



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department:</b> Crossroads School	<b>Report Date:</b> 2/24/21
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**Enrollment:**

**Current Enrollment:** 42

**Emergency Drills:**

<b>Fire Drill:</b> Upcoming	<b>Other (Specify Type):</b>
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**Curriculum and Instruction:**

Elementary School classroom teacher, Ms. Allison Gebler, led her students in completing virtual classroom assignments, remote individual and group sessions, and full time in-personal learning! In English Language Arts, students worked on their individual communication or language arts programs during direct instruction. Curricula that are currently being utilized by her students and staff include ProloQuo2Go, core language boards, Student Reading and Edmark. Each curriculum is specifically designed create individual student learning plans that collect specific data and implement student assessments. Star Student, Lyla R., from Union Public Schools, has achieved mastery in the majority of her IEP goals!

Mrs. Susan Parenti’s middle school classroom enjoyed science and social studies learning activities throughout the month of February. Instructional units about migration and hibernation were a particular area of focus for the students and staff. Students practiced answering “WH,” questions by utilizing Brain Pop videos. Student engagement was extremely high during these instructional lessons and thoroughly enjoyed by the students.

**Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

Crossroads students and staff celebrated Black History Month throughout the month of February! Crossroads School staff members, Ms. Elaine Liggeri (School Social Worker), and Mr. Raheem Anthony (Paraprofessional), served on the overall committee that was created by Mrs. Carrie Datillo. A plethora of activities were created by students and staff to celebrate this important month.

Staff participated in a classroom door contest in which students and staff created amazing artwork honoring some of our Black History heroes such as advocates, abolitionists, artists, musicians and other professionals. During both art and music classes staff and students created unique lessons that promoted the inter-disciplinary curricula of multiple content areas. The week culminated with Crossroads School Principal, Mr. Reed Leibfried, serving as a guest speaker in Mrs. Amador’s classroom. Many other staff members read to our students, displayed unique individual talents that were aligned to the celebration of the month, and discussed crucial concepts that elaborate on the importance and significance of celebrating Black History Month!

**Professional Development:**

Crossroads School staff participated in the Commission Professional Development Day on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. I would like to sincerely thank Acting Superintendent Mr. Michael Kowalski and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mrs. Carrie Datillo for supporting the professional development aligned to social and emotional learning for our students and staff. This course was provided free of charge and created at Yale University.

Clear goals and objectives were articulated to Crossroads Staff by Principal, Mr. Reed Leibfried, Supervisor of Instruction, Ms. Melissa McLaughlin and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, Danielle Cicalese. Due to the COVID-19 national pandemic and the unprecedented times in Education, the administrative team felt that it was imperative to offer our staff a professional development session that is aligned to the social and emotional needs of our staff as educators as well as family members on a personal level. This course presented our staff with best practices in identifying stress and understanding the impact that stress has on our everyday lives. We collaboratively discussed skills and strategies that are scientifically proven to assist in managing our own emotions as well as recognizing, identifying, and managing our student's emotions and overall mental health.

The Crossroads Staff has made the determination to utilize after school (Tuesday/Thursday afternoons) to create an atmosphere that allows our staff to share their own feelings as an educator and individual. Our professional learning communities will continue to align our school level professional development goal of improving our staff capacity of social and emotional learning.



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department: Hillcrest Academy North</b>	<b>Report Date: 2/21/21</b>
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<b>Enrollment:</b>	
<b>Current Enrollment: 77</b> <b>Acceptances: 6</b>	<b>Intakes: 6</b> <b>Disenrollments: 0</b>
<b>Emergency Drills:</b>	
<b>Fire Drill: 2/07/21</b>	<b>Other: Non-Fire Evacuation 2/21/21</b>

**Curriculum and Instruction:**

During the month of February, students in Mr. Van Cleef’s Economics class explored the social and economic impact of the racist 20th Century practice of redlining on minorities in the United States today. Students first learned about the suburbanization of America and the housing boom that coincided with it. They read accounts of redlining - the US Government and bank-sponsored practice of denying money and services to areas where minorities predominantly live. Students then analyzed the impact of the practice and focused on creating solutions going forward by collaboratively answering the questions “What might life have been like for a black family in the 20th Century having trouble getting a mortgage because of redlining policies?”, “If redlining policies were not in place, how might America look different today?”, and “Do you believe America should be responsible for creating a solution to the wealth gap between black and white households? What possible solutions might you suggest?”. These lessons helped students gain a deeper understanding of the roots of the racial wealth gap in the United States today and inspired them to become solution-oriented when looking to the future.

