

UCESC

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Kenilworth, Bryan Russell of Linden, Scott Worswick of Mountainside, John Wolak (non-voting) of New Providence, Lenny Cathcart, Jr. of Plainfield, Silvia Fonseca (non-voting) of Roselle, Katherine Panetta of Roselle Park, Craig Nowlin of Scotch Plains-Fanwood, Anthony Delia (non-voting) of Springfield, Patricia Calhoun (non-voting) of Summit, Linda Lewis

(non-voting) of Union, Ms. Hunnicutt of Westfield and Kathleen Wittrock of Winfield.

The schools operated by UCESC serve students with different special needs. Beadleston High School and Westlake School are located at 1571 Lamberts Mill Road in Westfield. Hillcrest Academy North is located at 2630 Plainfield Avenue in Scotch Plains, while Hillcrest Academy

South is located at 728 Westfield Avenue in Westfield. The administration building and Crossroads School are situated at 45 Cardinal Drive in Westfield.

According to the UCESC website, Beadleston High School provides an educational environment for "uncomfortable teens who need emotional support." Westlake School caters to primary and secondary students with physical and mental disabilities. Crossroads School provides a "preschool and early childhood program" for students with autism and pervasive developmental disorders.

The Hillcrest Academy locations are for "students who have the intellectual ability to achieve but who need a highly structured, personalized environment in which to succeed," Ms. Hunnicutt said.

Hillcrest Academy South, adjacent to Kehler Stadium, is leased from the Westfield Public Schools. Due to student crime complaints, the Westfield BOE has decided not to renew the Hillcrest South lease for next year. UCESC officials have said they intend to appeal this decision to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

According to records provided by the Scotch Plains tax collector, the Hillcrest North property is owned by AM School Associates, located at 433 North Broad Street in Elizabeth.

School districts are legally obligated to fund the expenses of students who are determined to need special education that their districts are unable to provide. According to Ms. Hunnicutt and Mr. Nowlin, most of the Westfield and Scotch Plains-Fanwood special needs students are not enrolled at UCESC. They are sent to other public or private school districts.

Ms. Hunnicutt said the average cost per student that Westfield pays to send students out-of-district is between \$35,000 and \$50,000.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools sent nine students to UCESC facilities this year at a cost of \$205,574, said Mr. Beese.

According to the UCESC budget, 97.5 percent of the commission's revenue comes from school districts, while state and federal aid provide the remainder.

"Each sending district pays for its own students," Ms. Hunnicutt said. "We (Westfield Public Schools) don't pay for any student who lives in any other town."

According to the New Jersey state Office of Planning, there are 566 municipalities in the state. The school districts associated with municipalities present their budget for public vote and approval each spring. The other school district budgets are not subject to public vote. The county superintendent of schools transfers commission budgets to the NJDOE.

Superintendent Hartnett Discusses Role of UCESC

By DON WILLIAMS and DAVID RIGGS

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - Edward Hartnett has been the superintendent of the Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) for 26 years and will retire at the end of June.

The Westfield Leader and The Times had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Hartnett to discuss his career and the organization he heads, which he says is "largely unknown to the public."

The UCESC was established in 1969, with representatives from 12 Union County public school boards. Today, the UCESC has a "two-tiered governing body," as Mr. Hartnett put it, with a representative assembly that meets at least twice a year to elect members of the Board of Directors and to approve the budget; the board of directors, comprised of members of the representative assembly (elected members of the boards of education for the 21 public school districts in Union County), meets monthly.

School districts are required by law to send students out of district to provide services required by these students' individualized education plans (IEPs) if the home districts cannot provide. County-level educational service commissions and similar organizations are responsible to work with the districts to find the best fit for these students' needs.

The mission of the UCESC, Mr. Hartnett said, is twofold: to provide educational services to students who are placed in its programs for students with special needs, and to arrange for transportation for all students in Union County whose IEPs require out-of-district placement.

