



ESCNJ

Express

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Spring 2026

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey



ESCNJ Launches Partnership with Paper Mill Playhouse

On April 16, 2026, the Paper Mill Playhouse engaged ESCNJ's Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Future Foundations Academy students with an autism-friendly performance of 101 Dalmatians!

Over 100 ESCNJ students enjoyed a professional theater performance designed specifically to meet the needs of audience members with autism.

The Paper Mill Playhouse defines these performances as "theater experiences in which the environment and typical 'rules of attendance' have been relaxed to provide a comfortable and judgment-free space to accommodate individuals with autism or developmental disabilities and the families and professionals who support them."

Full Story continued on page 2

2026 - 27 School Year

**First Day of School
September 3, 2026**

On The Inside

New Vice Principal at FFA

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ESCNJ Celebrate Graduates

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FFA Welcomes Julio Lopez as Vice Principal

F SCNJ is pleased to welcome Julio Lopez as the new Vice Principal at Future Foundations Academy (FFA). Mr. Lopez joins us with more than 15 years of experience in special education.

A versatile and motivational Spanish-speaking leader, Mr. Lopez excels in team building and delivering measurable progress for both students and staff. His professional background includes roles as a special education paraprofessional, transition coordinator, and director of special services.

"I'm excited to be here and to be part of the FFA and the Commission," said Mr. Lopez. "I look forward to working with the students and staff to maintain a positive school culture."

His experience provides the foundation to assist in creating complex master schedules that optimize instructional time and resource allocation.

Mr. Lopez earned his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University and holds two Master's degrees from the University of Phoenix and Montclair State University.



Students Enjoy a Theatrical Production at the Piscataway Campus



Unlike typical theater productions, these special performances ensure autism-friendly accommodations, such as:

- Lights on, but dimmed
- Consistent sound levels
- "Bring your own materials" access
- Electronic devices permitted for communication and motivational systems.
- Ease of movement and talking
- Activity areas

Designed by board-certified behavior analysts and Paper Mill access staff, the production allowed

BBLC and FFA students to enjoy a relaxed, inclusive environment.

The ESCNJ Behavioral Support Team created and facilitated sensory spaces for students who needed access to enjoy the show, while the ESCNJ Buildings & Grounds and Safety Teams ensured the space was safe and aligned with student needs.

Members of the Paper Mill community who were in attendance shared how impressed they were with the knowledge of and expert care for our students.

ESCNJ looks forward to exploring additional opportunities for accessible productions and thanks the Paper Mill Playhouse for the generosity!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 ESCNJ GRADUATES

Academy Learning Center:

Joseph Caiazza
Dymtro Dibrov
Matthew Klimik
Kyle Lin
Fiton Mjeshtri
Zahra Wertz

Center for Lifelong Learning:

Malik Arbaz
Darius Berden
Isaac Booth
Janaya Brunson-Hyatt
Brendan Donnelly
Aiden Downes
Christian Elias Villa
Alexis Hernandez-Martinez
Rajeev Manukondu
Konya Owusu
Saniya Rahman
Sadhana Reddy
Rida Siddique
Shianyna Timmers
Daniella Wassel

Future Foundations Academy:

Jordan Check
William Craig
Jefferson Cruz
Kareem Eschek
Malik Horton
Randeep Kehal
Jacob Lawrence
Nihal Malekar
Sierra Melendez
Emmanuela Mezikpih
Nanda Ranganathan
Tyangelo Tucker
Alysia Wood

Piscataway Regional Day School:

Safeerah Allicock
William Bolton
Bryan Dorisme
Anayanelli Gomez
Magaly Lopez
Kimberly Montanez
Najla Namoya
Cesar Perez
Parnika Ram-Mohan
Adrian Robinson-Brazziel
Christopher Samayoa

