



ESC NJ Update

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

New Jersey's Leader In Shared Services

Collaboration With New Brunswick Serves Students And Taxpayers

The Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts is running three high quality special class programs for students with Autism spectrum disorders and saving New Brunswick taxpayers thousands of dollars.

Now in its third year of operation, the special class program is a partnership between the New Brunswick Public Schools and the Collaborative Educational Services (CES) division of the ESCNJ.

The preschool, K-1, and K-2 classes make it possible for students with Autism spectrum disorders to receive comprehensive services from ESCNJ staff in their home district, rather than traveling to costly private special education schools.

The CES initiative has been implemented in other Middlesex County schools in the past including the Edison Township and Sayreville Public Schools.

"Often districts do not have the resources or expertise to effectively meet the educational and therapeutic needs of students on the Autism spectrum," said ESCNJ Assistant Superintendent Gary Molenaar.

"Through the CES, students stay in their home district and receive the same level of service as students in the six schools we operate in Middlesex County," Mr. Molenaar said.

The ESCNJ provides a supervisor, three teachers, therapeutic services and case manager oversight.



The partnership between the New Brunswick Public Schools and the ESCNJ is in its third year.

The program moved into the newly constructed wing of the Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, after operating in temporary space the first two years.

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CLL's 5th Annual Spelling Bee (See P.8)



Focus On CyberThreats To Schools



Cybersecurity professionals reviewed the challenges facing school districts.

A “Summit on CyberThreats against NJ Schools & Municipalities” held at the PDA attracted school administrators from across New Jersey.

The program included several cybersecurity professionals discussing “Emerging Cyberthreats,” “Assessing and Anticipating Risk,” and “Complex Challenges” facing schools and municipalities.

The workshop included information about the ESCNJ-Dellicker Technology Contract, which meets no-bid requirements so organizations can quickly purchase internet and technology solutions to reduce risk.

For more information, please contact Business Administrator Patrick M. Moran at pmoran@escnj.us or 732-777-9848 Ext. 3120

New Approach For Learning About Osmosis At NuView

Gummy Bear candies were used to help students learn about osmosis. Students first measured several Gummy Bears before placing them in plastic glasses to soak overnight. The following day, students again measured the Gummy Bears, and then shared observations about why they had changed over the course of 24 hours.

“This was an enjoyable way for students to learn how liquids flow through membranes to impact



A NuView student at work on his osmosis project.

the size of objects,” said NuView Classroom Teacher Jennifer Alberici.

Generous Contributions for ALC Equipment



(L-R) Stonebridge Men’s Club President Don Marino, Trustee Joe Pavlichko, ALC Principal Dr. Erik Solberg and Board President Dr. Dale Caldwell.

The ESCNJ Board of Directors presented a Board Resolution and honored the Stonebridge Men’s Club for its \$5,900 donation to ALC. The funds were used to purchase a Superstand Youth stander, and two iPads.

The new equipment helps students with multiple disabilities engage in weight bearing exercises.

Funds for BBLC Playground Upgrades



South Plainfield Elks Lodge member, Christine Sauer (R), presented a \$1,500 check to Supervisor Cindy Borell. The funds, raised by the Lodge’s ENF Committee, will be used for BBLC playground upgrades.

PAL Open House

ESCNJ Board Member and Bergen County Technical Schools/Special Services Superintendent Howard Lerner, spoke with a PAL (Pathways to Adult Living) student about the program and learned more about the popular “PAL



Dr. Lerner with PAL student

Treats” for dogs at a recent Open House. The PAL program is designed to ensure a successful transition to independent living for 18-21 year-old students who have completed their high school academic requirements.

For more information about PAL, please contact Supervisor Raissa Prus, M.A., SLE/c at 732-777-9848 Ext. 6690 or rprus@escnj.us.

Piscataway Elks Raise Funds For PRDS Equipment



Physical Therapist Jolie Semon working with a student during a visit from the Piscataway Elks.



Piscataway Elks Lodge members presented PRDS Principal Phyllis DeLucia with \$1,500 it raised for adaptive therapy equipment.

The Piscataway Elks Lodge raised \$1,500 for PRDS to purchase The Tumble Forms Universal “Grasshopper” System for adaptive therapy use.

“We are very grateful for the donation from the Piscataway Elks,” said PRDS Principal Phyllis DeLucia.

“We were thrilled when they visited, because it gave us an opportunity to show them how the equipment is being used to

benefit our students,” Ms. DeLucia added.

Commonly referred to as “The Grasshopper,” the equipment is used for various therapeutic activities, and features a padded coaster base which provides comfort and support for students, said Physical Therapist Joli Semon, who worked with a student on the equipment during the visit.

Building Project At NuView



NuView students incorporated marshmallows and toothpicks as a way to understand how engineers design buildings for maximum structural stability.

NJDOE’s “Best Practices” for Kindergarten Teachers



Representatives from the New Jersey Department of Education facilitated a workshop on best practices for Kindergarten students at ESCNJ’s Professional Development Academy.