Under Mr. Hartnett's leadership, the UCESC has seen a growth in programs and facilities. The commission acquired land to build the Beadleston and Westlake Schools on Lamberts Mill Road in Westfield in 1997. It developed property in 2000 on Cardinal Drive in Westfield to hold its administrative offices and the Crossroads School.

Mr. Hartnett discussed the history of Hillcrest Academy, a program operated by UCESC with two campuses serving at-risk Elizabeth students.

"Every Abbott district requires that an alternative program is required for at-risk students," he said, referring to the Abbott v. Burke lawsuit concerning the funding of schoolchildren in minority-dominated urban districts. "Elizabeth has major space limitations; all of [Elizabeth's] schools are bursting at the seams. As there is no space for an alternative high school in Elizabeth, Hillcrest Academy was created to accommodate some of these students," Mr. Hartnett said.

The Hillcrest program began with 60 students in Scotch Plains in 1995 and expanded to the former Lincoln School on Westfield Avenue in Westfield in 2004. The program currently enrolls roughly 150 students.

Mr. Hartnett cites transportation as the UCESC's largest expense.

"We save millions of dollars every year [by organizing a sort of carpool system for busing students from the county], and still transportation is close to \$20 million...The cost of transportation is astronomical," he said. "Each bus is contracted separately, with about 350 contracts organized each year from roughly 40 bidding transportation services. UCESC is required by law to choose the transportation company for each bus with the lowest bid."

Before the creation of the UCESC, districts were required to arrange instruction and transportation for their students with out-of-district placement. Mr. Hartnett told The Leader/Times that in the late 1960s, the County superintendent of schools encouraged a centralized organization to act as an intermediate public education agency to "maintain administrative responsibility" for the county's educational programs.

Looking back, Mr. Hartnett said, "It's been a great career. I have found it very rewarding to serve thousands of disabled kids. During my 36-year career as an employee of the UCESC, I have seen the district develop into what it is today."

After retiring, Mr. Hartnett plans to travel and stay active as an advocate for the disabled community.

For more background information regarding the UCESC and its budget, please read the corresponding front-page article in this week's issue.



Sara Magnola for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

THANK YOU...Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr reads a resolution thanking the Central Jersey Technical Rescue Team, a non-profit organization based out of Fanwood, whose volunteers are called upon to assist with difficult search-and-rescue cases. The mayor and council honored members of the team at their June 13 meeting.

Non-Municipal School Districts in Union County

By HORACE CORBIN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

In New Jersey, there are 566 municipalities and 672 school districts.

There are 26 school districts in Union County, of which 21 are associated with the 21 municipalities; five additional special districts exist and are not subject to public budget vote approval. These five districts report to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) via the county superintendent of schools. They are listed below with contact information.

1: Union County Educational Services Commission, Mr. Edward Hartnett, Superintendent, 45 Cardinal Drive, Westfield NJ, 07090-3316, (908)233-9317, www.ucesc.k12.nj.us.

2: Union County Vocational School District, Thomas Bistocchi, Superintendent, 1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains NJ, 07076-2928, (908) 889-2900, www.ucmagnethigh.k12.nj.us.

3: Central Jersey Arts Charter School, Ms. Shamida Coney, Lead Person, 203 Park Avenue, Suite #5 2nd Floor, Plainfield NJ, 07060, (908) 222-3322.

4: Queen City Academy Charter School, Ms. Cynthia Cone, Lead Person, 815 West Seventh Street, Plainfield NJ, 07060, (908)753-4700, www.queencity.edu.

5: Union County TEAMS Charter School, Ms. Sheila Thorpe, Lead Person, P.O. Box 2741, Plainfield NJ, 07062 (908) 754-3353.

The source of information is the NJDOE and the state office of planning.

Summer Hours Begin

SCOTCH PLAINS - Township residents should note that summer office hours are now in effect for all Scotch Plains municipal offices.