Pathways to Adult Learning Completion Certificate

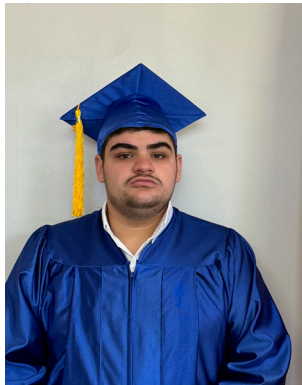
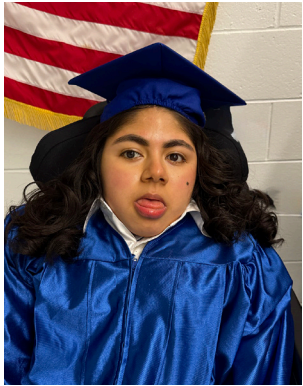
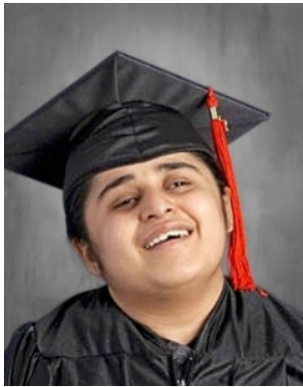
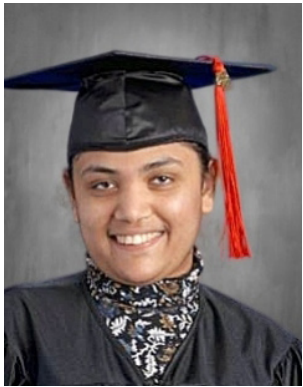
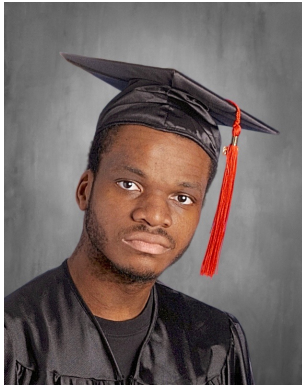
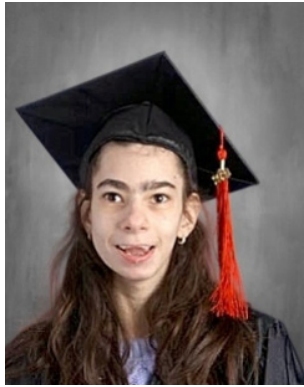
Michael Jenkins
Brian Neal
Maria Santos
Nivea Williams



ESCNI HONORS CLASS OF 2026!



ESCNI HONORS CLASS OF 2026!



SPRING 2026

2026 ESCNJ Vendor EXPO a Resounding Success

The 2026 ESCNJ Vendor EXPO was held on May 20 at Raritan Center in Edison, creating the ideal opportunity to mingle and meet for potential business opportunities.

Featuring dozens of Co-op vendors and members, this year's event was one of the largest gatherings since the annual EXPO launched in 2011, drawing more than 700 members and 118 vendors.

The day began with a complimentary breakfast followed by four presentation sessions covering topics ranging from cybersecurity and code changes to cooperative purchasing, energy sustainability, records management, and public works project management — all offering CEU credits at no cost.

A new presentation by the ESCNJ Co-op team was exceptionally well attended, as members were eager to hear the latest updates. After lunch, the afternoon opened up for vendor interactions and giveaways across the expo floor.

A standout addition this year was the ESCNJ Student Art Exhibit, featuring beautiful artwork created by students from ESCNJ schools in Piscataway, Sayreville, and Monroe.

Attendees were enthusiastic in their praise, and the exhibit added a wonderful sense of community spirit to the event. The Ambassadors from the PAL and ACS programs also deserve recognition for their outstanding work assisting and directing attendees and exhibitors throughout the day.

The EXPO also welcomed special guest Eric LeGrand, who attended as a guest of Whirl Construction. Attendees were thrilled to meet the former Rutgers University football player who has gone on to build a remarkable career as an entrepreneur, motivational speaker, sports analyst, author, and philanthropist.

Overall, the 2026 ESCNJ Vendor EXPO was an overwhelming success, once again proving its value as a premier platform for networking and collaboration. ESCNJ thanks all members, vendors, presenters, volunteers, and guests for a truly exceptional event, and looks forward to next year's EXPO.



Sixth Student from PAL to Earn the Prestigious Rebecca S. McDonald Award

Maria Santos, affectionately known as "Jupiter" by her friends, recently became the sixth Pathways to Adult Living (PAL) student to receive the Rebecca S. McDonald Award from the Transition Coordinators Network of New Jersey since 2019. This prestigious honor is presented to a senior or aging-out student who has demonstrated exceptional achievement in transitioning successfully into the adult world.

When Jupiter joined the PAL Program in July 2024, she arrived as a quiet and reserved young adult who often preferred solitude. In those early days, she kept to herself and sought out peaceful spaces, slowly acclimating to her new environment on her own terms. Few could have predicted the transformation that lay ahead.