In English, students practiced the argumentative essay skill of developing analysis by writing a body paragraph through the “quote sandwich” lesson. Students practiced the analysis skill on IXL by choosing the analysis that connects the claim to the evidence. Students also learned about MLA format. Students learned how to use in-text citations and identify the parts of a works cited page and practiced these skills on IXL.

In Algebra 1 students had a lot of fun exploring percent of change being used for all real-life applications, like taxes, discounts, increase and decrease comparisons. In Algebra 2, students worked through the chapter of Systems of Linear Equations via IXL.com. The distance learning virtual assignments gave a lot of opportunity to solve realistic word problems and truly prevent a customer from being taken advantage of. Together as a class they explored when is best to use specific coupons, how many tickets need to be sold for fundraisers and much more. The students used online graphing tools, like Desmos.com, to represent each situation graphically.

The students in Geometry are studying four of the many centers of a triangle. They are creating these centers by constructions using only a compass and a straightedge in IXL. They are also creating examples by paper folding any triangle they cut out of paper and fold following instructions for bisectors, medians, and the like. They will determine which kind of center would be beneficial for different real-world scenarios.

**Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

February is filled with holidays and special events which calls for special projects. For Black History Month, we have asked the students to complete the line, “I dream a world...” This is the first line of the poem written by Langston Hughes that inspired Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech. This activity took place during the scheduled

SEL groups on Friday. Student work is still being collected and is truly inspiring!

Also, during the month of February, the social worker helped welcome several new students to HAN by putting them in communication with their advocates. Administration and the social worker continued bi-weekly meetings with advocates to discuss progress and have followed up with phone calls to both students and parents as needed. In a related area, the social worker is covering for a teacher who is out by taking over advocate responsibilities and remaining in regular contact with students. As always, the social worker has continued to remain in contact with students as needed and is reaching out regularly to students who have been identified by teachers. For the remainder of the month the social worker has several professional developments scheduled: Module 2 for the School Mental Health Center, Healthy Relationships for Teens, and The Opioid Crisis in NJ.

**Professional Development:**

Our professional development day in February was well spent working on the webinar, “Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress.” It taught us that we need to take care of our emotions so that we can help guide our students in handling theirs. It was very informative and we, as a staff, are looking forward to implementing some of the suggested strategies. Then, in the afternoon, we had a jigsaw activity where staff discussed strategies we can implement to increase student engagement.

HAN’s PLC decided that the most effective use of time would be to share remote learning strategies given this new instructional setting. As a result, the PLC team chose to share aloud a useful remote instructional technique with models and examples during the meetings. Teachers are required to sign up for a future date indicating the strategy they would be teaching and providing some resources which will act as “bank of tools and strategies” for all the teachers to access during remote learning. This has proven to be an effective use of time. We look forward to continuing these efforts of sharing tools and strategies in remote learning during future PLC meetings in March and April. During a PLC meeting, Ms. Machado did a presentation on “Sites” which is a Google app for web design. The app allows you to create your own website. The app allows you to incorporate other Google apps such as Google, slides, form, sheets, docs, and drawings into the website. There can be one editor or students can be invited to collaborate on the website as joint editors. Some ideas presented were to create a teacher website with information or a student classroom website that students can add to and contribute to as a group.