Offices will be open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays and close at 12:30 p.m. on Fridays through September 8.

SP Council

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mits will be sold to township residents at the Westfield Department of Public Works headquarters on North Avenue. A permit will cost \$81, a price that will be pro-rated because the conservation center has already been open for several months, and be valid through the end of the year, officials said. Township residents will need to show a driver's license or a tax bill as proof of residency.

The council is also expected to pass a resolution next week to authorize the police department to use \$18,705 in municipal forfeiture funds for the purchase of a state-of-the-art fingerprinting system. The computerized system, which Mr. Atkins called "a very good investment," will be used whenever the police department fingerprints criminal defendants. Chief Mahoney noted that the automated system would be linked with both the State Police and FBI fingerprint networks.

POLICE BLOTTER

Scotch Plains

Monday, June 12, a student at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School reported that while his car was parked in the parking lot someone scratched the side of his vehicle with a key.

Tuesday, June 13, a resident of Nicole Court reported that someone removed a toolbox from the back of his truck. The toolbox was valued at \$70.

Tuesday, June 13, James Hoelzel, 45, of Lebonon was arrested for possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS). According to police, they were conducting an investigation into suspicious activity and discovered marijuana in Hoelzel's possession. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released on a summons.

Wednesday, June 14, a resident of Winding Brook Way reported that her vehicle was entered and several video games and loose change were removed.

Friday, June 16, Jason Grissom, 27, of Plainfield was arrested for possession of a CDS. According to police, they were conducting a motor vehicle stop for careless driving and after further investigation discovered that the suspect had marijuana in his possession. He was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released on a summons.

Fanwood

Tuesday, June 13, Naivene E. Mahgoub, 20, of Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road for an outstanding warrant out of Bridgewater. Antonio M. Storey, 22, of Plainfield a passenger in the car, was subsequently arrested for outstanding warrants out of Piscataway and Bridgewater.

Wednesday, June 14, Hector Arboló, Jr. 47, of Whitehouse Station was arrested after a field investigation revealed outstanding warrants out of Middlesex.

Thursday, June 15, Abayomi Williams, 30, of Roselle was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue, which revealed an active Roselle warrant.

Thursday, June 15, Hassan Mosley, 32, of Scotch Plains was arrested after a field investigation revealed an outstanding Mountainside warrant.

Thursday, June 15, Stacey Y. Petty, 33, of North Plainfield was arrested following a field investigation for outstanding warrants from Woodbridge and Newark.

Friday, June 16, Naem Salahuddin, 26, of Jersey City was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill road for a no-bail warrant out of Union County.

Saturday, June 17, Jose M. Silva, 49, of Dunellen was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue, which revealed an outstanding warrant out of Elizabeth.

Saturday, June 17, Nicholao Giannacci, 18, of Scotch Plains was arrested for possession of alcohol under the legal age of 21 following a motor vehicle stop on Farley Avenue.

Monday, June 19, Emerita C. Zacarias-Alonso, 45, of Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road for an immigration violation. She was processed and released to the Immigration and U.S. Customs Department.

Mountainside

Tuesday, June 13, Devon J. Samaroo, 23, of Maplewood was arrested on Mill Lane after police responded to a call of a suspicious male loitering behind an office building. A computer check revealed Samaroo to be a wanted out of the Essex County Sheriff's Department with active warrants out of Union and Elizabeth, police said.

Wednesday, June 14, Gerard Blue, 46, of Plainfield was arrested for driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop on Route 22 for improper display of plates. He was also charged with an active warrant from Dunellen in the amount of \$1,000.

Wednesday, June 14, a patron of a Route 22 movie theater reported that upon returning to his vehicle he noticed the windows were down and several items thrown about the vehicle.

According to police, prints were found in the vehicle. The incident was turned over to the detective bureau for further investigation, police said.

