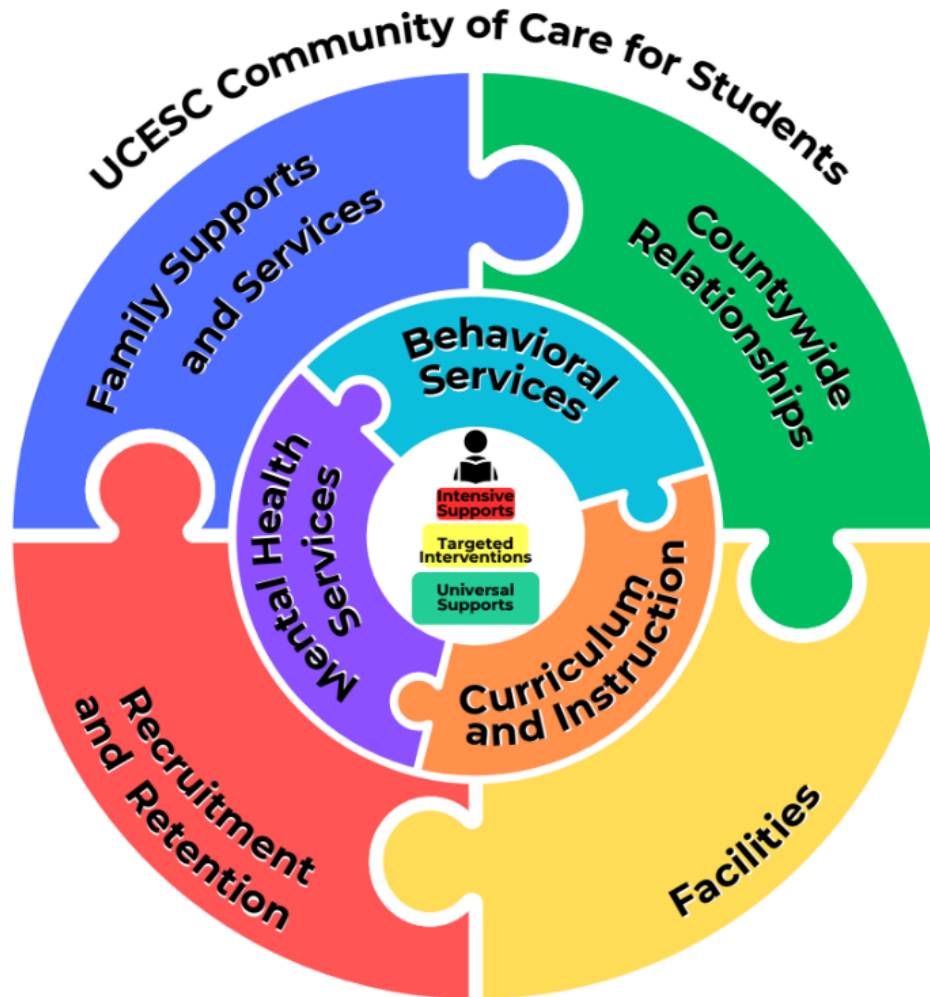UCESC

Building Partnerships for Tomorrow

Strategic Plan
2024-2029

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The Five Strands

The Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) is committed to fostering a thriving learning environment where every student feels supported, safe, and empowered to reach their full potential. This Strategic Plan outlines our vision for creating a "Community of Care for Students," a comprehensive framework that prioritizes student well-being, safety, and academic development through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This plan recognizes that student success is multifaceted and requires a holistic approach encompassing behavioral services, robust curriculum and instruction, comprehensive mental health support, and strong partnerships with families and the wider community. It also acknowledges the crucial role of countywide supports and services, well-maintained and equipped facilities, and the recruitment and retention of highly qualified and dedicated staff in achieving this vision. This plan serves as a roadmap for UCESC, guiding our efforts to provide a nurturing and enriching educational experience for all students.

Community of Care for Students
The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Behavioral Services
UCESC will develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to proactively addressing the behavior needs of students by implementing programs and strategies that promote overall skill development and decrease interfering behaviors. This includes positive behavior interventions, social-emotional learning programs, and tiered behavior plans, fostering a nurturing environment for every student's development.