Jupiter's vocational journey unfolded through PAL's work-study program, where she explored a variety of job sampling experiences. She presented at the Dare to Dream Leadership Conference, participated in the SWAP Meet in Trenton, and assisted at the ESCNJ Vendor Event at the New Jersey Convention and Expo Center.



District Case Manager Sarah McCulloh, Mrs. Santos, Maria "Jupiter" Santos, Job Coach Tomasa Joiner, Mr. Santos and Teacher Marci Rubin



In a particularly memorable achievement, she independently entered — and won — an art contest through the ARC of New Jersey, themed "Highlighting Our Abilities." Her winning design was featured on a t-shirt and made available online, an accomplishment that brought her well-deserved recognition and pride.

"Over the past two years, Jupiter has worked tirelessly to build her social skills and step outside of her comfort zone. As her confidence grew, so did her willingness to engage with others and advocate for herself," said PAL Supervisor Denise Geddis. "It is hard to say who is more excited about what comes next — Jupiter or the PAL staff who have had the privilege of walking alongside her."

Her teacher, Marci Rubin, and job coach Tomasa Joiner at the Grover Cleveland Travel Plaza, were both instrumental in supporting her growth every step of the way.

As Jupiter prepares to exit PAL in June 2026, she does so with confidence, purpose, and an exciting future ahead.

She has secured a position at Starbucks — a milestone that reflects both her dedication and her growth. She is also exploring the possibility of enrolling in courses at her local community college this fall, and she is looking forward to her upcoming Person-Centered Planning meeting, where she will proudly share her goals with her support network.

Celebrating Our Students: FFA Artists Recognized in the NJDOE Autism Acceptance Virtual Art Expo

Every April, schools throughout New Jersey join together to participate in schoolwide and community activities to commemorate Autism Acceptance Month. In support and recognition of students with autism spectrum disorder, the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Special Education promotes acceptance and awareness of ASD as an opportunity for educators, students, and parents to celebrate students on the spectrum.

This year, the NJDOE curated more than 200 original artworks from students across New Jersey with autism and their allies for a Virtual Art Expo. This year's inspiring theme — "What's in a Dream?" — invited students to share their visions, hopes, and imaginations through creative expression.

- Ethan (Carteret)
- Derek (Plainfield)
- Khalil (New Brunswick)
- Cheick (Plainfield)
- Nigel (Plainfield)
- Nate (New Brunswick)
- John (New Brunswick)

We are thrilled to announce that several of our talented FFA students have been recognized in this prestigious statewide exhibit! Their artwork is a testament to their creativity, perseverance, and the incredible work happening every day across our programs.

Please join us in celebrating the following students and their remarkable contributions:

We are incredibly proud of each of these students for sharing their talent and their dreams with the world. Their participation in this virtual expo highlights the importance of inclusion, self-expression, and the powerful voices of students on the spectrum. Congratulations to all of our recognized artists — you make us proud every day!



ESCNJ Celebrates the 2026 Middlesex County Unsung Heroes



Alexander Flesch, Academy Learning Center

Alexander is a kind and caring young man whose smile can light up any room. He has overcome many academic, functional, and personal challenges with strength and determination. Throughout this year, Alexander has made exceptional academic progress, maintained nearly perfect attendance, and demonstrated tremendous growth in both his learning and independence. He has truly blossomed into his personality and shown remarkable maturity. Alexander's perseverance, positivity, and growth continue to inspire not only his classmates but also his teacher every day.

- Rebecca Josephson, Teacher, Academy Learning Center



Kyle Lin, Academy Learning Center

Kyle Lin is a truly deserving "Unsung Hero" at Academy Learning Center. Since joining ALC during the 2020–2021 school year amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, Kyle has consistently demonstrated dedication, perseverance, and a positive attitude. He approaches each day with determination, contributes positively to classroom morale, and always strives to do his best. Over the years, Kyle has shown tremendous personal growth, significantly reducing interfering behaviors while developing effective coping strategies to manage daily challenges. He takes great pride in his work both in the classroom and through the Job Sampling Program, where he has successfully maintained employment at a local restaurant. Kyle's resilience, strong character, and work ethic make him an inspiration to both students and staff, truly embodying the spirit of an Unsung Hero.

