



ESC NJ *Express*

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Winter 2021

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey



There's Plenty Happening During the 2021-2022 School Year!



Happy New Year!

We would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2022!

On The Inside

ESC NJ's Business Administrator Retires After 31 Years of Service **p2**

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ESCNJ Business Administrator Patrick Moran Retires After Long Tenure as “Cornerstone”

Patrick Moran, ESCNJ’s Business Administrator, announced his retirement after more than 31 years of service.

Dale Caldwell, president of the ESCNJ Board of Directors, took a special moment to acknowledge Mr. Moran at the November 19 board meeting, expressing his deep appreciation for years of dedication and commitment to the commission.

“The Board appreciates all your contributions and extends best wishes to you on your retirement,” said Dr. Caldwell, presenting the retired business administrator with a plaque that recognized decades of service and merit.

ESCNJ administrators were present at the presentation, including Mr. Moran’s long-time colleague, Schools Superintendent Mark Finkelstein.

“On behalf of myself and everyone here at ESCNJ, we would like to wish Pat all the best and we thank him for all his years of service,” Mr. Finkelstein said. “Pat was the cornerstone of this organization. His years of dedication and commitment to the students, staff, administration, and everyone involved in the Commission will never be forgotten.”

Mr. Moran retired in December.



Patrick Moran (L) and Mark Finkelstein



Dr. Dale Caldwell, Kai-Li Pao, Patrick Moran, Anthony La Marco and Mark Finkelstein (L-R)

Graham Peabody Appointed to ESCNJ’s Executive Committee

Graham Peabody, superintendent of the Spotswood Public School District, is the newest member of ESCNJ’s Executive Committee.

Mr. Peabody started his professional career in public education as a student teacher in Spotswood in 1994. Prior to being named the district superintendent in 2017, he served as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

Over the past four years, Mr. Peabody became increasingly involved with the ESCNJ, serving as a member of the statewide ESCNJ Co-Op and regularly interacting with ESCNJ’s central leadership.

“Graham Peabody’s ongoing experience with our services makes him a valuable addition to our Executive Board,” Mr. Finkelstein said.

Mr. Peabody chairs the Finance Committee, working closely with Mr. Finkelstein’s team to create annual budgets that best support students’ specific needs.

“It is an honor to serve on ESCNJ’s Executive Committee, given its demonstrated commitment to excellence,” Mr. Peabody said. “Having worked hand-in-hand with numerous superintendents, business administrators and directors in the various roles I have had over the years within the Spotswood School District, I have seen the service ESCNJ provides. It’s truly a model organization within our state.”



ESCNJ Welcomes Five New Board Members

ESCNJ would like to welcome the following new members to its Board of Directors:



Chari Chanley



Janet Ciarrocca



Dr. Joseph Massimino



Robert Mooney



Dr. Kristina Nicosia

The new board members all offer the extensive educational experience that will help enhance and elevate special education services provided at ESCNJ as well as their respective districts.

Dr. Massimino is superintendent of the Woodbridge Township School District, Ms. Ciarrocca is acting superintendent of North Brunswick schools, Dr. Nicosia is acting superintendent of the Highland Park schools, Mr. Mooney is the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School's Interim superintendent and Ms. Chanley is the acting superintendent of the Monroe School District.

"All of our new board members are terrific additions to the ESCNJ Board of Directors," Mr. Finkelstein said. "I am confident they will provide valuable input and assistance to further enhance the quality of education here at ESCNJ. I am excited to work with them all; they each bring different perspectives that are critical toward achieving overall excellence."

Bright Beginnings Learning Center Welcomes a New Supervisor

ESCNJ is congratulating Jennifer Nesi on her new position as Supervisor at the Bright Beginnings Learning Center (BBLC) in Piscataway.

"Jennifer's experience and skillsets in working with sending school districts, parents and students are so beneficial as she navigates the day-to-day operations of BBLC," Mr. Finkelstein said.

Ms. Nesi replaced Cindy Borell, who retired last June.