Curriculum and Instruction
UCESC will develop a structured, coherent, and rigorous course of study tailored to meet each student's individual needs while maximizing their potential as learners and global citizens. Teachers will utilize instructional strategies that provide a substantive and well-rounded education emphasizing individual student growth and high standards. Individual student growth will be prioritized, valued, and celebrated.

Mental Health Support

UCESC staff recognizes that for students to be effective learners, their mental health needs must be valued and met. Mental health services aim to support all students in their emotional, psychological, and social well-being. UCESC staff will develop programs that help students foster the skills and coping mechanisms they need to manage their mental health and succeed in school. These supports and services will create a nurturing environment where children feel appreciated and supported, contributing significantly to their overall well-being and success.

Countywide Supports and Services

Countywide educational supports and services encompass a comprehensive array of programs, resources, and initiatives designed to enhance and enrich the educational experience for all students across Union County. These supports for our partner districts are planned and implemented to address the diverse and changing needs of students, families, educators, and the community as a whole.

Facilities

In the context of meeting student and staff needs, school facilities refer to the physical infrastructure and resources, including technology, that provide a safe environment to support various academic, extracurricular, and developmental activities. The design and availability of these spaces directly influence the quality of education and the range of programs offered, catering to students' diverse learning styles, interests, and abilities. These facilities are essential for creating safe environments that are conducive to facilitating learning, fostering creativity, promoting social interaction, and ensuring students' success.

Family Supports and Services

Family supports and services recognize families' crucial role in their children's education and well-being and provide resources and support to help them be effective partners in the learning process. This partnership is designed to encompass various programs and resources to strengthen the connection between families and schools, empower families to support their child's learning and development, and promote a positive school climate

Recruitment and Retention

The goal of recruitment is to bring new staff into the organization who share UCESC's ideals. These individuals will empower our unique and diverse learners by designing and implementing pedagogy and student supports that meet the students' needs while embracing, valuing, and accepting their individuality and believing in their potential.

Retention aims to further develop and encourage our existing staff. By participating in district, school, and individual professional development opportunities, UCESC staff will be lifelong learners who can meet the needs of the ever-changing student population. Additionally, all staff contribute to fostering a positive, inclusive, and highly communicative school culture where they feel valued and respected, creating a rewarding work environment.

5-Year Plans

Community of Care for Students - Behavioral Services

DEFINITION: The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Behavioral Services - UCESC will develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to proactively addressing the behavior needs of students by implementing programs and strategies that promote overall skill development and decrease interfering behaviors. This includes positive behavior interventions, social-emotional learning programs, and tiered behavior plans, fostering a nurturing environment for every student's development.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will create a comprehensive inventory of Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior supports for each program and document the data systems currently used to collect baseline behavior information. For programs with gaps, UCESC will identify the necessary behavior supports to implement data collection systems to ensure 100% coverage of behavior baseline data collection systems for Tier 1 supports across all programs.	● A clear understanding of existing Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior supports current data collection systems, and gaps in data systems across current programs. ● A clear understanding of necessary supports to address gaps in Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior supports and behavior data collection. ● A solid foundation for scaling behavior interventions and data collection across programs enabling us to respond to student needs effectively.	Creation of an Inventory Tool: ● A structured framework or tool to document and analyze Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior supports and data systems across programs. Gain Access to Data Systems: ● Access to existing behavior data collection systems and processes for reviewing and documenting current practices. Resource Allocation: ● Budget/personnel/time for implementing or updating data systems and addressing identified gaps. Training and Professional Development:	Creation of a Google Drive folder that includes: ● Inventory of Tier 1 supports for each program ● Inventory of Tier 2 supports for each program List of data systems used to collect baseline behavioral data ● Development of a report of gaps per program.