- Alexis Cullen, Teacher, Academy Learning Center



Christian Elias-Villa, Center for Lifelong Learning

Christian is a cheerful and friendly student at Center for Lifelong Learning who is always eager to help others. He actively participates in all classroom activities and waters plants in the greenhouse and around the school as his school job. Christian also has work-based learning jobs off campus, at Bubbas he cleans all the booths and menus. If he notices someone who is upset, he quickly steps in to offer assistance. Christian loves to sing and dance, and he has a strong passion for World Wrestling Entertainment, which he enjoys talking about enthusiastically.

- Shashi Gross, Teacher, Center for Lifelong Learning



Jefferson Cruz, Future Foundations Academy

Jefferson Cruz is a student at Future Foundations Academy who can be relied upon at a moment's notice. He is always willing to support his classmates and consistently steps up to help with any task within FFA. Jefferson completes every job with confidence, reliability, and ease, making him a dependable and valued member of the school community.

- Katie Feiles, Principal, Future Foundations Academy



Jordan Check, Future Foundations Academy

Jordan Check is a student at Future Foundations Academy who is highly attentive to her surroundings and consistently contributes to keeping the classroom organized. Her willingness to help during vocational tasks is evident in her focus, responsibility, and dedication to doing her best. Jordan's attentiveness and strong work ethic play an important role in her success and positively support the learning environment for everyone. Jordan is also a Special Olympics gold medal winner in Freestyle and Backstroke!

- Katie Feiles, Principal, Future Foundations Academy



Safeerah Allicock, Piscataway Regional Day School

It is an honor to share more about Safeerah, a 21-year-old student at Piscataway Regional Day School (PRDS) for the past five years. A sociable and hardworking young lady, Safeerah has overcome personal challenges with determination, taking great pride in her education and her role as an ASL teacher to her peers and staff.

As she prepares for graduation, Safeerah remains focused on improving her reading skills and independence. She is an effective self-advocate who actively shapes her IEP and participates in all pre-vocational programs, including a paid work-study internship. Her dedication to her community and her dream of becoming a teacher are evident in her work at the school cafe and her effortless ability to connect with others.

In recognition of her leadership, kindness, and positive influence, Safeerah has been selected to speak on behalf of her peers at the 2026 graduation ceremony. She truly embodies the dedication and inspiration for which she is being honored.

- Traci Yuhas, Teacher, Piscataway Regional Day School



Parnika Ram-Mohammed, Piscataway Regional Day School

It has been a privilege to watch Parnika grow during her years at PRDS. Originally shy, she has developed significant independence and courage, now navigating the halls with confidence using her motorized wheelchair or walker.

Parnika demonstrates a strong work ethic and a positive attitude in all environments. She is a natural leader and social peer who enjoys gym class, delivering coffee, and playing UNO. Additionally, she excels in our pre-vocational program, successfully completing tasks such as sorting, packaging, and fulfilling Ellison orders.

Parnika is a kind, compassionate student whose presence brings joy to our entire school community.

- Traci Yuhas, Teacher, Piscataway Regional Day School

Spring Refresh: Here's What's New at the ESCNJ Aquatics & Fitness Center

Spring is a season of renewal, and at the ESCNJ Aquatics & Fitness Center, located at 333 Cheesequake Road in Sayreville, behind the Center for Lifelong Learning, they are blooming with exciting updates to help you reach your wellness goals. From fresh class additions to a streamlined digital experience, there has never been a better time to dive back into a fitness routine.

Jump Into Our Newest Classes – ESCNJ is thrilled to expand the aquatic and specialized programming. These additions join the robust current schedule, which includes favorites like **Body Pump**, **Zumba**, **Cycle**, and **Vinyasa Yoga**. Finally, following a successful AEA Workshop, we are preparing to introduce several new classes to our lineup:

- **Aqua Cardio** and **H2O Body Sculpting** for low-impact, high-intensity results.
- **Aqua Zumba**, bringing the dance party to the pool.
- **Rated M for Mature**, a class specifically tailored for our active older adult community.

Sleeker Online Experience - A **full visual overhaul** was performed to make your digital experience as smooth as your workout. Key updates include:

- **Enhanced Navigation:** Condensed scattered tabs and added interactive widgets to make finding information easier than ever.
- **Mobile & Performance Optimization:** By condensing image file sizes and updating the backend, the site now loads faster and performs better on all devices.
- **Professional Design:** A new, sleek aesthetic featuring muted colors that are easier on the eyes.