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department:</b> Hillcrest Academy South	<b>Report Date:</b> 2/21/21
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**Enrollment:**

<b>Current Enrollment:</b> 83 <b>Acceptances:</b> 2	<b>Intakes:</b> TBA (waiting for parental responses and additional students from Elizabeth Academies) <b>Disenrollments:</b> 0
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**Emergency Drills:**

<b>Relaxed Fire Drills:</b> 2/11/21 (Cohort B for LMA & WLS) & 2/17/21 (Cohort A for LMA & WLS)	<b>Other: Relaxed Non-Fire Evacuation:</b> 2/12/21 (Cohort B for LMA & WLS) & 2/17/21 (Cohort A for LMA & WLS)
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**Curriculum and Instruction:**

Four teachers at HAS applied for the 2020 Union County STEM Scholars Grant that was made possible through the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. All four were awarded the grants and they were: Both Ms. Arora and Mr. Reichman will each receive a microscope that includes a digital eyepiece camera that allows the user to capture and transmit of images from the microscope to the teacher’s computer for immediate broadcast to a distance-learning class, projection onto a screen in the classroom without sharing and subsequent sanitizing of the microscope, or both. Ms. Ferrari and Mr. Sobieniak will receive software and polling device clickers (QT2’s). These will provide classes with engaging lessons because every student will be able to participate with this hands-on activity, it will provide frequent individual or group feedback to use for self-assessment as well as formative assessment data, and participation can be anonymous.

**Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

Staff and students participated in a district-wide Black History Month project *The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity*. The HAS staff developed and shared activities that were reviewed during the Social-Emotional groups on Fridays as well as throughout the week. Completed projects will culminate in a digital collage presentation. Every month students are recognized for their achievements and receive an incentive. This is posted on Dr. Baslamello’s Google Classroom, the family and student receive an email with the award(s), and the students decided that the incentive of a five-dollar Dunkin Donut gift card was extremely rewarding. January’s Student of the Month Award recipients were as follows: Awards of Excellence were received for Respect-Javier Criado; Citizenship-Yasim Reid; and the overall SoM went to Anthony Piedrasanta. Academic certificates were awarded in Art, Ms. Picciano-James Ramirez; English, Ms. Cioffi-Aja Mars; English, Ms. Holden-Tahaj Bowers; Health, Mr. Barone-Anthony Piedrasanta, Health, Ms. Rubin-Taivian Hanson, Math, Ms. Ferrari-James Ramirez; Math, Mr. Sobieniak-Kiara Cruz; Science, Ms. Arora-Isaiah Montes; Science, Mr. Reichman-Anthony Piedrasanta; Social Studies, Ms. Duarte-Valerie Pizarro; Social Studies, Ms. Wrzesinski-Aja Mars. Perfect Attendance awards were earned by Tahaj Bowers, Fa’Asia Hall, Taivian Hanson, Tymir Johnson, Alaysia Negron, Keamya Osby, Ja-ion Persha, Anthony Piedrasanta, Heavenlii Romero, and Cierra Sanchez.

**Professional Development:**

A professional development day was on 2/5/21, for the morning session all staff viewed a Yale webinar *Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress*. During the afternoon session, staff was divided into groups that brainstormed and researched student engagement strategies that will build a positive school culture in our Distance Learning Program. These strategies were then reviewed in PLC and faculty meetings as well as additional time provided to complete the webinar. The HAS Pandemic Response Team continued to Meet weekly to create specific procedures for when the students return to a hybrid schedule and reported out at faculty meetings. PLCs also continued to focus on engagement strategies to support students and families to be successful at school virtually whereas the Department meetings have focused on staff sharing lessons and activities. The Social Worker, shared Guidance Counselor, and Principal identified specific students through a Google Form staff completed who require additional motivation to attend school by calling, emailing, scheduling Google Meets, and sending letters in an attempt to not only engage the students but also to elicit family assistance.



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department: Lamberts Mill Academy</b>	<b>Report Date: February 2021</b>
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<b>Enrollment:</b>	
<b>Current Enrollment: 44 Total</b>	<b>Intakes: 2</b>
<b>LMA Campus: 34</b>	<b>Acceptances: 1</b>
<b>New Point: 12</b>	<b>Disenrollments: 1</b>
<b>New Point at LMA: 2</b>	