		● Training for staff on identifying effective Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior supports and implementing consistent data collection practices.	
By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, UCESC will expand Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior supports district-wide, guided by the data collected during the 2024-2025 needs assessment. The organization will strengthen behavior data tracking systems to ensure accuracy and consistency, analyze trends to identify areas of need, and designate staff in each program as behavior data specialists. For programs lacking skilled staff, UCESC will implement targeted training programs or hire additional certified behavior staff (e.g., BCBAs, RBTs) to build capacity for effective behavior data collection and analysis across all programs. The organization will be prepared to deliver BACB CEUs for BACB certificate holding staff, and outside staff, through ACE accreditation.			
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, UCESC will expand Tier 2 behavior services and supports district-wide to address the needs of students requiring targeted interventions, guided by the previous year's data. The organization will develop and deliver advanced training for staff on Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), and supporting data collection practices.			

Tier 1 supports will also be refined and optimized based on behavioral data trends. UCESC will also compile a detailed inventory of existing Tier 3 services and research additional evidence-based Tier 3 options to prepare for their integration. The organization will roll out a BACB CEU catalogue and offer regularly occurring CEUs for BACB-certified staff both within and outside of the Commission.			
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will implement Tier 3 individualized behavior supports for students with severe behavior needs, informed by the inventory and research conducted in the prior year. The organization will deepen the integration of behavior analysis and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) principles throughout the academic curriculum to support all students. Additionally, UCESC will establish and launch a commission-wide digital behavior data tracking system to enhance consistency, accessibility, and analysis of behavior data across all programs.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will fully integrate tiered behavior supports, behavior data collection systems, and dedicated behavior support staff into organizational policies and practices across all programs. A sustainability and succession plan for behavior programs and staff will be developed, including BACB supervision and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for BACB certificate-holding staff,			

Community of Care for Students - Curriculum and Instruction (Information Literacy)

DEFINITION: The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Curriculum and Instruction - UCESC will develop a structured, coherent, and rigorous course of study tailored to meet each student's individual needs while maximizing their potential as learners and global citizens. Teachers will utilize instructional strategies that provide a substantive and well-rounded education emphasizing individual student growth and high standards. Individual student growth will be prioritized, valued, and celebrated.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will develop and seek board approval for an Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Plan and an accompanying Artificial Intelligence Literacy Scope and Sequence	- How other school districts have addressed their AI policies. - Staff knowledge and experience with Artificial Intelligence - Gaps and strengths of UCESC staff in their understanding and use of AI. - Useful resources and best practices with regards to effectively utilizing Artificial Intelligence as a tool for both students and staff.	- Form an AI Policy Committee. - Review existing draft and board-approved policies from other school districts. - Develop a draft for review and feedback. - Form an AI Literacy Committee. - Review existing AI resources and curricula from other school districts and government and non-government agencies. - Implement a survey of UCESC staff to assess their knowledge and use of Artificial Intelligence.	- Board-approved Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy (submitted for first reading by the May 2025 meeting) - UCESC Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy Scope and Sequence

		● Develop a draft curriculum plan for review and feedback.	
By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, all UCESC staff will: ● Participate in professional development sessions focused on the ethical and effective use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in education. ● Gain access to a comprehensive library of resources on AI applications for both students and faculty.			
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, UCESC staff will participate in professional development and curriculum review sessions to integrate the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Information Literacy.			
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will develop and introduce comprehensive rubrics for each school and program to assess students' information literacy skills and knowledge as defined by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will utilize student work samples and accompanying rubrics to assess and set goals for future work in the area of information literacy.			

Community of Care for Students - Curriculum and Instruction (Professional Learning)

DEFINITION: The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Curriculum and Instruction - UCESC will develop a structured, coherent, and rigorous course of study tailored to meet each student's individual needs while maximizing their potential as learners and global citizens. Teachers will utilize instructional strategies that provide a substantive and well-rounded education emphasizing individual student growth and high standards. Individual student growth will be prioritized, valued, and celebrated.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will have conducted an audit of its current professional learning systems' alignment with the 2022 Standards for Professional Learning and created a four-year plan for addressing areas of need of improvement.	• The audit results will inform district practices and guide district improvement planning for the Professional Learning Plan for the District.	• Analyze current PL plans to measure any current alignment with the 2022 Standards for Professional Learning • Identify Benchmark Data to provide a clear picture of UCESC's current practices to determine where to focus resources	• An organizational chart aligning current practices to the 2022 Standards for Professional Learning has been developed • An organizational chart with the next steps has been developed
By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, TBD based on the results of the audit.			
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, TBD			
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, TBD			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC's professional learning program will adhere to the 2022 Standards for Professional Learning.			

