

January 2026

A report from the January 2026 meeting of EASTERN's Joint Operating Committee. EASTERN is a part of the school districts of Abington, Bryn Athyn, Cheltenham, Hatboro-Horsham, Jenkintown, Lower Moreland, Springfield, Upper Dublin, and Upper Moreland.

Summary

- January Student of the Month
- Open House
- Donations
- SkillsUSA Local Competitions
- SkillsUSA State Officer Training
- School Board Appreciation Month
- 2024 – 2025 Financial Audit Report Approved
- NCLA Women in Leadership Summit
- Expanded Learning Opportunity for Allied Health
- Practical Nursing Adjunct Instructor
- Policy C112, Admission of Students
- Practical Nursing Relocation Project
- Internship Supervisors Approved

Coming Events

Joint Committee Meeting

February 11, 2026

*March 11, 2026

April 8, 2026

*May 13, 2026

June 17, 2026

*Seminar Room 8 PM

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Visit our website!

www.eastech.org

January Student of the Month

Gretchen Linn, a Springfield Township High School senior, is the January 2026 Student of the Month at Eastern Center for Arts and Technology (EASTERN) in Willow Grove. Gretchen is being recognized for her outstanding work in EASTERN's Welding Technology program. The Student of the Month Award is sponsored by EASTERN's faculty, Joint Operating Committee, and the Willow Grove Rotary Club to highlight student excellence, success, and service. Ten students each year are selected for this honor.

Gretchen's was inspired by her older sister positive experience at EASTERN. Choosing a program was easy for her—she has known since she was 14 years old that Welding Technology was the perfect fit for her future in Mechanical Engineering.

At EASTERN, Gretchen was elected as a School-Wide SkillsUSA Officer for the PM session, serving as Reporter. She is an active EASTERN volunteer, providing Welding Technology demonstrations during the Open House and Career Expo, and assisting at EASTERN's annual Designer Bag Bingo and Craft Fair. Through her Welding Technology program, she has earned the CareerSafe OSHA 10-Hour Training certification.

Gretchen is a member of EASTERN's Women in Trades Club, led by Meghan Cicchino, Welding Technology Instructor. Last year, the club spoke to a group of female students in a STEM club at Keith Valley Middle School in Hatboro-Horsham.

At Springfield Township High School, Gretchen stands out as a leader and athlete. She serves as Captain of the Varsity Water Polo team, is a proud member of the National Honor Society, and has been recognized as both Student Athlete of the Month and Suburban One League Athlete of the Week.

"Gretchen is smart, helpful, driven, and kind," said Meghan Cicchino, Welding Technology Instructor. "She brings positive energy to the classroom and is always willing to assist with any school project."

After graduating from EASTERN and Springfield Township High School, she plans to attend Rutgers University, or University of Delaware for Mechanical Engineering.

Mark Your Calendar for EASTERN's Open House

Open House at EASTERN in Willow Grove is Sunday, **March 1, 2026**, from 1 – 3:00 p.m.

January 2026

Donations

The Joint Operating Committee approved the following donations:

- Caliber Collision (Wayne, PA) donated 12 gallons of reducer, 6 gallons of paint, 63 quarts of tints, 17 ½ gallon of tints, and 2 gallons of clear for our Collision Repair program
- Upper Dublin Township Police Department donated Alco- Sensor FST and Portable Breath Test instruments for our Protective Services program

SkillsUSA Local Competitions

EASTERN held local competitions from December 1 – 5, 2025. There were 34 trade competitions as well as 12 leadership competitions that EASTEN students competed in. We had 66 first place winners, including winning teams, who will be attending the district level competitions from January 23 – 28, 2026 with EASTERN staff chaperones at Bucks County Technical High School.

SkillsUSA State Officer Training

The Joint Operating Committee approved travel for Student Success Coordinator, Rebecca Ashworth; Protective Services/Hatboro-Horsham student Lucas Smith; and Design, Photography, and Illustration/Abington student Ace Williams; to attend the SkillsUSA State Officer Training on January 29-30, 2026, in Altoona, PA.

January is School Board Appreciation Month

January is School Board Appreciation Month! At EASTERN, we want to acknowledge and thank our Joint Operating Committee for their dedication to career and technical education, and to continuous program improvement.

2024-2025 Financial Audit Report Approved

The Joint Operating Committee approved the Audit Report for the school year ended June 30, 2025, as prepared by Barbacane Thornton & Company.

NCLA Women in CTE Leadership Summit

The Joint Operating Committee approved Dr. Cathleen Plesnarski to attend the NCLA Women in CTE Leadership Summit in Dallas, Texas from March 23 – 25. Dr. Plesnarski was invited to attend to help steer the program, and to participate in a panel discussion by NCLA CEO, Dr. Rachael Mann.

BOARD BRIEF

Expanded Learning Opportunity for Allied Health

The Joint Operating Committee approved Ms. Allison Latzo, EASTERN's Allied Health Instructor, to attend an Anatomy Tournament with up to four students at Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport, PA on March 4 – 5, 2026.

Practical Nursing Adjunct Instructor

The Joint Operating Committee approved Lauren Medley, BSN, RN, as Practical Nursing Adjunct Instructor for the remainder of the 2025 – 2026 school year.

Policy C112, Admission of Students

The Joint Operating Committee was presented with the first reading of Policy C112, Admission of Students. The policy includes language clarifying the new suggested policy regarding students who participate in charter school education. The suggested language is as follows:

EASTERN retains the authority to disenroll a student in the event a student no longer has a legal entitlement to attend EASTERN.

Practical Nursing Relocation Project

The Joint Operating Committee approved the bid tabulation for the Practical Nursing Relocation Project. With the addition of the new Construction Careers and Management program beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, the Practical Nursing Program will relocate to Upper Moreland School District's former Administration Building, located across the street from EASTERN. The move is scheduled for this upcoming summer.

Cooperative Education/Internship Supervisors Approved

The following Supervisors have been approved for student internships:

- Gary Marchewski from Stahl Electrica, Inc. was approved to supervise Jack Bender from Electrical Technology/Springfield Township High School
- Matt Batchelor from Batchelor Home Improvements from approved to supervise Jayden Fitsimmons from Carpentry/Hatboro-Horsham High School.
- Tom Toth from O'Donnell Metal Fabricators was approved to supervise Edward O'Brien from Welding Technology/Abington Senior High school.