Prep Work at FFA



Twice a month ESCNI staff on the Piscataway Campus buy about 100 student prepared salads, which include romaine lettuce, spinach, chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, celery, olives, shredded cheese and nuts. Salads cost \$5 and are delivered to staff by the students.

BBLC Shares Innovative Approach To Staff Development



BBLC Teachers Julie Sakowicz (L), and Christie Farmiga gave a compelling presentation to the Board of Directors on using video to strengthen staff development practices with teachers and classroom aides. .

CLL Board Presentation Well Received



CLL Teachers Nicole Paturzo (L) and Meghan Langan engaged Board members with their presentation "Incorporating Technology in an Autism Classroom."

Board Appoints Advisory Member From Rutgers

Dr. Gail S. Verona was appointed to serve as the Rutgers University Advisory Board Liaison to the ESCNJ Board of Directors.

"Rutgers University expressed a desire to serve on our Board in an advisory capacity a year ago, and the addition has been productive," said ESCNJ Board President Dale Caldwell.

Dr. Verona will continue offering counsel and advice in several areas including



Dr. Gail S. Verona

curriculum, policy issues, finance and professional development.

Welcome Aboard



Newly appointed Board members Ms. Michele Cook (L) and Ms. Shantell Cherry with President Dr. Dale Caldwell following their first meeting.

Rutgers Professor Shares Gender Identity Information With ESCNJ Board



Dr. Mangin said schools should be inclusive spaces where all students feel they belong.

The impact school policies and practices have on students whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth was the focus of a presentation by Rutgers Associate Professor Dr. Melinda Mangin at a recent Board of Directors meeting.

An Associate Professor in the Department of Education Theory, Policy, and Administration in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers, Dr. Mangin shared a wealth of information pertaining to what it means to be transgender, best practices for supporting transgender students, and recommendations for "promoting a sense of belonging" at school.

"Schools should be inclusive spaces where all students feel they belong, including transgender and gender-expansive children," said Dr. Mangin.

ESCNJ Students 'Open Wide' For MCC's Dental Hygiene Students

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "people with intellectual disabilities" have more tooth decay and "a higher prevalence of gingivitis and other periodontal diseases than the general population."

That is why 29 Middlesex County College (MCC) students in the Dental Hygiene program were welcomed when they arrived to give free dental screenings to about 90 students.

The MCC students, faculty, and two dentists, came at 6:30 a.m., and transformed the Media Center into seven dental screening stations. For the next two hours, students from BBLC, FFA and PRDS filed through to have their teeth checked.

"We were looking for decay, plaque buildup, inflamed gums and related issues," said MCC Dental Hygiene Professor Lynn Tobin, who coordinated the visit.

"This was also an opportunity to speak with students about best practices for maintaining good oral health," she added.

While the Dental Hygiene program provides some training for working with special needs students, the process was reinforced prior to the visit by CLL Supervisor Meena Pasupathy, who visited the MCC campus to speak about ESCNJ's students.

"Meena gave a great presentation in advance of our visit, so our students felt very prepared," said MCC Dental Hygiene Chair Michelle Roman.



Students received a free dental screening courtesy of the MCC Dental Hygiene program.

The MCC Dental Hygiene Clinic provides examinations, fluoride treatment, X-rays, and nutritional counseling for a nominal charge, and can be reached at 732-906-2536 or rroman@middlesexcc.edu.

BBLC Workshop At Techspo '19



BBLC staff facilitated a workshop on improving social skills using SiLAS technology.

BBLC Supervisor Cindy Borell, Speech Therapist Marisa Martin-Vargo, and Teacher Nicole Cornely facilitated a workshop at Techspo '19 on the use of SiLAS (Socially Interactive Learning Avatar Software) technology to help students strengthen their social skills.

Assistant Superintendent Gary Molenaar also contributed to the workshop, along with SiLAS Founder Chris Dudick and Curriculum Developer Bernadette Mullen.

Funded by a \$250,000 National Science Foundation grant, the SiLAS software was featured on an ESCNJ *Better Together* podcast, www.escnj.us.

ALC Works On STEAM Projects

ALC students participated in a day of fun and creative STEAM activities. STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Art, and Mathematics), encourages students to use their artistic and creative talents to think outside of the box and problem solve.

All 18 classes received the same STEAM challenge: build a game/toy/activity utilizing recycled materials. Each activity would then be shared with the other classrooms in the A, B, or C wing in a round robin format.

Student and staff were up to the challenge, creating toys and games, including water bottle race cars, milk jug Hungry Hippos, marble runs, popsicle stick and rubber band airplanes, and soda bottle bowling pins.



All ALC classes participated in the challenge to create something using only recycled materials.

Co-op Pricing System Saves Millions In Tax Dollars



The Co-op Pricing System's "Vendor Expo" is May 15th.

Founded in the early 1990s with about 60 school districts, the ESCNJ's Co-op Pricing System has grown to over 1,250 members whose collective buying power continues saving taxpayers millions of dollars annually.