Community of Care for Students - Curriculum and Instruction (Staff Evaluations)

DEFINITION: The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Curriculum and Instruction - UCESC will develop a structured, coherent, and rigorous course of study tailored to meet each student's individual needs while maximizing their potential as learners and global citizens. Teachers will utilize instructional strategies that provide a substantive and well-rounded education emphasizing individual student growth and high standards. Individual student growth will be prioritized, valued, and celebrated.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will revise the annual Teacher Assistant evaluation system to ensure it accurately reflects current best practices, aligns with district priorities, and effectively supports the professional growth and development of all Teacher Assistants.	● Current best practices in teacher assistant evaluation ● How well the current evaluation system aligns with Teacher Assistant job responsibilities	● Convene an advisory committee of certified staff, teacher assistants, and administrators ● Review the current teacher assistant evaluation and research best practices in teacher assistant evaluation and review evaluation systems from other educational services commissions. ● Revise the current teacher assistant evaluation to align with findings from research. ● Present teachers' assistant evaluation to the board of directors for approval. ● Create a professional learning session for all teacher assistants to be provided in September 2025.	● Board-approved Teacher Assistant evaluation system.

By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, UCESC will revise the annual evaluation system for related service providers to ensure it accurately reflects current best practices, aligns with district priorities, and effectively supports the professional growth and development of all related service providers.			
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will revise the annual evaluation system for teachers to ensure it accurately reflects current best practices, aligns with district priorities, and effectively supports the professional growth and development of all teachers.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will revise the annual evaluation system for support staff to ensure it accurately reflects current best practices, aligns with district priorities, and effectively supports the professional growth and development of all support staff			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will have reviewed and revised, when necessary, all district evaluation systems and documented the changes in a newly revised UCESC Evaluation Manual.			

Community of Care for Students - Mental Health Support (MTSS)

DEFINITION: The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Mental Health Support - UCESC staff recognizes that for students to be effective learners, their mental health needs must be valued and met. Mental health services aim to support all students in their emotional, psychological, and social well-being. UCESC staff will develop programs that help students foster the skills and coping mechanisms they need to manage their mental health and succeed in school. These supports and services will create a nurturing environment where children feel appreciated and supported, contributing significantly to their overall well-being and success.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, all schools will have implemented reflective cycles to create action plans for Tier 2 students.	- Reflective cycle strategies - Ways that PLCs can assess the effectiveness of the reflective cycle system the school created	- Create systems for utilizing a reflective cycle after a student is identified as needing Tier 2 services. - Utilize PLC time to reflect upon the use of reflective cycles.	- Each school will submit a form that they use when conducting reflective cycles. - Each school PLC will identify three ways in which the cycles worked well and three areas that need adjustment.
By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, 100% of UCESC schools and departments will implement and evaluate at least two Tier 2 interventions stemming from a data-driven reflection cycle. This will be achieved by developing and maintaining a digital tracker that documents all action plans, implementation progress, and evaluation results for each intervention.			
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, UCESC will create a training and consultation model for using the reflective cycle to design and implement Tier 2 interventions.			

By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will partner with a Union County district to pilot a program that utilizes the reflective cycle for designing and implementing interventions for students in MTSS Tier 2. This pilot program will include a rigorous data collection and analysis component to inform program modifications and ensure optimal effectiveness. UCESC will collect data on and use this data to make evidence-based alterations.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will offer consultation services to districts in mental health and emotional regulation programming.			

Community of Care for Students - Mental Health Support (Restorative Practices)

DEFINITION: The Community of Care for Students is a comprehensive framework fostering a supportive environment where students' well-being, safety, and academic development are prioritized through a culture of empathy, inclusivity, and proactive support. This framework includes student behavioral services, curriculum and instruction, and mental health support.

Mental Health Support - UCESC staff recognizes that for students to be effective learners, their mental health needs must be valued and met. Mental health services aim to support all students in their emotional, psychological, and social well-being. UCESC staff will develop programs that help students foster the skills and coping mechanisms they need to manage their mental health and succeed in school. These supports and services will create a nurturing environment where children feel appreciated and supported contributing significantly to their overall well-being and success.