Meet the ESCNJ Administration Staff



Central Administration Staff



Academy Learning Center



Adult Community Services



Bright Beginnings Learning Center



Center for Lifelong Learning



Future Foundations Academy



NuView Academy



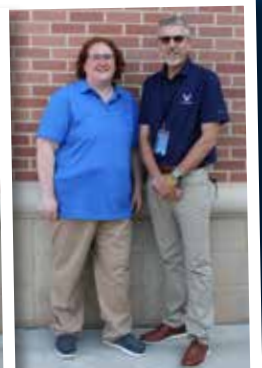
Non-public School Services



Pathway to Adult Learning



Piscataway Regional Day School



Turning Point Academy



WE ARE...**ESCNJ**

Lou DiMeglio Receives the “Educational Facilities Manager of the Year Award”

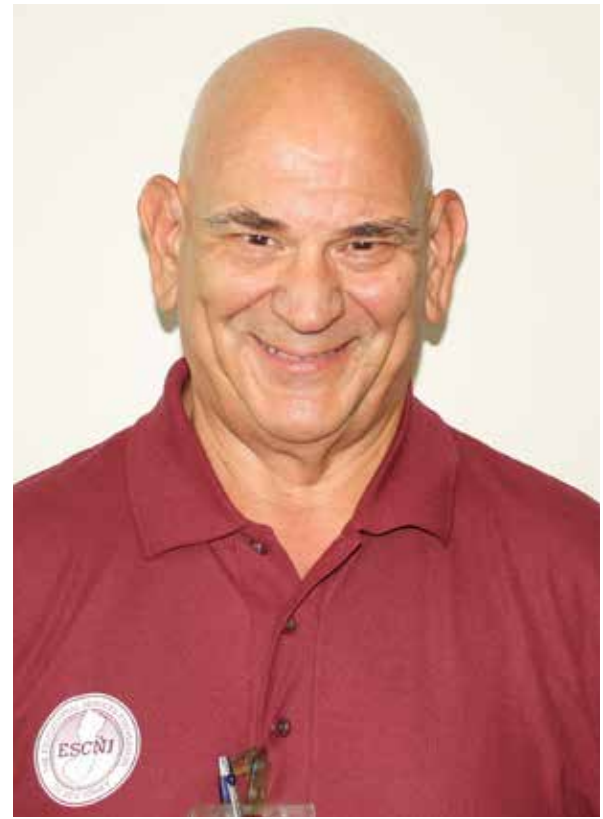
Lou DiMeglio, the longtime Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds at ESCNJ, was awarded the “Certified Educational Facilities Manager (CEFM) of the Year” award.

The CEFM Award through the New Jersey School Buildings and Grounds Association seeks to inspire dedication and excellence in school facilities management, recognizing innovation, outstanding service and best practices.

Mr. DiMeglio said he is honored to win the statewide award. “There are so many school districts in New Jersey and to be recognized by my peers is truly an honor,” he said.

Mr. DiMeglio, employed at ESCNJ for more than 25 years, was recognized for his superior management and supervision of the school buildings and grounds at all ESCNJ properties, based in Piscataway, Monroe, and Sayreville.

“We would like to congratulate and thank Lou for his outstanding commitment and the significant contributions he has made in managing the grounds at ESCNJ,” Mr. Finkelstein said. “Lou has been a valuable employee for many years and has done an exceptional job of maintaining all of our properties.”



Piscataway Regional Day School Receives a Grant from Home Depot

Piscataway Regional Day School (PRDS) received a \$8,251 grant from the Home Depot Foundation to support the school’s pre-vocational and independent living skills classrooms.

A big shout-out goes to Craig Forte, a teacher at PRDS, who works part-time at Home Depot. He worked on the grant application with PRDS nurse Kathleen Reitz, as well as Marlanna Pierce, Allison Sullivan, Ted Sattur, and Jamie Zarrett, who also serve on the PRDS grant committee.

A special “thank you” also goes to Kaitlyn Krulan, Specialty Assistant Store Manager at the Home Depot in Clifton, and all the employees at the Regional Home Depot, for supporting this generous donation to PRDS students.



Phyllis DeLucia, Craig Forte, Kaitlyn Krulan, Mark Finkelstein and Kathleen Reitz (L-R)

An ESCNJ Snapshot





Pathways to Adult Learning Expands its Footprint in Sayreville

The Pathway to Adult Learning (PAL) program, designed to help students ages 18-21 transition to independent living, has grown over the past year. To better accommodate students and staff, the program has taken over adjacent space at its location on Main Street in Sayreville.

"We are truly excited that this program is growing; we've seen nearly a 50% increase in students and hope to accept even more," said Raissa Prus, supervisor of community-based instruction. "We truly have an exceptional program teaching the necessary skills needed to secure employment, and to help our students lead an independent life. We are proud to say many of our students are working full time, and we have two job coaches to assist them."



Eddie working at the Thomas Edison Travel Plaza on the New Jersey Turnpike in Woodbridge.



Students at PAL discuss work skills with teacher Marci Rubin.