<b>Emergency Drills: 4</b>
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<b>Fire Drill: 3</b> 2/11/21 - Cohort B, 2/17/21 Cohort A	<b>Other:</b>
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<b>Curriculum and Instruction:</b>
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<b><u>English:</u></b>
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We have begun our Narrative text unit exploring the spoken or written account of connected events and how they form a story. These skills have been practiced and strengthened through use of our IXL program, homing in on student’s individual skill sets. In honor of Black History month, we read Show Way by Newberry Honor Award winning author Jacqueline Woodson. We read critically focusing on characterization and the importance of knowing the physical and moral aspects of a person to better comprehend a narrative. In addition to honor Black History Month, each week we explored various African American authors through student facilitation and their personal interests. Students continue to enjoy our short writes and have been elaborating on their writing as they voluntarily share them out with their peers. Student learning has also been engaged with our weekly focus on vocabulary development and current events in literacy.

<b><u>History:</u></b>
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World History students have started studying the Renaissance and Enlightenment in Europe and the worldwide cultural impact those events have had on society. US I History students are studying the cause and effect relationship of the Civil War and the parallels they see in today’s society. US II History students will be starting to study World War II and how the social, economic, and political effects will be playing a role in the second half of the 20th Century. 20th Century Modern History students have been studying the origins of the law and order relationship in the U.S. and will be analyzing more political cartoons as sources of different time periods. On Thursday, February 18, 2021, Lamberts Mill Academy students will participate in a virtual assembly in which students will hear from a Municipal Judge for Union County and be able to ask questions. Social Studies students have begun researching and creating Biographical Google Slides following the themed weeks for Black History Month. Representative Slides from each grade level will be sent to the UCESC Black History Month Committee to be added to a district wide presentation.

<b><u>Mathematics:</u></b>
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Students enrolled in Consumer Mathematics learned about how to properly write out a check, along with all the key components of a check. We also had a debate arguing if checks have been ‘obsolete’ with online banking. Students argued advantages and disadvantages of checks in today’s current world situation. Students also spent time ‘balancing’ a checkbook and learning about the difference between an ATM/Check card versus a credit card. Students in Algebra 2 have started learning about graphing circles in the coordinate plane, and the equation of a circle.

They had the opportunity to discuss the similarities and differences between circles and parabolas. Students used assistive technology including graphing calculators and the interactive DESMOS website in order to graph equations of circles and identify different properties of them.

Students taking Algebra 1 are continuing to learn and explore about linear equations, and how to graph them in the coordinate plane system. They have also been getting good practice with this topic on the IXL website. Students in Geometry are learning about properties of circles and triangles including perimeter, circumference, and area. They are learning how to apply different formulas, to different types of visual problems, and word problems.

Finally, all students were exposed to a mini biography of Katherine Johnson, a pioneer in Mathematics as an African American mathematician working for NASA to help critical aspects of Alan Shepherd's first flight into space, and her impact she has had within the history of the space race for NASA.

**Community Based Instruction and Special Events: N/A**

**Professional Development:**

LMA staff participated in Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support training. During this training, the staff started working on their classroom Matrixes, that are focused on or 4 Core Values. (Respect, Responsibility, Safety, Kindness) in addition the staff participated in IEP training that focused on the PLAFF section of the IEP. The goal of the IEP training was to instruct the staff on creating IEPs that paint a more specific picture of the student's skills and abilities.





**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department: Nonpublic Services</b>	<b>Report Date: 2/23/21</b>
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**Enrollment:**

<b>Current Enrollment as of December 31st:</b>	<b>Acceptances:</b> N/A
Total Comp Ed Services: 795	<b>Acceptances:</b> N/A
Total Supplemental Instruction Services: 467	<b>Intakes:</b> N/A
Total Speech Services: 160	<b>Disenrollments:</b> N/A

**Emergency Drills:**

<b>Fire Drill: N/A</b>	<b>Other: N/A</b>
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**Curriculum and Instruction:**

Nonpublic programs vary on how students are provided services. Some programs offer in-person, virtual or a combination of both as a means to deliver instruction. Nonpublic teachers continue to track student growth and achievement using the model their assigned nonpublic school utilizes. Teachers continue to utilize Elmo cameras during virtual learning. Speech Therapist continue to send Loom recordings to assist in providing speech language and articulation lessons.