Personal Training Packages: Looking for one-on-one guidance? Our certified trainers are ready to help with packages ranging from **Bronze (8 sessions for \$600)** to **Platinum (24 sessions for \$1,440)**.

Membership & Training Updates - To continue providing top-tier facilities and instruction, the updated pricing structure will take effect **June 1, 2026**. Offering flexible tiers to fit every lifestyle, with all basic memberships including access to the pool, gym, group classes, and childcare.

Tier	Monthly Rate	Key Features
Basic Single	\$45	1 Orientation, 1 Quarterly Consultation
Basic Couple	\$80	All Basic features +2 Guest passes per month
VIP	\$100	1 Monthly Consult, 10% off Personal Training, +4 Guest passes per month
Seniors (62+)	\$15 Single / \$25 Couple	Includes Basic features and a \$30 discount on the annual fee

Monthly Membership Rates:

More Ways to Pay - Striving to be as flexible as possible to accommodate the members' needs. In addition to cash, credit, check, and ACH, we are excited to announce that **Tap-To-Pay options (Apple Cash and Google Pay)** are coming soon. Continuing to partner with providers like **SilverSneakers**, **RenewActive**, **Clover**, **Braven**, **Tivity**, and **Wellhub**, many of which may fully cover membership costs!

Note: A \$30 enrollment fee applies at sign-up, and a \$60 annual maintenance fee is charged to keep the facility in peak condition.

For more information, contact the membership desk at 732-317-0333 or visit the website at theaquaticscenter.com.



Swimming

Lessons For All

Making a splash with every lesson! Dive into fun and learning at our kids' swimming classes! Adaptive lessons available! Stop by the front desk today for more information or check out our website!

Featured:

- Certified Instructors
- Private Facility
- Affordable Price
- Early Access for Members!

Inclusive Activities

- Learn To Swim
- Learn To Breathe
- Learn To Float



Classes Start : 7/1/26!

Registration Opens

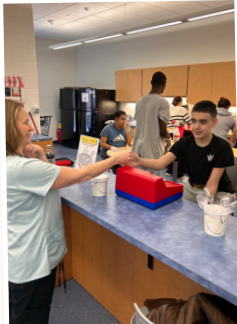
Members – 4/20/26
Non – Members – 4/22/26

Registration Closes

For ALL: 6/1/26



LOOKING BACK ON ALL OUR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



During these cold winter days, students from FFA prepared soups, developing culinary skills such as measuring ingredients, following recipes, practicing kitchen safety, and working collaboratively, while providing warmth and support to staff.



ACS participants working together to perfect their job skills, daily activities and enjoying the friendships they have made along the way.



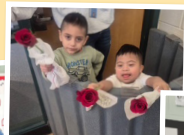
FFA students celebrated Valentine's Day this year by selling Valentine's Day cards, soups and snacks to the Professional Conference Center participants.



The energy was electric at the CLL Science Fair! Staff and students got hands-on experience with some amazing experiments, from bubbling lava lamps to exploring the sense of touch and the science of clean hands.



In February, staff and students from CLL went all out to celebrate International Day, a highly anticipated and well received event. Each class selected a country to study and showcased engaging displays that included fun facts, traditions, and cultural customs from around the world. This event fostered a sense of global awareness and appreciation for diversity among students and families.



BBLC had a great week celebrating the 100th Day of school by making t-shirts and counting to 100! They also loved the schoolwide Valentine's Day dance and flower deliveries.



Students and staff from PRDS learned about other countries during International Week with a passport around the world within the school!

LOOKING BACK ON ALL OUR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



February was a busy month for the students from NuView Academy. From cupcake decorating for Valentine's Day to an ice cream social to celebrate kindness and friendship to wrapping up the month with bracelets and peace signs to celebrate Black History Month.



Students and staff from CLL participated the American Heart Association's Heart Healthy Challenge. The fun but challenging obstacle courses were set up by CLL's Adaptive Physical Education Teachers, Craig Haberstroh and Anthony Zammit. The goal was for everyone to increase their heart rates while exercising and moving through each obstacle.



Academy Learning Center was honored with a banner from the American Cancer Society, Northeast Region, in recognition of their fundraising efforts for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.