Thursday, June 15, a Route 22 gas station reported that the driver of a white Mitsubishi received \$25 worth of gas and fled the scene without paying. The attendant obtained the plate number, which was turned over to police.

Saturday, June 17, a patron at a Route 22 restaurant reported upon that his vehicle's driver's side window was smashed and a Megalyn Global Positioning System (GPS) estimated at \$650 was stolen. Damage to the vehicle was estimated at \$1,600.

Found:

Ladies watch found at the Raider softball field. Call Fred at The Leader/Times, (908) 232-4407.

Saturday, June 17, a visitor at a Route 22 nursing home reported her vehicle's passenger side window was smashed and her GPS was stolen from the vehicle.

Saturday, June 17, police responded to a Route 22 theater on a report of found property. According to police, a Hudson County Sheriff's Office uniform with a badge, a police style hat also with a badge, a safe, numerous CDs and various paperwork were recovered. The items were found in the rear parking lot of the theater. Police said an earlier report of a stolen vehicle containing items matching the description of those found was received. Mountainside police contacted the Union Police Department and the victim responded to the location and retrieved the items.

Monday, June 19, Peter Kahotho, 53, of Boundbrook was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) following a motor vehicle accident with injuries on Route 22. Kahotho was arrested at the scene after refusing to submit a breath test, police said.

Westfield

Sunday, June 11, Gordon Brown, 26, of Westfield was arrested in the 500 block of Prospect Street on outstanding traffic warrants from Westfield, Spotswood and Sayreville. He was released after posting \$1,412 bail.

Monday, June 12, Timothy D. Jones, 25, of Scranton, Pa. was arrested at South Avenue and Boulevard on a contempt of court warrant issued by Newark. Jones was subsequently released on his own recognizance with a new court date.

Monday, June 12, Charisse Y. Jones, 36, of Newark was arrested at the Somerset County jail on a contempt of court warrant issued by Westfield. She was transported to the Union County jail, where she was held on \$135 bail.

Two days later, she was arrested on two contempt of court warrants from Newark on a criminal charge with a combined bail of \$5,125. She was held at the Union County jail on that bail plus \$135 from the Westfield warrant for a total of \$5,260.

Wednesday, June 14, Jason L. Mitchell, 25, of Roselle Park was arrested following a motor vehicle stop at West North Avenue on outstanding warrants from Springfield, for \$2,500; Summit, for \$600; Irvington, for \$369; Parsippany, for \$250; Newark, for \$165, and Watchung, for \$107.

Mitchell was released on his own recognizance on the Springfield warrant pending a court appearance and ultimately was turned over to the Summit Police Department on its warrant along with the other detainees.

Wednesday, June 14, at Westfield police headquarters, Victor J. Rivas, 20, of Elizabeth posted \$580 bail on a contempt of court warrant issued by Elizabeth.

Thursday, June 15, a resident of the 1000 block of Rahway Avenue reported damage to two of her motor vehicles. One tire was cut on one of the vehicles while two tires were cut on the other. Both vehicles were in the victim's driveway at the time the incident occurred.

Thursday, June 15, a resident of the 600 block of Westfield Avenue reported an apparent attempted motor vehicle theft. The vehicle, which was unlocked and parked in its owner's driveway, sustained damage to the ignition.

Friday, June 16, Brendan Cline, 18, and Mike Mandelbaum, 18, both of Westfield, along with a 17-year-old male juvenile from Westfield, were arrested and charged with possession of alcohol underage at Tamaques Park. Cline and Mandelbaum were issued summonses and released. The juvenile was released to a responsible adult.

Friday, June 16, the president of a club located in the 200 block of West North Avenue reported the theft of \$6,256 from the club's bank account after an unknown individual forged and cashed two checks.

Friday, June 16, Evan Pantano, 18, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding \$250 Westfield traffic warrant. He was released after posting bail.

Saturday, June 17, Amani Simeon, 18, of Piscataway was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Cumberland Street on three outstanding Clark warrants. Simeon was released after posting a total of \$475 bail.