Nonpublic teachers completed progress reporting for all students receiving supplemental instruction. Progress reports will be sent to parents within the next week.

Nonpublic nurses continue to provide in-person services to our nonpublic school students and assist with Covid-19 contract tracing.

Nonpublic State programs: Textbooks and Security are fully implemented.

**Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

**Professional Development**

Nonpublic teachers continue to use ELMO cameras when providing virtual lessons to students and Pear Deck training. Teacher, paraprofessionals, and nurses are continuing to work on GCN trainings set forth by UCESC.



## Union County Educational Services Commission Superintendent Report

<b>School/Department: Technology</b>	<b>Report Date: 2/23/21</b>
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### **Enrollment:**

N/A

### **Emergency Drills:**

<b>Fire Drill: N/A</b>	<b>Other: N/A</b>
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### **Curriculum and Instruction:**

We have been working with multiple vendors to tailor quotes for our E-Rate network improvement project. All quotes have been received and we are currently weighing our options.

Our department has grown by 1! We welcome Thomas Rogers as our new Technology Support. He has already proven himself as an excellent addition to our team providing us with excellent feedback from staff regarding how to improve our IT provisions.

We have cut over all of our internet connections to the new redundant services. Our internet connection is currently configured for failover and load balancing.

### **Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

### **Professional Development:**



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department: Transportation</b>	<b>Report Date: 3/3/21</b>
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**Enrollment:**

N/A

**Emergency Drills:**

<b>Fire Drill: N/A</b>	<b>Other: N/A</b>
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**Curriculum and Instruction:**

Nonpublic school transportation applications (B6T's) are due in the student's resident district by March 15, 2021. The nonpublic schools are responsible for the timely submission of the application to each student's resident district. Reminder notices were sent to each nonpublic school by the Transportation Office on February 16, 2021. Calendar requests for the 2021-2022 school year were sent to the nonpublic schools on February 16, 2021.

The next on-site school bus inspection is scheduled for March 19 & 22, 2021. The inspection team feels that two days are needed for inspection. The second day allows for re-inspection and a higher approval rate.

**Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

**Professional Development**



## Union County Educational Services Commission Superintendent Report

<b>School/Department:</b> Westlake School	<b>Report Date:</b> 2/18/21
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<b>Enrollment:</b>	
<b>Current Enrollment:</b> 55 <b>Acceptances:</b> 0	<b>Intakes:</b> 0 <b>Disenrollments:</b> 0
<b>Emergency Drills:</b>	
<b>Fire Drill: (Relaxed Fire Drill)</b> 2/11/21 Cohort A 2/17/21 Cohort B	<b>Other (Relaxed Bomb Threat):</b> 2/12/21 (Cohort A) 2/17/21 (Cohort B)

<b>Curriculum and Instruction:</b>
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In Language arts students are reading a passage and answer comprehension questions. They work on identifying vocabulary words such as food, clothing, everyday objects, and animals. In addition, the students answer a variety of “Wh” questions about the words. For daily news students learned about the young author Amanda Gorman who gave speeches at both the inauguration and the super bowl. They also read about Mardi Gras and completed readings and activities for the Chinese New Year. Each student learned about the year they were born, and the traits associated with that year.

In math, topics such as comparing numbers and estimating length in inches and centimeters were reviewed. Students work on various math skills from counting, addition, subtraction, money skills and making change. All skills focus on their individual academic levels and work towards daily living skills to make our students more independent.

In Science, students are reviewing the types of clouds and the weather with snow being the focus as we continue to have snowstorms and inclement weather. Students are not as happy to have snow days this year as they are looking forward to being in school with each other.

In Social Studies Westlake students have been discussing Black History month during both Social Studies and Language Arts. Some of the Famous Black Americans that have been discussed are: Dr. Mae Jemison first Black woman to be an astronaut (1983), Ms. Jennifer King was the first Black woman to coach in the (NFL 2021), Kamala Harris first Black woman Vice President. Mrs. Convery’s students have discussed and learned about Groundhog Day, Valentine’s Day, Chinese New Year and President’s Day. Resources that have been utilized are print materials, online Scholastic magazines, audio books, videos and google slides presentations to learn something new about each topic we studied. During our field trips around the world students in Mrs. Swisher’s class visited the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, experienced a safari in India, and took a trip to the theater in Russia to learn about The Nutcracker ballet. The students watched videos, answered questions, and completed worksheets about the current country.