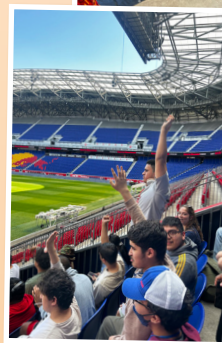
The ACS participants loved spending the day at the Equine Therapy in Long Valley, NJ. Maggie helped change the mask on the horse to prevent flies from getting in her eyes.



Thank you to the Edison Eagles Basketball and Cheerleading Teams for hosting the PRDS pep rally during spirit week!



Rutgers Master Gardener Margaret Nemeth and Cassie Dougherty have been volunteering at FFA to help get our garden up and ready for the season. They have been a major support, consistently assisting with preparation tasks while demonstrating strong responsibility and teamwork. They also worked with the K-6 students to plant carrot, radish, lettuce, and arugula seeds. Their dedication and hands-on support have made a meaningful impact on our garden program and student learning experience.



FFA went to Sports Illustrated Arena, home of the Red Bulls. Lauren Due, a meteorologist from News 12 NJ, Mad Science NJ and the Red Bull mascot, REDD, were there to provide the students with education and entertainment. They played trivia games and had a Q&A session.

LOOKING BACK ON ALL OUR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



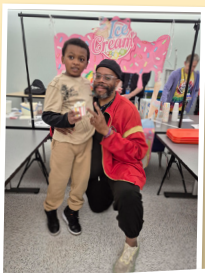
April is National OT Month and the PRDS OT team put together visual perceptual interactive activities for our students and staff to engage with!



FFA staff celebrated Autism Acceptance Month with handmade T-shirts stating that Autism doesn't end in April.



The students from BBLC glued paper together to make the American flag in honor of Memorial Day.



BBLC celebrated Autism Week in April with fun activities each day. Sensory play in the gym was fun for everyone. Students order their own treats during the ice cream social.



PRDS students, families and friends spent an "Evening Under the Stars" at the annual PPA dinner dance! A fun time was had by all! A special 'thank you' to our PPA for coordinating such a wonderful event.



ACS participants enjoyed the day at the Woodbridge Aquarium.



LOOKING BACK ON ALL OUR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

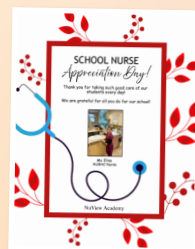


Read Across America was another huge success this year, with readers from all over the state! Guest readers from the ESCNJ Central Office and various readers from throughout Middlesex County stopped by to read books to the students. Staff and students participated in special themed days to celebrate Dr. Seuss' books, including silly sock day, crazy hat day, and favorite color day.



Through a work-based learning experience at Burlington Coat Factory, students from FFA develop employability and organizational skills by sorting hangers by size, placing them on hangers, tagging merchandise with prices, and maintaining sales floor organization.

Students also assist with organizing shoes, toys, and apparel, ensuring items are properly placed and displays remain orderly. Work based learning experience at Burlington supports the development of workplace responsibility, attention to detail, and teamwork skills.



Teacher Appreciation Week was in full swing at ESCNJ. Principals, teachers, and staff all participated in the celebrations. On behalf of everyone at ESCNJ, thank you for your support, dedication and hard work. You are truly the best!



May is National Speech Language Hearing Month; Monday, May 18 is National Speech Language Pathologist Day! In recognition, the Speech Team at PRDS set up an informative and interactive Communication Information Station in the PRDS lobby for students and staff to learn from and interact with!

UPDATES ON ESCNJ PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

ESCNJ Provides Grant Funding for Teacher Certifications

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey is proud to announce the successful launch of its Dual Certification Grant Program, an initiative designed to help member districts address staffing shortages and expand opportunities for educators to earn additional certifications in high-need areas.

Now in its first year, the program has already generated strong participation and enthusiasm among ESCNJ member districts. Grants were awarded to the districts of Carteret Public Schools, Highland Park, Metuchen Public Schools, North Brunswick Township Public Schools, Sayreville Public Schools, South River Public Schools, and ESCNJ.

Through the program, educators are pursuing certifications and endorsements in several critical shortage areas, including bilingual education, Teacher of Students with Disabilities (TOSD), gifted education, reading specialist certification, certified school nursing, and Orton-Gillingham training. Additional participants are working toward math and science endorsements, alternate route certifications, and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) credentials.