Annual Sub-Goals	*What will we learn from our work toward this goal?*	*What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?*	*How will we know we've achieved this goal?*
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, Hillcrest Academy North, Hillcrest Academy South, and Lamberts Mill Academy will implement restorative community-building circles with all of their students at least once a month.	- Elements of restorative practices and community building circles - The philosophy behind restorative practices - Ways in which the restorative practice of amplifying student voice increases school engagement	- Conduct training in the basics of restorative practices and community-building circles. - Meet with school administrative teams to review and build upon the use of restorative practices and community-building circles. - Provide opportunities for individual staff and PLCs to reflect upon their work in this area. - Conduct and analyze responses from quarterly surveys on staff knowledge, understanding, and use of restorative practices.	Each school will provide documentation of community-building circle schedules.

By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, 100% of Hillcrest Academy North, Hillcrest Academy South, and Lamberts Mill Academy will successfully implement restorative conferences in at least five student conflicts within each school. Each school will develop and utilize a standardized tool to assess the impact of restorative practices on a factor selected by the school.			
By the end of the 2026-27 school year. 100% of Hillcrest Academy North, Hillcrest Academy South, and Lamberts Mill Academy will successfully implement a system for integrating and reintegrating students upon enrollment in the program, an in-school or out-of-school suspension, or any absence lasting three or more days.			
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will utilize restorative practices in lieu of in or out-of-school suspensions for at least ten incidents.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, Hillcrest Academy North, Hillcrest Academy South, and Lamberts Mill Academy will decrease the suspension rate from 22% in 2022-23 to 15%. Disenrollment for attendance, not including students who never attend, and disciplinary infractions will decrease from 26% in the 2022-23 school year to 15%.			

Countywide Supports and Services

DEFINITION: Countywide educational supports and services encompass a comprehensive array of programs, resources, and initiatives designed to enhance and enrich the educational experience for all students across Union County. These supports for our partner districts are planned and implemented to address the diverse and changing needs of students, families, educators, and the community as a whole.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will implement Behavioral Services (BCBA) for local public and charter schools, including Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), Behavioral Improvement Plans (BIPs), and consultation services.	● UCESC will be able to assess the overall needs of our behavioral services in partner districts. ● UCESC will be able to determine what additional resources/personnel are necessary to continue to support partner districts in their behavior needs.	● Experienced BCBAs. ● Rapport and relationships with partner districts. ● Team or Committee to meet with districts, organize staff, and create procedures. ● Support of the behavioral team at UCESC. ● Template/Blueprint for FBAs & BIPs.	● UCESC will receive and complete at least five behavioral referrals/FBAs/BIPs. ● Partner districts know the behavioral services UCESC can offer/provide and how to access these services.
By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, UCESC will expand services to local public and charter schools by establishing Work-Based Learning (WBL) internship opportunities and transition planning/programming.			
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, UCESC will establish relationships with at least five local public and charter schools to identify and address their Behavioral and Transition needs through targeted assessments and services. UCESC will design, pilot, and analyze a consultation model to assist charter and public schools in creating specialized special education programs.			

By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will provide tailored consultations to at least three public and charter schools to support the establishment and growth of in-district specialized educational programs. UCESC will create and deliver professional development opportunities to help districts maintain and enhance their in-district programs.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will provide a comprehensive range of both in-district and off-site professional development opportunities for local public and charter schools, including CST services, Behavioral Services, Mental Health Services, Program Development, and Transition Services. UCESC will expand its service offerings to include full CST services, Behavioral Services, Mental Health Services, Program Development, and Transition Services to meet district needs comprehensively.			