In Food Preparation Mrs. Palmer and Mr. Carten have a virtual class together on Friday mornings. Mrs. Palmer’s students demonstrate the recipe in view of the computer modeling for the students in Mr. Carten’s room. It is a great experience for everyone. They have made cornflake chicken and this week they made Valentine’s Day Strawberry Muffins. Everyone has their own supplies when they are constructing the recipe. Students are taught to read recipes and measure ingredients.

This month we wanted to build on what the students previously learned in physical fitness in the classroom, so with the wonderful donation from the BMW grant we received 60 yoga mats for every student in the school. On top of that we were using steppers in the classrooms. The students learned many new cross training exercises that incorporated isometric and dynamic movements. All students were able to participate in ALL the exercises. For example, the “Kneel to stand” exercise

was something that was introduced to all the students. Some students performed it independently, with just a visual prompt on what it looks like and some students used visual and physical prompts to accomplish the exercise, but as I stated before ALL the students were able to engage in Kneel to stand exercise. During Health, this month we talked and participated in activities that deal with Social Emotional Learning, The Whole Child and Mindfulness. One specific topic was about self-esteem.

This month the behaviorists planned for and helped to facilitate the return of students, to daily in-person learning. Currently 19 students started full-time at Westlake on February 4. This support will continue, along with consulting with teachers on developing remote instruction which facilitates learning. Intensive planning, consulting, and modeling behavioral and instructional practices has occurred for some students: Student 1--included room & teacher change, adding transitions, and change in transition strategies to eliminate need for restraints. Continuous monitoring of data and strategies, to determine success of student in new setting, as well as the resources required for success. Student 2 -including prep for new staff (nurse, security guard and 1:1), change in morning meds procedures. Student 3--Consult to assist with issues identified by teacher, which included addition of data collection, sharing new BIP info with classroom paraprofessionals, reviewing strategies and creating new strategies for difficulty waiting for bus during dismissal.

### **Therapies:**

This month the Occupational Therapists have been working diligently to deliver both in person sessions and virtual sessions as we return to the hybrid model and some students begin to attend school full time. It has been wonderful to interact with our students in the building again. They have incorporated boom cards, google slides, life skills, and simple recipes into our sessions. They also send home packets and email sessions to students who do not participate in virtual sessions. They continue to explore new resources to implement in school and via teletherapy. The OT's continue to assess students' progress toward their goals. They are attending IEP meetings in order to develop appropriate and functional therapy plans and goals. They meet with families in order to collaborate on students/family needs and priorities and continue to collaborate with teachers to develop the most effective program for each student.

Currently we have one physical therapist working three days a week at Westlake School with nineteen students receiving physical therapy services. Our students continue to receive PT via in person therapy, live teletherapy sessions and electronic emailed sessions or a combination. Mrs. Feuerstein continues to develop a positive rapport with our families participating in live teletherapy sessions from home. It is great to see our parents so involved in the treatment sessions! Here are a few examples of student successes with teletherapy sessions. One student has started to make progress on transitioning from standing to the floor with more control. This goal was very important to her mother and the constant carryover at home with teletherapy sessions is definitely contributing to her progress. Another student is becoming less apprehensive with standing and walking exercises at home. Her mother and brother are active participants during her sessions and make sure that she practices these skills often. Those that have opted out of live teletherapy sessions are receiving electronic sessions via email on their remote weeks. These emailed sessions are specifically designed for each student based on their IEP goals and include pictures, videos and instructions of how to perform the exercises at home.

In Speech, the Speech Department incorporated themed activities including: Valentine's Day, Groundhog's Day, President's Day, Chinese New Year and Black History Month. It was a month full of fun activities! They used Boom Cards, editable PDFs, Epic Books and PowerPoint for their virtual sessions. They also used printable themed worksheets and books for their in-person sessions. This month was very exciting, as we were able to experience an excellent professional development day! We learned how to use the new-and-improved BoardMaker software and we are so excited to use it in our daily practice. This month, Mrs. Barone collaborated with other disciplines - she had the opportunity to observe a student with his music therapist so that she can better support him in therapy. Students are making so much progress whether they are using their iPad to communicate effectively or making excellent progress in expanding conversational skills or problem-solving skills. We are so proud of our students!