Students write in their journals about the events for the day.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- Parent Support Workshop (Spanish & English) **January 20**
- Parent Support Workshop **January 27**
- CE Event for BCBA's **February 2**
- Piscataway Campus-Wide Open House **February 11**

Visit www.ESCNJ.us for more information

Former BBLC Supervisor Donates an Outdoor Bench for All to Enjoy

Cindy Borell, the former Bright Beginnings Learning Center (BBLC) Supervisor, who retired last June, donated a bench outside the main entrance of the school, dedicated to the "hardworking and talented BBLC staff."

When Cindy retired, her colleagues collected money to buy her a memorable gift. Cindy asked that the money be used for a bench for all to enjoy for years to come.

Thank you, Cindy, for your generous gift to the students and teachers, as well as for your years of service at ESCNJ.

And here is the plaque:



Two ESCNJ staff members, Debbie McAvoy Sheldon and Lisa Bocra

PAL Students Launch a Pet Toy Business on Etsy

Pathway to Adult Learning (PAL) students are learning entrepreneurial skills and using their new-found talents to launch a cat toy business.

A key part of the curriculum is the school's recently-launched Etsy shop, known across the Internet as "PAL Treats."

The students are involved in each and every part of the operation, making it an invaluable experience. There are lots of skills involved from creating the plush cat toys, to packaging, budgeting and shipping of the final product.

The program's success has been made possible through a partnership with Rutgers Enactus, a program that connects college leaders to local organizations to improve the greater community. Rutgers students worked with the PAL administration to create a budget and system for tracking orders, along with setting up the Etsy account.

The toys can also be purchased at www.etsy.com/shop/PALSTreats. Or, call 732-339-9250 or email contactpaltreats@gmail.com.



A PAL student, with Raissa Prus, supervisor of community-based instruction at ESCNJ, and Marci Rubin, PAL teacher, help sell products at the Sayreville Centennial Day in October.

ESCNJ welcomes the Middlesex County Educators' Summit on Student Mental Health



A number of local county and state dignitaries attended the summit at ESCNJ's professional conference center on September 30. The focus was to address student struggles during this ongoing pandemic.



Chief Dave Irizarry, Metuchen Police; Yolanda Ciccone, Middlesex County Prosecutor; George Scott, State Coordinator, Traumatic Loss Coalition; Senator Joseph F. Vitale, 19th Legislative District; Dr. Frank A. Ghinassi, President and CEO, Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, Senior VP Behavioral Health and Addictions Services Line, RWJBH; Kyle Anderson, Middlesex County Executive County Superintendent; Lakeasha Carter, MPA, Department of Community Services, Middlesex County; Mark Finkelstein, Educational Services Commission of New Jersey Superintendent; Ronald G. Rios, Commissioner Director, Middlesex County Board of Commissioners; Scott Feder, South Brunswick Public Schools Superintendent and Lois Yukna, Middlesex County Education Association

ESCNJ Partners with County Office of Health Services to Offer COVID Vaccine to Students

On November 23, students from all ESCNJ schools were able to receive COVID vaccinations from the Middlesex County Office of Health Services (MCOHS). There were nearly 50 students who were administered their first vaccine.

Taylor Miller, MCOHS COVID Specialist, coordinated with Meena Pasupathy, ESCNJ Director of Collaborative Educational Services, to bring in Dr. Ngoc Q. Tran, MCOHS Medical Director to administer the vaccines.

On December 14, MCOHS staff returned to administer the second shot.

Thank you to the staff of MCOHS for making such an important event so successful.



Taylor Miller, Meena Pasupathy and Dr. Ngoc Q. Tran (L-R)



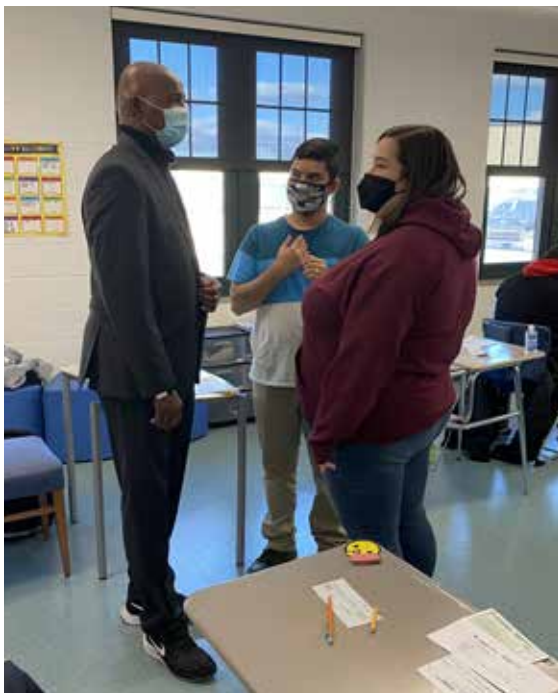
A NuView student receives his second shot of COVID vaccine.



