, ESY was “all virtual” this summer for the nine student participants. Instructional topics covered this summer included:

1. Job Exploration (through Disney Jobs and CareerOneStop)
2. Social Skills (“Act It Out” Scenarios)
3. Conover Online (Workplace Readiness Modules)
4. Nearpod Lessons (Persistence, Organization, Teamwork, Self-Advocacy)
5. Interviewing Skills (Partner Interviews and Group Interviews)

The distance learning program utilized both the Google Classroom and the Workplace Readiness Online Program through the Conover Company. Students logged into the Google Classroom at 9am each day to complete a morning assignment posted by the instructor. Then at 9:30, they joined their teacher for a live web-based call through Google Hangouts Meet. The virtual meeting allowed time for the teacher to provide a “mini-lesson” and answer any questions the students may have had about the assigned work. The students were then assigned additional work to complete independently. After a midday lunch break, the students and staff returned for another 45 minutes of live online programming. The teacher was available in the Google Hangout during this time in case students need one-on-one support. The students also participated in weekly, virtual yoga class with Ashrams for Autism yoga studio, a weekly “At Home Fitness” program with a certified PE teacher, and a weekly group led by one of our Occupational Therapists.

Families of students who are graduating from our program this past June were referred to agencies for continuation of services including the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the New Jersey Travel Independence Program at Rutgers.

Additionally, we have provided families with information related to available mental health services, stress-reducing family activities, and resources on how to speak with their children about the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

The Work Readiness Academy targets students with disabilities (ages 17-to-21) who are in need of a comprehensive transition program with a significant focus on community-based work-learning. Students are referred from sending school districts across Union County.

The Project SEARCH program at Overlook Medical Center will welcome 9 new interns this September as part of the program’s 5th cohort. This summer the students have completed the following (all virtual):

- Student and Family Program Orientation
- “Welcome to Overlook” Session
- Travel Training Orientation and Intake with NJTIP at Rutgers

The Project SEARCH program will begin the 2020-21 school year in “full-time” remote learning for at least the first month of the year.

Families of students who are graduating from our program this June were referred to agencies for continuation of services including the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the New Jersey Travel Independence Program at Rutgers.

Additionally, we have provided families with information related to available mental health services, stress-reducing family activities, and resources on how to speak with their children about the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

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.

UCESC is currently delivering a virtual model of the Job Exploration Counseling services.

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

TRANSPORTATION:

Bidding for fall routes has been completed and the department is ready for another year of filling the transportation needs of the students of Union County. Two Hundred eighty-three (283) routes have been bid and 164 have been renewed. These routes travel to more than 160 different schools. In addition, late requests are arriving every day which will be run on an emergency basis and bid at a later date. Thirteen (13) routes were established to Nonpublic schools transporting 412 students.

Setting up transportation for 2020-2021 has been challenging. Schedules are changing daily with schools and districts making final decisions on their individual reopening plans.

WESTLAKE:

Enrollment as of August 21, 2020 Actual: 56 Changes: Entered: 2 Exited: 2	Referrals: 0 Intakes Scheduled: 2 Accepted: 2
Fire Drills: N/A due to Virtual Learning	Emergency Drills: N/A due to Virtual Learning
Suspensions: 0	

Westlake is preparing to re-open in September following the Restart and Recovery Plan provided by the UCESC. These guidelines are essential in providing a safe environment for all students and staff during the pandemic at this time. Currently we have worked closely with the custodial staff to secure and place hand sanitizers in each room, adhere signage to include six feet apart and clean and sanitize certain areas of the school that will be needed once students return. We are moving classroom furniture from classroom and dedicating areas for students to have a designated space for learning in an environment that is conducive to their needs.

Westlake has finalized our classroom rosters and staffing needs with the hire of a brand-new nurse. Our rosters have been approved and provided to essential UCESC employees, especially transportation to be able to begin working on next steps of bussing.

Parent Packets went out today to parents with all UCESC forms that are required to be signed and returned to as soon as possible and we are currently working on preparing additional letters to parents with confirmed student assignments of hybrid or virtual learning and additional information they would need prior to returning to school. We are also working on letters to our staff with their assignments beginning September. We expect that September will be fluid and changes may need to occur, but we are certain we are prepared for opening and may safely maintain social distancing to the greatest extent.

The following lessons were provided through virtual and/or pencil and paper format during Westlake School's ESY Distance Learning program focusing on Math, Language Arts, Social Studies and Science which are the state requirements. A variety of lessons were composed by teachers according to student levels and aligned to their Individual Education Plans (IEP's).

Language Arts:

Cause and effect, problem solving, Yes/No questions, WH questions, sequencing, and prepositions, During lessons students touched on individual skills such as letter ID, sight words, categories, rhyme words, American sign language, Wilson Reading, reading comprehension and writing skills. Multiple choice, and open-ended questions were addressed for the 18-21 year olds. Students worked on spelling, capitalization, using a full sentence, and punctuation. They also worked on various vocational vocabulary worksheets and reading labels and answering questions.