Facilities

DEFINITION: In the context of meeting student and staff needs, school facilities refer to the physical infrastructure and resources, including technology, that provide a safe environment to support various academic, extracurricular, and developmental activities. The design and availability of these spaces directly influence the quality of education and the range of programs offered, catering to students' diverse learning styles, interests, and abilities. These facilities are essential for creating safe environments that are conducive to facilitating learning, fostering creativity, promoting social interaction, and ensuring students' success.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will have purchased a suitable property to consolidate the Commission, Nonpublic Services, Work Readiness Academy, and Westlake School, enhancing operational efficiency and potentially reducing overall costs. Planning for alterations at 45 Cardinal Drive will begin.	- Legal and regulatory considerations for the building acquisition - Prioritizing costs to best meet the students' needs	- Building inspections - Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the building's structural integrity, safety, and functionality. - Zoning variance - Develop a plan for relocating existing operations during upgrades. - Develop a detailed budget for all necessary upgrades and renovations. - Present the project plan, including the budget and proposed upgrades, to the board for approval.	- Successful completion of purchase. - Architectural plan for the expansion of Crossroads School at 45 Cardinal Drive.

By August 31, 2026, construction of all alterations at 45 Cardinal Drive will be completed and fully inspected and approved by all relevant authorities. This will enable Crossroads School to commence operations at the newly redesigned building by September 1, 2026.			
By August 31, 2027, construction of all learning labs and Nonpublic Department teacher workspace at 53 Cardinal Drive will be completed and fully functional, enabling the relocation and commencement of operations for the Work Readiness Academy and Nonpublic Services at this location.			
By August 31, 2028, the construction of classrooms and offices for Westlake School at 53 Cardinal Drive will be completed and fully functional, enabling the relocation and commencement of operations for Westlake School at this location. Hillcrest Academy North will move to 1571 Lamberts Mill Road.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will have consolidated all school and district operations into the three properties owned by UCESC, eliminating the need for all building leases.			

Family Supports and Services

DEFINITION: Family supports and services recognize families' crucial role in their children's education and well-being and provide resources and support to help them be effective partners in the learning process. This partnership is designed to encompass various programs and resources to strengthen the connection between families and schools, empower families to support their child's learning and development and promote a positive school climate

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
Throughout the 2025-2027 school years, UCESC will provide opportunities for schools and programs to share relevant information that can be used to support families.	• Survey results and experiences (i.e. Resource Fairs, Programming) will provide school and program level feedback to determine families' needs in order to create programs and identify resources to best support UCESC families.	• Administrators will be provided meeting time to review survey data, and share out ideas and information from planned events to provide other schools and programs ideas and feedback for their Family Supports and Services goals	• A meeting tracker has been utilized to track shared information between schools and programs
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will compile information from all resource directories, programming, school-led fairs, and PTO resources available from the schools and departments as well as NJDOE resources not covered by any UCESC schools.			

By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will add a dedicated section to the district website showcasing each school's information regarding Family Supports and Services.			

Recruitment

DEFINITION: The goal of recruitment is to bring new staff members who share UCESC's ideals into the organization. These individuals will empower our unique and diverse learners by designing and implementing pedagogy and student supports that meet the students' needs while embracing, valuing, and accepting their individuality and believing in their potential.

Retention aims to further develop and encourage our existing staff. By participating in district, school, and individual professional development opportunities, UCESC staff will be lifelong learners who can meet the needs of the ever-changing student population. Additionally, all staff contribute to fostering a positive, inclusive, and highly communicative school culture, where they feel valued and respected, creating a rewarding work environment.

Annual Sub-Goals	*What will we learn from our work toward this goal?*	*What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?*	*How will we know we've achieved this goal?*
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, the UCESC HR Department will have identified at least five strategies for increasing recruitment opportunities designed to bring certified staff members into the district.	- The HR Department will stay current on laws and trends in hiring educators in the State of NJ. - The HR Department will research recruitment strategies and opportunities.	- The HR manager and supervisor of pupil personnel services will attend professional development meetings regarding hiring, staffing shortages, etc. - Attend monthly meetings and participate in the NJSTRIDE Professional Learning Committee.	- HR Department has attended five or more relevant trainings and shared this information accordingly with Central Office staff. - Monthly NJSTRIDE meetings are attended, and committee work is completed. - Create a document that tracks attendance at relevant training with a report of information relevant to recruitment strategies and current laws and trends.