Saturday, June 17, a resident of the 700 block of Forest Avenue reported that two tires on his motor vehicle were flattened after being punctured with an unknown device while the vehicle was parked on the street where the victim lives.

Saturday, June 17, Norma Eguia, 50, of Linden was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Grove Street on an outstanding Woodbridge contempt of court warrant. He was released after posting \$35 bail.

Sunday, June 18, David Desravines, 28, of Roselle was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at South and Hetfield Avenues on an outstanding warrant issued by Roselle Park. He was released after posting \$57 bail.

Table 1: Ten-Year Budget Summary for Union County Education Services Commission (UCESC)

Item Description	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Budget	\$ 18,693,944	\$ 20,526,573	\$ 22,200,149	\$ 25,050,964	\$ 28,056,842	\$ 32,722,962	\$ 36,604,673	\$ 37,361,946	\$ 37,106,653	\$ 38,249,750
Enrollment	285	282	287	300	317	348	356	366	350	299
Attendance	82%	85%	86%	85%	83%	85%	86%	86%	86%	86%
Employees Total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	323
Transportation	\$6,903,172	7,831,714	9,143,094	10,355,962	12,156,662	15,265,703	18,305,599	17,158,045	17,065,855	18,152,240
Transportation serves 3,500 students in 2005								2005 Transportation	47%	18,152,240
								2005 Instruction	22%	8,518,110
								2005 Other	30%	11,579,400

Perennials on Parade!

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Buy 10 Perennials get 20% Off

Extended Thru 06/27

Our Perennial Festival has begun. There is no better time to select perennials than when they are bursting with flowers, the soil temperature is a perfect temperature for planting, and the selection is the greatest.

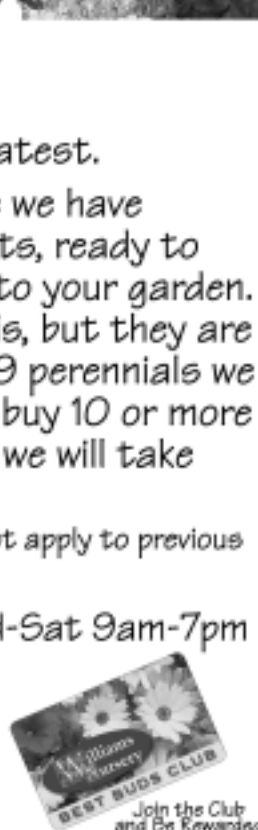
In celebration of this time we have thousands of perennial plants, ready to march into your cart and into your garden. (Well they really won't do this, but they are on Sale). If you purchase 5-9 perennials we will take 10% off of them, or buy 10 or more to make a great border and we will take 20% Off.

Sale Ends 06/27/06 and does not apply to previous purchases.

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WF BOE to Terminate UCESC Hillcrest Lease

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contested case process, disputes arising under school law and regulations."

Mr. Harnett said the UCESC had not received a formal notice as of June 19 from the Westfield BOE attorney. He said this notice must be submitted to the DOE commissioner in order for the UCESC to make a formal appeal of the BOE's decision.

Sue Hopper and Lisa Stern, residents who live adjacent to Hillcrest South, told The Leader/Times, "We are very pleased with the board's decision of non-renewal. However, we

are cautiously optimistic about the results and question why the UCESC feels the need to appeal this decision.

"It's not just a matter of securing the safety of our neighborhood but getting space back that the Westfield schools desperately need. We intend on monitoring this action very closely to assure a satisfactory result for all involved."

Mr. Hartnett is retiring effective July 1. His replacement, William Petrino, is the current UCESC Superintendent in Rahway.



The partners at Bramnick, Rodriguez, Mitterhoff, Grabas & Woodruff, LLC congratulate

JON M. BRAMNICK

for being named a New Jersey Super Lawyer for 2006 by New Jersey Monthly Magazine

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