The program has also supported educators seeking qualifications in some difficult-to-fill instructional areas, including chemistry and other science-related positions. By investing in current staff members and helping them expand their professional credentials, participating districts are building stronger internal

pipelines to meet the evolving needs of students.

To date, ESCNJ has distributed more than \$95,000 in grant funding to support tuition and certification costs for participating educators. The response from districts has reinforced the importance of creating pathways for professional growth while simultaneously addressing statewide educator shortages.

"We are extremely pleased that our member districts have embraced this opportunity," said ESCNJ leadership. "This program reflects our continued commitment to supporting schools, investing in educators, and helping districts meet workforce challenges with innovative and practical solutions."

As the program continues into the upcoming school year, ESCNJ looks forward to expanding participation and continuing to support educators pursuing advanced certifications that will directly benefit students and school communities.



Staff Highlights



ALC's Speech Therapist, Rachel Beer, has begun her School Counseling program at Georgian Court after being accepted into ESCNJ's grant program! Rachel has served as an educational specialist leader at ALC for several years, frequently sharing her expertise at both school- and district-wide events while also providing valuable parent training opportunities.

Rachel looks forward to her experience in the program and to integrating newly learned approaches into her practice.

Academy Learning Center Celebrates Read Across America with Visit from Monroe Township High School Key Club

Academy Learning Center (ALC) welcomed 25 students from the Monroe High School Key Club for a special Read Across America event designed to foster a love of reading and meaningful peer connection. Students rotated through a series of themed stations, including a "foot book" obstacle course, Seuss-inspired games like Connect 4 and Bingo, and a scavenger hunt – all designed to make reading fun and accessible.

This event has taken place each of the past four years thanks to the staff at ALC for planning all the fun activities. The collaboration between ALC and the Monroe Township High School Key Club highlights the power of community partnerships in enriching educational experiences and creating inclusive, supportive environments for all learners.



UPDATES ON ESCNJ PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

ESCNJ Parent Education Events: A Year of Connection and Learning

ESCNJ proudly hosted three engaging Parent Education events this year, bringing families together for learning, connection, and support.

On Saturday, March 7, ESCNJ partnered with Plainfield Public Schools to offer a workshop focused on supporting children's communication at home. Families also participated in a dental hygiene presentation led by students from Middlesex College Dental School, with a focus on caring for children with disabilities. Nearly 30 participants attended, and many students joined alongside their families, making it a truly interactive experience.

On Saturday, April 11, ESCNJ collaborated with We Rock the Spectrum Kids Gym to host Helping Siblings Connect. This event focused on supporting positive interactions between siblings through play. While parents attended a workshop on fostering these relationships, children and their siblings enjoyed time in the gym with support and modeling from ESCNJ's Behavior Supports Team.

On April 17, ESCNJ hosted its first-ever Family Resource Fair. Families attended informative sessions on Guardianship and an Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), while connecting with community vendors offering valuable resources and services. The event was well attended, and we are excited to expand it even further next year.

We are grateful for the positive feedback received across all events. Families shared that weekend scheduling makes participation more accessible for working parents. The opportunity to bring children along—without the need for childcare—was also a meaningful benefit.

Planning is already underway for next year's events, with continued opportunities offered throughout the community. Upcoming topics include Water Safety Training at the ESCNJ Aquatic and Fitness Center, as well as additional sessions focused on Communication, Play, and Mental Health.

We look forward to continuing to support and connect with our families in the year ahead.



ESCNJ Schools are Recognized as Top Contributors in the REPLENISH Program

ESCNJ was recognized for its partnership and was a top contributor in the REPLENISH Program. ESCNJ Partners with REPLENISH, a community-driven organization dedicated to fighting food insecurity and making financial decisions regarding basic needs. The collaboration with Middlesex County schools helps ensure residents have access to nutritious food and hygiene necessities.

REPLENISH expressed gratitude to schools that participated in the 2025/26 School Food Drive. Through a collective effort, ESCNJ successfully donated more than 2,000 pounds of canned goods to support local families in need. This initiative reflects ESCNJ's ongoing commitment to giving back and strengthening the communities it serves.

Donations included canned goods, pasta, rice, cereal, and other non-perishable foods, as well as household necessities such as paper products, soap, shampoo, and toothpaste. Students and staff contributed generously by placing items in designated collection bins throughout the schools.