Math:

Math lessons focused on money skills, addition and subtraction, graphing, and place value. Students studied the different types of graphs and their uses. They learned how to collect and analyze data to answer questions based on their data. Students practiced many math related skills during this process including but not limited to number identification, counting, addition and subtraction, greater than & less than, measurement, colors, and content vocabulary. Lessons also included 1:1 correspondence, number facts,

fraction, and place value. Some students worked on the number line using manipulatives, and Touch Math curriculum that enabled them to gain a better conceptual understanding of math.

Science:

Science Units addressed the solar system, animals and their habitats, plants and weather. Students studied different habitats including forest, rainforest, ocean, desert, and arctic to better understand the importance of both living and nonliving things and how animals and plants have adapted in order to thrive where they live. Students participated in virtual experiments exploring materials, creating questions, and testing their hypothesis. Additional Science Units addressed the life cycle of animals/ plants and the facts of sharks and various ocean animals. The three states of matter (solids, liquids, and gases) were introduced and learned how to identify and label the different states of matter. Changing states of matter experiments were conducted by making ice cream in a bag to see how the matter changes. These experiments were complete virtually with teacher demonstration and students following the directions at home to make the experiments hands on and a fun learning opportunity.

Social Studies:

Social Studies lessons included current events, map skills and geography. Students practiced reading current events using popular News 2 You articles and participating in group discussions. They answered comprehension questions based on the current events that they read. Students also learned about the geography of the United States visiting a new state each week and exploring new lands including the states capital, flag, symbols, maps, geography and fun facts about the culture and the history of the lands. Additional Social Studies lessons included learning about different types of occupations and job descriptions in our community. Various unique and traditional holidays around the world are addressed including celebrating the 4th of July and learning various symbols that represent America.

Physical Education:

Mr. Shanfield provided virtual physical education lessons that provided students with cardiovascular exercise to keep them in shape while quarantined. Students successfully followed his directions and were exercising to the best of their ability during their scheduled physical education time.

Students had the opportunity to participate in our virtual karate program, and virtual yoga enrichment program enhancing mindfulness, relaxation techniques, responding to directions, and increasing the ability to control body movements in a specific way.

Health:

Health lessons continued through virtual learning and the focus shifted towards how and why wearing masks is an important, discussion about Covid-19 and what it means and washing hands. Safety of this pandemic was discussed during this time.

Art:

Students had opportunities to work on visually stimulating art projects provided by Ms. Caputo who would email them weekly the lesson and materials needed prior to the lesson. Her artwork depicted colorful explorations about summer themes that had step by step instructions and during her live instruction, she modeled for students and had them hold up and share their work with their peers.

Therapies:

Students who received therapies were provided with virtual Counseling, Speech, Occupational therapy and Physical Therapy as deemed according to their individual education plan. These therapies were delivered via live instruction to the best of our ability, as well as through email exercises to continue with practicing at home.

Social Work:

Our social worker with our school BCBA continued with the implementation of the “Zones of Regulation”, a curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control is being introduced to classroom teachers to incorporate into SEL designated time. She also worked with students and families to discuss the anxieties of Covid-19, wearing face masks and the loss of loved ones. These discussions and social emotional counseling will continue way into the 2020 school year as the pandemic continues and the changes in school continue. Students need structure and normalcy so coming back to school will be a challenge, but we are prepared to work together to ensure students are comfortable and safe.

Behaviorist:

Our Behaviorists worked closely with classroom staff often consulting and logging into live sessions to assist students. Many families reached out to her since they were working with their child from home, trying to get them to complete schoolwork. They found many challenges, but the BCBA was able to provide great support through strategies and in consulting with the parents.

Virtual Field Trips:

During the Extended School Year program various virtual field trips were available for students to attend with teacher guidance and learning more about these places in the world. These virtual trips included: The Statue of Liberty, The Great Barrier Reef, The Amazon Rainforest, The Gobi Desert, London England, Washington D.C., The Space Station, The Planets, The Great Wall of China, and Hawaii.

Each classroom teacher had a variety of virtual experiences ready for their students so additional themed lessons such as Outer Space, Around the World, Around the United States and All about Animals/Habitats were included. Boston Children’s Museum, Atlanta Zoo, Yellow Stone National Park walking tour, Seattle Aquarium, & Georgia Aquarium, and many, many more. We also had a virtual session with Creature Comforts Pet Therapy, and they showed their friendly natured dogs, cats, and a bunny. This was so interactive, that our students were able to show their pets from home as well. What a great experience!

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.

cc: Eric Larson, Business Administrator/Board Secretary