"The Co-op Pricing System saves state taxpayers approximately \$25 million annually," said Business Administrator Patrick M. Moran, while discussing the Co-op and the upcoming Vendor Expo, (May 15th, at the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center in Edison), during an appearance on ESCNJ's *Better Together* podcast, www.escnj.us.

Staff time saved by not having to construct complex bid specifications also saves taxpayers approximately \$15-\$20 million a year in "human costs," Mr. Moran said.

East Brunswick Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Victor Valeski, also appearing on *Better Together* said his district has saved considerable taxpayer funds through its Co-op membership.

"The ease of acquisition, the assurance that our purchases comply with state laws and regulations, and knowing the products are the most competitively priced, are great benefits," said Dr. Valeski, who also serves on ESCNJ's Board of Directors.

For more Co-op information, please contact Mr. Moran at 732-777-9848 Ext. 3120.



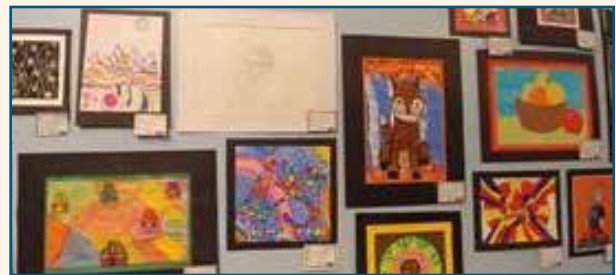
Discussing the ESCNJ's Co-op Pricing System and May 15th Vendor Expo are (L-R), CDW Field Account Executive Jon Kertesz; ESCNJ Coordinator of Communications and Better Together Host David Sandler; East Brunswick Public Schools Superintendent and ESCNJ Board of Director Dr. Victor Valeski, and ESCNJ Business Administrator Patrick M. Moran.

Planning For Adult Life At FFA



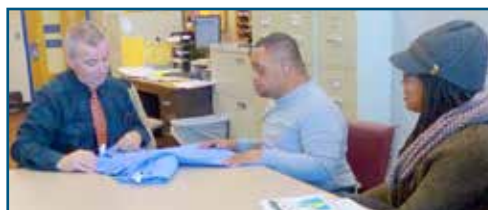
Mr. George Sangiovanni from The ARC of Middlesex County, meets regularly with students about charting a life course for adulthood.

NuView Art On Display



Art work by three NuView students is included in the annual Art Educators of New Jersey Teen Arts Festival on display at the George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick.

PRDS Supporter Completes 22nd Fundraiser



Mr. Zuppa presenting funds he raised to a PRDS family.

Montclair resident Bill Zuppa completed his 22nd George Caunt Memorial Ride, also known as One Man-One Bike-One Child, in honor of his nephew, a former PRDS student who passed away in 1996.

Since then, Mr. Zuppa had ridden his bicycle throughout the country, fueled by pledges towards his One-Man-One-Bike-One Child initiative. A PRDS committee then selects a family to receive the funds raised through Mr. Zuppa's efforts.



Thanks to all
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New Brunswick Collaborative *(from page 1)*

"Parents and students feel like they have a home now that we're settled into our new classrooms," said ESCNJ Supervisor Antoinette Nicholasi.

Assistant Superintendent Molenaar said the collaboration allows for "a seamless transition for students when they are ready to move into a mainstream setting in their New Brunswick school."

The CES collaboration has also significantly reduced special education expenditures for the New Brunswick Public Schools. Based on 2018-2019 tuition rates from the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of School Finance, private special education tuition ranges from approximately \$68,000-\$100,000 per student. Tuition rates through the CES program range from \$45,000-\$65,000. Districts "conservatively speaking," realize another 25 percent savings per student when factoring in transportation costs, said ESCNJ Business Administrator Patrick M. Moran.



ESCNJ Speech and Language Pathologist Jessica Geniton working with a Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts student.

CLL Holds 5th Annual School Spelling Bee

Staff, family and friends cheered as students participated in CLL's 5th Annual Spelling Bee.

The event, which showcased the literacy skills of students, was a collaborative effort between the speech department, teachers and instructional aides. Students communicated in a variety of ways, including speaking into a microphone, writing words that were transmitted to a Smart TV, or spelling words on the Alphabet Board.

"We are so proud of all our students," said Principal Mary Beth Conley.

"This event is one of the highlights of our year, and it's wonderful that the CLL community continues to attend and support the students," Mrs. Conley added.



Nonverbal students used an electronic speech generating device to participate in the spelling bee.



Some students spoke through a microphone when spelling their words.

Teachers Learn About Self-Care



Teachers learned techniques for maintaining their own well-being so they can enjoy their work and be effective with students at a "Self-Care and Avoiding Burnout for those Working with Difficult Students" workshop. The program was facilitated by Dr. Jason Rodker, who was trained in Child-Clinical School Psychology at Pace University.



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