



The  
**South Bergen  
 Jointure Commission**  
*Quarterly*



Use this QR code to access Families Resources put together by the SBJC Parent Committee.

The mission of the South Bergen Jointure Commission is to unlock the potential of every student. As a leading educational provider, we will focus on the development of each student's social, emotional, and academic needs. By fostering an environment that is supportive and challenging, we will empower students to maximize their independence and potential in becoming fulfilled and productive members of their community.

## *SBJC RECEIVES RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCREDITATION FROM MIDDLE STATES TEAM*

Since the Summer of 2019, SBJC staff, families, and key stakeholders have been working together to develop a strategic plan that will provide new opportunities and programming for our students. In order to achieve this goal, SBJC underwent the crucial process of accreditation by the Middle States Association's Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools, the gold standard for school improvement.

In addition to the creation of a strategic plan, Middle States requires districts to produce a comprehensive and reflective self-study; one demonstrating compliance to the twelve Middle States standards.

The SBJC hosted the Middle States Visitation Team in May. This team examined our Self-Study application and strategic plan as well as interviewed families, staff, and members of our Board. At the visit's end, the team announced that they will be recommending to the MSA-CES that, at its Fall 2022 Commission meeting, they grant a full, seven-year accreditation for the South Bergen Jointure Commission.

"The Middle States accreditation process aligns our strategic goals with our mission, and that's to make sure we're unlocking the potential of every student," said Dr. Michael Kuchar, SBJC Superintendent. "Our goal is to have all of our students live productive and independent lives, and this could mean something different for each one of our children. The strategic plan our district has developed will help guide us in achieving this vision."

The first step of the accreditation process was to survey stakeholder groups from all across the district. The results were then analyzed by the district Planning Team—twenty-two volunteer teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, and administrators. SBJC then used that information to identify four key areas that would be the focus of our strategic plan. A more in-depth look into these strategies can be found on the next page.



*Pictured: On a school-wide field trip this June, SBJC's Maywood Campus students visited the Bergen County Zoo in Paramus.*

The self-study, the complete strategic plan, and the Middle States visiting team report can all be found on our website: [www.njsbjc.org](http://www.njsbjc.org).

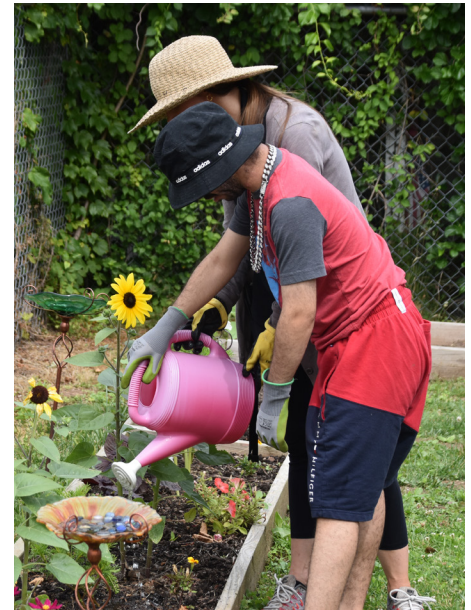
If interested in becoming involved with our Strategic Planning, please reach out to Shane Miller at [smiller@njsbjc.org](mailto:smiller@njsbjc.org) or 201-393-0475 (ext. 246).

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

How we're unlocking the potential of every student.

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The SBJC has developed a strategic plan that will drive all of our district initiatives around one unifying purpose: building a better future for our children with extraordinary needs. This plan will allow us to achieve a laser-like focus on meeting each and every one of our students' individual goals, in addition to building a model of collaboration and voice-and-choice. Below are the four objectives of our strategic plan.



*Above left: Students at our main campuses have had biking added to their physical education curriculum, with the goal of having every SBJC student learning how to ride a bike before they leave our program. Above center: Students in our 18-21 program attended the Boys & Girls Club of Lower Bergen County for swimming, part of our Fitness Initiative. Above right: Students at our Lodi Campus tend to the Liz Forte Garden.*

## Least Restrictive Environment

The vision of the SBJC is centered on ensuring that our students are given the tools needed to live successful post-scholastic lives, and the first step in measuring that this is occurring is by developing a system that makes certain that our students are learning in their least restrictive environment (LRE). The SBJC LRE team has produced a Continuum Tool that will allow for the district to take a system-wide approach in identifying the proper placement for the education of our students.

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## Professional Development

This plan will provide the district with direction in establishing the use of a model that supports the professional growth of our faculty and staff. The plan focuses on the use of data to drive the selection of professional development offerings, and will also focus on improving the training model we use for all of our new hires.

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## Communication

It is our goal to establish a system of effective communication for both our internal and external stakeholder groups. This communication plan will establish a system that continuously analyzes data from surveys and other sources to assess our current status and improve upon our weaknesses in channeling information. It will also help us to develop skills within one of the most important and untapped assets of our learning community: our SBJC families. We'll look to increase parent engagement through the sharing of opportunities, training, support services, and district resources.