Nadia Romano Superintendent of Schools said, "I am so proud of the ESCNJ Community of students, teachers and support staff for their dedicated effort to make a difference!" The breakdown by school is as follows:

Future Foundations Academy: 850 pounds

Piscataway Regional Day School: 450 pounds

Center for Lifelong Learning: 400 pounds

Bright Beginnings Learning Center: 300 pounds

Grand Total for the 2025-26 Year:
2,000 pounds



UPDATES ON ESCNJ PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

ESCNJ Receives an Excellence in Partnership Award from the All Abilities Bike Program

Collaborating with Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM), ESCNJ piloted the first-in-the-nation All Abilities Bike Learn-to-Ride Camp, an initiative founded by the Strider Education Foundation (SEF). The pilot consisted of 10 one-hour sessions for eight students ages 8-16 at Future Foundations Academy.

On May 8, ESCNJ School Superintendent Nadia Romano attended Keep Middlesex Moving's annual meeting. She, along with FFA Vice Principal John Taylor, represented ESCNJ in accepting an Excellence in Partnership Award for the All Abilities Bike program at FFA.

The students learned the importance of wearing helmets and how to stay active and healthy. They were taught how to build and ride their bikes, which they were able to keep after the camp concluded. Educators observed significant confidence-building and growth in students over the 10-day period.

The students had so much fun, and ESCNJ is thankful to Middlesex County and its funding partners for providing such an amazing program!

KMM provided feedback on the program, which SEF incorporated into an updated curriculum currently in use nationwide. The teaching method was praised for breaking down skills into small and manageable pieces.



Keeping Kids Safe: ESCNJ Hosts Bus Contract Transportation Summit

On April 9, the ESCNJ Transportation Department held a Bus Contract Transportation Summit at the Professional Conference Center. The summit brought together contractors and staff to reinforce the shared commitment that drives everything ESCNJ Transportation does — keeping students safe.

The scope of ESCNJ's transportation operation is significant: 10,500 students, 1200 routes, 200 schools, 80 contractors, and 35 districts. With that level of responsibility, student safety is not just a priority — it is the foundation of every decision made.

The summit focused on updated procedures across several key areas:

- **Training Requirements:** Drivers must complete and document semi-annual training covering behavioral management and safety updates. Contractors are responsible for ensuring drivers understand and follow these expectations.
- **Accident and Incident Reporting:** Immediate notification of accidents, injuries, behavioral issues, or vehicle breakdowns is mandatory, followed by written documentation. If an incident involves student safety or operations, it must be reported.
- **Professional Conduct:** Drivers and aides are expected to maintain professional behavior with students, parents, and school personnel at all times.
- **Record Keeping:** Thorough records regarding vehicle inspections, driver certifications, and safety checks must be maintained to ensure accountability.

The summit reinforced that the relationship between ESCNJ and its contractors is built on mutual responsibility. ESCNJ is committed to clear communication and support; in turn, we expect

contractors to uphold the highest standards of compliance. Transparency and prompt reporting are essential to protecting the students who rely on us every day.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Last Day of School **June 23, 2026**

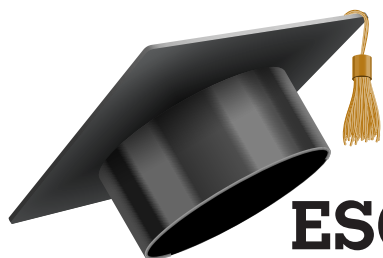
**Extended School Year
Program Begins** **June 29, 2026**

Fourth of July **July 3, 2026**
(All Schools Closed)

2026-27 School Year Begins **September 3, 2026**

Labor Day **September 7, 2026**
(All Schools Closed)

Visit www.ESCNJ.us for more information



ESCNJ Graduations

Academy Learning Center **June 17, 2026**

Bright Beginnings Learning Center - Preschool **June 11, 2026**

Bright Beginnings Learning Center - Moving Up Ceremony **June 10, 2026**

Center for Lifelong Learning - 8th Grade **June 5, 2026**

Center for Lifelong Learning - High School **June 12, 2026**

Future Foundations Academy **June 17, 2026**

NuView Academy **June 16, 2026**

Pathways to Adult Living - End of Year Celebration **June 16, 2026**

Piscataway Regional Day School **June 18, 2026**



The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

1660 Stelton Road
Piscataway, New Jersey 08854
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