A steady stream of IEP meetings have been held this month accommodating student needs to the best of everyone's ability. For our graduates, collateral agencies are struggling to keep up to date with the application process and the interruptions created by the Pandemic. It is a ripple effect since adult placements are mostly closed because of the virus which does not allow tours at this time.

There has been an effort to re-register the Girl Scouts by Mrs. Sandroock as well as the Boy Scouts at Westlake. Mr. Shanfield, an Eagle Scout himself, has stepped up to help with this effort to connect with the new Boy Scout liaison.

Counseling efforts are on-going with the theme of uncertainty about the future as related to returning to school and if life will ever be "normal" again. Many students find mask wearing difficult to tolerate but continue to work on this skill and taking mask breaks when it is appropriate. These concerns, as well as some family illnesses are discussed during counseling sessions to assist students with the many changes over this past year due to Covid-19. Social distancing has had an extreme impact on most students and staff.

SEL activities continue to be at the forefront at Westlake School. Mr. Shanfield and Mrs. Convery have added our School Spirit Day Bingo back for students to have some outlets of fun engaging activities. Mr. Shanfield runs Friday dance parties where students and staff all participate virtually and this month, we had a Virtual Valentine's Day Dance Party. Mr. Shanfield reminds us that students are engaged either on-line or in person, but also the staff throughout our school have been so helpful especially participating in the exercises themselves. (Remember that SEL involves everyone and it is both mentally and physically).

Mrs. Swisher's class focused on our moods and attitudes. Students learned to identify their emotions, where they came from, and some strategies to deal with them. They then moved on learning to deal with challenges. Students learned to break down a larger goal into smaller steps to accomplish great tasks. They read "A Little Spot of Teamwork" and discussed the various ways we can help each other while at school or at home. Some of the students created a virtual Valentine's Day card to send to the children at St. Jude's and the class discussed how it felt to do kind acts for one another.

For a positive school culture, staff members wanted to do something fun and promote a sense of Westlake family togetherness so our Paraprofessional, Claudia Caro-Esposito put up a bulletin board to celebrate love. The Westlake staff brought in pictures of themselves and family members that celebrate love. Our "**Love Is In the Air**" bulletin board has been such a great success with many photos from everyone's lives that we extended it to a second bulletin board. It brings the staff much happiness to display and look at each other's photos from the past and present.

### **Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

Students were introduced to the *Self-Discipline* soft skills module. The learning goals for this module included:

- Understand what self-discipline involves (self-control, responsibility, motivation)
- What self-discipline means in the workplace
- Examples of self-discipline in everyday living
- What things students have control over and can do to practice self-discipline everyday

A video presentation, produced and presented by a preteen YouTuber, was especially effective in presenting the "*5 Things You Can Control Everyday* (Attitude, Actions, Words, Manners, Effort).

Students also participated in a teacher-led self-discipline assessment where they were able to see where they scored on the self-discipline scale. The assessment was shared on the Google Meet screen so that students could see each example and give me a response. They could see me recording their response on the document. Following the assessment, the results were explained, and areas of improvement were identified.

A self-discipline sort exercise challenged students to differentiate between examples of self-discipline behavior being shown and not shown.

Mrs. Goodson is using the information provided from the Professional Development session for Boom Cards 101 (presented by Judith Fiorica) held on February 5<sup>th</sup>. She has created Boom Cards for the soft skills modules. Boom cards are an excellent way to have students practice skills. Mrs. Goodson has covered specifically geared for Westlake Wolves. She especially likes the ability to add voice to text which is a supportive learning aid for my students. She enjoys creating fun activities using Boom decks.