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## Functional Living Skills

This objective was developed in order to maximize the opportunities students have to both learn and generalize skills that promote their independence post-scholastically. We'll look to expand programming in the following areas:

- Independent Living Skills
  - Functional Communication Skills
  - Social/Emotional Skills
  - Community-Based Living Skills
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# NEWS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

## 2022 SBJC VALEDICTORIAN, CHRISTIAN ESTEVEZ



The SBJC congratulates its 2022 valedictorian, Christian Estevez! Beyond his academic excellence, Christian is known for having a wonderful sense of humor, for his dedication towards his peers' friendship, and for his genuine kindness and helpfulness. Not only are Christian's wonderful traits seen in the classroom; he actively participates in school clubs and is a three-season athlete (Cross Country, Bowling, Track & Field). Considered by his peers to be an SBJC celebrity, Christian has touched the hearts of his classmates and teachers. Lodi Campus Principal Scott Rossig reflected on his experiences with Christian:

*"I've known Christian since he was a young boy, and he has done nothing but work hard and excel over the years! It's been so exciting to see him achieve, not only in regard to his learning, socialization and leadership, but recently in athletics and extracurriculars as well. We know that behind every great student is a supportive family... kudos to his parents for their dedication in seeing him succeed. I look forward to seeing all the great things to come!"*

## SBJC MOONACHIE STUDENTS GO FISHING

Students from our Moonachie Annex linked up with Westwood Regional High School students to take part in an awesome morning fishing event, a program the SBJC looks to continue next year.



## MAYWOOD CAMPUS FIELD DAY



The Maywood Ave School 8th Grade Team and SBJC Maywood Campus staff worked together to coordinate a field day for SBJC students. Maywood Ave School administrators and advisors worked with our team to develop activities for the event. Together, we shared ideas and suggestions for modifications on activities that would best be suited for SBJC students. The outcome far exceeded all expectations.

Feedback from both staff and students was that this was the best field day ever. There was scooter riding and basketball shooting, chalk drawing, blowing bubbles, constructing sandcastles, completing obstacle courses, tossing water balloons, and kicking the soccer ball around. But what was most awesome about this event is that SBJC students completed these activities side-by-side to their 8th Grade Maywood Ave buddies. Every SBJC student was partnered with a Maywood Ave student, truly forming bonds and having conversations about their shared interests.



## BERGEN COUNTY EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM



This school year, all SBJC students visited the Bergen County Equestrian Center. Students had the opportunity to take care of the horses, walking them around the indoor dirt pens, as well as grooming, feeding and tending to the wellbeing of these horses.

## NO BARRIERS IMPACT HUBS

At the New Jersey Association of School Administrators conference in Atlantic City, No Barriers co-founder and SBJC partner, Erik Weihenmayer, delivered a powerful keynote address to school administrators from around the state. Not only did Weihenmayer share his No Barriers philosophy of "what's within you is stronger than what's in your way," he also highlighted the great programs SBJC is building for our students.

Superintendent Dr. Michael Kuchar and No Barriers ambassador Andrea Delorey followed the keynote with a breakout session focused on co-creating impact through the No Barriers philosophy and framework.

## 2021/2022 SBJC EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

We celebrate the following SBJC employees who have proven to be exemplars of their profession:

**Amber Doran, Paraprofessional  
Maywood Campus  
Paraprofessional of the Year**

**Cheryl Lupica, Speech Therapist  
Lodi Campus  
Educational Service Professional of  
the Year**

**Joe Marszalek, ELA Teacher  
Lodi Campus  
Teacher of the Year**



South Bergen  
 Jointure Commission  
 Board of Education  
 500 Route 17 South  
 Hasbrouck Heights, NJ  
 07604

**The South Bergen Jointure Commission** is a public New Jersey school district whose classrooms are not defined by walls and whose students are not defined by their classifications. We focus on the development of our 300+ students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

**Board Members**

Mr. Giovanni Giancaspro  
*President*  
 East Rutherford

Dr. James Albro  
*Vice President*  
 Wallington

Mr. Damian Kennedy  
 Bogota

Dr. Dario Sforza  
 Becton Regional

Ms. Allison Evans  
 Carlstadt

Ms. Anna Sciacca  
 Garfield

Dr. Matthew Helfant  
 Hasbrouck Heights

Mr. Frank Scarafile  
 Little Ferry

Dr. Douglas J. Petty  
 Lodi

Mr. Joseph DeCorso  
 Lyndhurst

Mr. James Knipper  
 Moonachie

Ms. Danielle Shanley  
 New Milford

Dr. Stephen Yurchak  
 North Arlington

Dr. Sue DeNobile  
 Rochelle Park

Mr. John Hurley  
 Rutherford

Mr. Jason Chirichella  
 South Hackensack

Mr. Anthony Albro  
 Wood-Ridge

**SBJC Superintendent**

Dr. Michael Kuchar  
 mkuchar@njsbjc.org

# Congrats to our SBJC Grads!

## Profile of a Graduate



**SBJC Graduates will have been exposed to experiences that:**

- Challenge them to recognize and strive toward their full potential.
- Cultivate critical skills needed to persevere through life challenges.
- Encourage them to build and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Provide meaningful life opportunities in the community.



**SBJC Graduates will view themselves as:**

- Having the skills, tools, and experiences needed to navigate their world.
- Self-confident individuals who are able to achieve their goals and advocate on their own behalf.
- Positive contributors in their community who engage in opportunities for community service.



**SBJC Graduates will, to the best of their ability, know how to:**

- Communicate their needs to those around them.
- Manage stress using techniques centered around mindfulness.
- Be problem solvers.
- Use empathy to understand and value diversity.
- Use technologies and access resources for the improvement of their lives.