Students in teacher Stephanie Marrone's class at BBLC receive their first shot.

ESCNJ Welcomes Former NBA Player Brian Taylor

A former Nets player and advocate for at-risk youths, Brian Taylor, spoke at the ESCNJ Board meeting on November 19. The NBA star later toured the Future Foundations Academy (FFA), and interacted with students and staff to observe all the amazing work at FFA.



Brian Taylor with students and staff at FFA.



Kyle Anderson (L), Mark Finkelstein and Brian Taylor interact with students from FFA.

ESCNJ Congratulates a Former PAL Student, Marcus Wilson

Marcus Wilson, a proud graduate from the Pathway to Adult Living (PAL) program and recipient of last year's Rebecca S. McDonald Award for his "successful transition activities" in preparation for independent living, has accomplished plenty since graduating last June.

After his days at ESCNJ, Marcus visited Colorado, where he had lived for a period of time, while his mom was in the military. With the help of his mother, Yasmeen Beckham, he booked his flight and flew by himself to Aurora, CO. where he met old friends.

When Marcus returned to New Jersey, he and his mom pursued another dream: For the young man to have his own apartment. With the support of the state Division of Developmental Disabilities, Marcus is now living independently in East Brunswick.

"Marcus has truly matured over the past few years and the PAL program has taught him so much," his mom said. "He goes to work, pays his bills and wants to travel. I couldn't ask for more; it's what every mother wants for her child."

While in the PAL program, Marcus secured a competitive job with Lowe's in East Brunswick. His apartment is not far from his job. Every day, he either walks or takes the bus to work.

"Marcus is a remarkable young man and we are truly proud of him and all his accomplishments and we wish him well in all his future endeavors," Mr. Finkelstein said.

Marcus Wilson in his new apartment in East Brunswick.



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words of Gratitude





The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

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Dr. Dale Caldwell, *President*

Dr. David Roman, *Vice President*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Cranbury, Susan Genco
Dunellen, Eugene Mosley
East Brunswick, Victor Valeski
Edison, Bernard Bragen
Highland Park, Kristina Nicosia
Jamesburg, Gina Villani
Metuchen, Vincent Caputo
Middlesex, Frederick Williams
Middlesex County Vo. Tech.,
Robert Mooney
Milltown, Stephanie Brown
Monroe, Chari Chanley
New Brunswick, Dale Caldwell
North Brunswick, Janet Ciarrocca
Old Bridge, David Cittadino
Perth Amboy, David Roman
Piscataway, Brenda Smith
Sayreville, John Walsh
South Amboy, Jorge Diaz
South Brunswick, Scott Feder
South Plainfield, Noreen Lishak
South River, Sylvia Zircher
Spotswood, Graham Peabody
Woodbridge, Joseph Massimino

Additional Counties Represented

Bergen County Technical Schools/
Special Services, Howard
Lerner
Clementon, Kathleen Haines
(Camden)
Jackson, Nicole Pormilli
(Ocean)
Millville Township, Tony Trongone
(Cumberland)
Robbinsville, Brian Betze
(Mercer)
Somerset Hills Regional, Gretchen
Dempsey (Somerset)

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Superintendent
Gary Molenaar, *Assistant
Superintendent*
Patrick M. Moran, *Business
Administrator/Board Secretary*
Kai-Li Pao, *Assistant Business
Administrator/Board Secretary*
Anthony LaMarco, *Assistant
School Business Administrator for
Business Operations*
Nadia Romano, *Director of
Human Resources*
Meena Pasupathy, *Director
of Collaborative Educational
Services & Administration*

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Special Projects*
Stacy Rieger, *Principal, ALC*
Nicole Cornely, *Supervisor, ALC*
Sandra Giardino, *Principal, BBLC*
Jennifer Nesi, *Supervisor, BBLC*
Mary Beth Conley, *Principal, CLL*
Michael Kane, *Vice Principal,
CLL*
Antoinette Nicholasi, *Supervisor,
CLL*
Katie Feiles, *Principal - FFA*
Kate Johnson, *Vice Principal -
FFA*
Russell Hudson, *Principal, NuView
Academy*
Phyllis DeLucia, *Principal, PRDS*
Raissa Prus, *Supervisor, PAL,
Community-Based Instruction*
Nancy Armbruster, *Director of
Nonpublic School Services*
Sharon Marinello, *Supervisor of
Nonpublic School Services*
Katherine Blades, *Supervisor of
Nonpublic School Services*
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Allison Sanchez, *Executive
Director of the Adult
Community Services Program*