### **Professional Development:**

Westlake has brought in 19 students on a daily hybrid basis from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. We continue to practice safe social distancing and have a big emphasis on communication throughout the day. Walkie talkies are used to communicate bathroom transitions, student arrival and student departure and behavioral support in order to facilitate safety and social distancing. All staff have been proactive in their planning of working with students and teamwork has been at the forefront. Making Westlake's student return into the building successful.

Staff attended professional development training on "Board Maker" which added more resources to their remote learning toolbox and participated in a webinar on "Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress." The webinar on Managing Emotions is a 4-hour course that is an excellent resource. Staff will be completing this workshop at two of our upcoming after school meeting times.



**Union County Educational Services Commission  
Superintendent Report**

<b>School/Department:</b> Work Readiness Academy	<b>Report Date:</b> 1/25/21
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**Enrollment:**

<b>Current Enrollment:</b> 22 (includes WRA & Project SEARCH) <b>Acceptances:</b> 0	<b>Intakes:</b> 5 (4 accepted for SY 2021-22) <b>Disenrollments:</b> 0
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**Emergency Drills:**

<b>Fire Drill:</b> 2/11/21	<b>Other (Specify Type):</b> None
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**Curriculum and Instruction:**

The Work Readiness Academy programs spent the majority of the month of February in Hybrid Learning with students attending “in person” learning on a rotating cohort schedule.

The primary instructional learning objectives this month were:

- **Positive Relationships at Work**
  - Students learned that there are certain rules for interacting with coworkers and customers, and that we may communicate differently with coworkers/customers than with people who are our friends (or family). The students discussed specific examples of ways they can be friendly at work, but without crossing boundaries or making someone feel uncomfortable.
- **Self-Care**
  - Students were exposed to different examples of ways we can take care of ourselves during times of increased stress - which if not attended to - can impact our performance at work.
- **Perception isn’t always Reality**
  - Students learned that perception is a way of understanding or interpreting something. Sometimes the way we perceive the actions or statements of those around us may not reflect what is actually intended. This is generally due to our previous life experiences and/or what we believe.

During our Community Meetings this month, we’ve been recognizing and celebrating Black History Month and the many important contributions Black Americans have made to our country’s past and present. We spotlighted the brave story of Ruby Bridges who famously became one of the first African American children to attend school with White peers after the landmark Brown vs. Board of Education ruling in 1954. We also called attention to the significant impact Black Americans have had on music spanning all genres. The students learned about the “Blues” and listened to an excerpt from Elmore Davis. As a follow up, the students were charged with choosing one Black musician (past or present) and designing a Google Slide “Tribute” to that artist that included a picture and a link to one of the musician’s songs.

### **Community Based Instruction and Special Events:**

In the absence of traditional Structured Learning Experiences and Community-Based Internships the staff spent much of the month of February implementing our new *"In House" internship experiences*. Students who are attending in person as part of our Hybrid model are now getting the opportunity to participate in one or more of our simulated "in house" work experiences that will include learning and developing clerical skills, customer service skills, food service skills, and general cleaning & hospitality skills. Students will get the chance to participate in an internship for approximately 60 minutes, 2-4 days per week. Additionally, we have assembled and delivered *"At Home Work Boxes"* for all students, including those who currently remain in full-time remote learning at home. These boxes will provide students with materials needed to complete simulated job tasks from home.

On Tuesday, February 23rd, the Work Readiness Academy welcomed Sergeant Gerald Brown from the Scotch Plains Police Department as a guest speaker as part of our Virtual Career Speaker Series. Sergeant Brown shared how he became a police officer, his primary duties in his role, and what he loves and dislikes most about his job.

### **Professional Development:**

On Friday, February 5th the Work Readiness Academy staff participated in a full day of professional development focused on increasing engagement during virtual instruction. The morning session featured a presentation by Farrah Rosenthal from Bergen County Special Services' Educational Technology Training Center, entitled, *"Using Technology to Engage and Empower Student Voice"*. Staff learned how to empower and engage student response with green screens, video, audio, and podcasting using web-based and iPad tools. In the afternoon, Judith Fiorica, from BCSS ETTC presented *Gamify Learning with Boom Cards*. In this session, staff learned how to create their very own customized, interactive lessons using the Boom Cards website.