By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, the Human Resources Department will have developed and implemented an equitable interview process for all positions across all UCESC programs and departments. *An additional goal will be developed based on the recruitment strategies developed during the 2024-25 school year	● The District will be able to implement an equitable interview process for all positions across all programs.	● The HR Department will need to create a Google Drive hosting all required interview materials. Training will be provided for Principals/Directors to review this process and the HR Handbook.	● All programs are beginning to utilize the new interview requirements, and Google Drive has been completed.
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, UCESC will have developed at least three partnerships with University programs to recruit qualified candidates.			
By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, UCESC will analyze current partnerships with University programs to determine effectiveness and impact on UCESC recruitment process.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will have working relationships with community partners and Universities to continue to recruit staff members.			

Retention

DEFINITION: The goal of recruitment is to bring new staff into the organization who share UCESC's ideals. These individuals will empower our unique and diverse learners by designing and implementing pedagogy and student supports that meet the students' needs while embracing, valuing, and accepting their individuality and believing in their potential.

Retention aims to further develop and encourage our existing staff. By participating in district, school, and individual professional development opportunities, UCESC staff will be lifelong learners who can meet the needs of the ever-changing student population. Additionally, all staff contribute to fostering a positive, inclusive, and highly communicative school culture, where they feel valued and respected, creating a rewarding work environment.

Annual Sub-Goals	What will we learn from our work toward this goal?	What will we need to do to accomplish this goal?	How will we know we've achieved this goal?
By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, UCESC will have recognized staff member contributions by identifying staff members who have exemplified the values of UCESC's theme for the school year: Empower Every Voice. UCESC will plan, implement, and assess Exit and Stay Interviews to retain our valued staff.	- Through informal observations of staff members, we can determine what best practices are being utilized in our programs. - We will receive input from staff members across our programs, identifying why they continue to work at UCESC. - We will receive input from staff members who are separating from UCESC.	- Collect data from principals and directors on which best practices are being recognized through pin distribution will inform administrators in which areas of UCESC values need attention. - Create, schedule, and conduct Stay and Exit Interviews, collect Qualitative Data, and analyze data to share with the Administrative Team.	- Spreadsheet indicating staff members from all UCESC programs are being recognized for exemplifying values indicated in the current year's theme. 3-4 randomly selected staff members from each UCESC program provided feedback during a Stay Interview and the data has been shared with the Admin Team. 90% of exiting staff members provided feedback on their UCESC experience, and the data was shared with the Admin Team.
By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, the UCESC Mentor Program will be evaluated and revised to enhance its effectiveness, focusing on Improving mentee retention rates.		A thorough review will be conducted, focusing on the application process, paperwork process, and communication protocols	

		within the Mentor Program. This review will include Verification of compliance with all relevant State of New Jersey requirements and district policies using a comprehensive checklist ● Analysis of research from at least three peer-reviewed articles on effective mentoring programs in education, ● Identification of best practices from other successful mentor programs in similar educational settings. ● A committee of 5-7 members, including recent mentors and mentees, will be convened to provide feedback on the current program, specifically addressing the application, paperwork, and communication processes.	
By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, the revised program will be implemented and evaluated, with data collected on mentee retention rates, professional growth, and overall program satisfaction.			

By the end of the 2027-2028 school year, based on the data collected during the 2026-27 school year, the district mentor program will be revised as needed. A data collection tool will be created to track the fulfillment of the program's goals.			
By the end of the 2028-2029 school year, UCESC will analyze the data collected during the 2027-28 school year to create the 2029-2032 mentoring plan.			

Appendix

School	Strand/Link
Crossroads School	1. Behavioral Services 2. Community of Care for Students 3. Curriculum and Instruction 4. Family Supports and Services
Hillcrest Academy North	1. Behavioral Services 2. Community of Care for Students 3. Community of Care for Students 4. Curriculum and Instruction 5. Family Supports and Services
Hillcrest Academy South	1. Behavioral Services 2. Community of Care for Students 3. Community of Care for Students 4. Family Supports and Services
Lamberts Mill Academy	1. Behavioral Services 2. Community of Care for Students 3. Community of Care for Students 4. Curriculum 5. Curriculum 6. Facilities
Non-Public Services	1. Countywide Supports and Services 2. Countywide Supports and Services 3. Recruitment and Retention
Westlake School	1. Community of Care for Students 2. Curriculum 3. Family Supports and Services
Work Readiness Academy	1. Community of Care for Students 2. Community of Care for Students 3. Family Supports and Services