



Josephine Hunt

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Awards 2025-2026 [Ringelheim](#) Award, NJCEC

2026 [Emerging Leaders](#) Award, NJASCD

Certifications NJ Principal, C.E., 2025
Teacher of the Handicapped, Standard, 2002

NJ Supervisor, Standard, 2024
Elementary School Teacher, Standard, 2000

Leadership Experience

Director of Special Services, C.I. and Assistant Principal, C.I.

**Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School, Closter, NJ
May 2024-Present**

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Supervised curriculum and instruction at assigned grade levels, ensuring alignment with IEP goals, promoting instructional consistency, and supporting improved student progress through data-informed practices and teacher collaboration.
- Analyzed LinkIt and Aimsweb data with grade-level teams to improve instruction and interventions across MTSS.
- Partnered with the assistant principal to interpret multiple assessments, including LinkIt and Aimsweb assessment data, leading grade-level data meetings to drive targeted instruction and close learning gaps.
- Strategized with the assistant principal on interpreting LinkIt and Aimsweb data to inform instructional planning and improve student outcomes across grade-level teams.
- Designed differentiated instruction, including AI-supported small-group planning through Google NotebookLM.
- Created a Pre-K district-wide handbook, Pre-K orientation, and Pre-K curriculum rubric, and used AI Notebook LM to create more effective individualized, differentiated, and scaffolded lessons per student to meet the curriculum's goals and objectives.

School Improvement

- Evaluated the effectiveness of instructional programs and developed targeted recommendations for improvement, leading to increased instructional alignment, enhanced student achievement, and more effective use of resources across classrooms.
- Consulted on a research initiative analyzing HIB trends and intervention effectiveness, informing school climate strategies, and reducing incidents.
- Collaborated with the middle school psychologist on research into HIB incident trends, identified root causes, and developed proactive interventions that reduced repeat incidents.
- Facilitated a schoolwide professional reading group on *The Anxious Generation*, leading to changes that reduced indoor recess behavior incidents through structured, screen-free activities.

Professional Capacity of School Personnel

- Observed, coached, and evaluated educators in various classroom settings, delivering actionable feedback that improved instructional practices and student engagement.
- Led targeted professional development for PK-8 teachers and paraprofessionals based on observed instructional needs, including AI for educators, co-teaching models, PBS, data-driven SMART goals, effective behavior management strategies, and effective PLAAFP writing.
- Provided daily coaching, modeling, and feedback to paraprofessionals to strengthen instructional practices, behavior supports, independence-building routines, and data collection.
- Served as lead teacher, mentoring new teachers, coordinating curriculum revisions, and supporting onboarding.
- Led a professional learning group for student teachers using the *Teach Like a Champion 5.0* program.

Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

- Led professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals: co-teaching, PBS/PBIS, PLAAFP writing, SMART goals, effective behavior plans, digital wellness, and paraprofessional utilization.
- Conducted structured paraprofessional training and ongoing professional learning for the district's paraprofessional team.
- Created and facilitated a professional staff reading group on *The Anxious Generation*, guiding Hillside educators through research-based discussions on rising childhood anxiety, digital exposure, and the developmental needs of modern learners.
- Presented at the NJEA PD Transform II, NJEA Convention, NVCC on "Teaching Student Resiliency in the Digital Age," NJPSA on "Building Resilient Schools Through Visionary, Vocal, and Value-Driven Leadership", NJASCD "Resiliency is a Matter of Heart", equipping educators to foster emotional regulation, digital balance, and perseverance in grades P-12 Learners.

Community of Care and Support for Students

- Oversaw and provided ongoing support to the Special Education Teachers, Child Study Teams, and Related Service Providers, resulting in improved collaboration, consistency in IEP implementation, and enhanced service delivery that supported student growth and compliance with state and federal mandates.
- Led a multi-staff integrated preschool team daily, coordinating paraprofessionals, CST members, related service providers, and general education partners to ensure seamless support for both IEP students and peer models.
- Created behavior supports, visual systems, and inclusive routines that improved independence, regulation, and peer interactions.
- Co-created the *Transition Bridge* program to support elementary students moving to middle school, increasing student and parent confidence.

Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

- Collaborated on I&RS/MTSS, HIB trends, school climate work, and parent communication systems.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

- Assisted the Director of Special Services in the implementation of the special education program, resulting in improved program consistency, compliance with IEP mandates, and enhanced support for students across all grade levels.
- Developed and completed 16 full days of administrative learning across multiple districts with supervisors, principals, assistant superintendents, directors, and vice principals, including staff supervision and evaluation, curriculum leadership, special education programming, scheduling and budgeting, climate/culture initiatives, family and community engagement, and problem-solving across authentic administrative cases.
- Served on School Improvement (SciP) Committee, Teacher Orientation Program (TOP) Committee, Social and Emotional Instruction and Curriculum Committee, Profile of a Closter Learner Committee, Steering Committee, Pop-Up Professional Development Committee, MLL Committee, I&RS Committee, School Safety Committee, Staff Social/Emotional/Physical Wellness Committee, Professional Reading Committee, Affirmative Action Team Committee, Scheduling Committee, and ELA and Math Committees.

Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

- Designed and delivered parent education events such as Back-to-School Night, Orientation, and targeted SEPAG sessions, enhancing parental understanding of accommodations and supports.
- Designed district parent programs, including Preschool Orientation Day and SEPAG presentations that increased parent participation and understanding.
- Expanded SEPAG meetings from quarterly to monthly with hybrid meeting options, increasing average parent attendance and increasing engagement in special education programming decisions.
- Increased enrollment by creating targeted outreach campaigns and leveraging social media, resulting in full enrollment with a waiting list for peer models.
- Created a district-branded preschool enrollment announcement for the Closter community page to increase family awareness and attract new applicants.

Operations and Management

- Supported daily building operations, school safety, staff supervision, and the coordination of programs, including Before Care, ESY, preschool transitions, and SEPAG.
- Completed multi-hour, personalized, and small-group NJASCD training in school budgeting and grant writing, enhancing expertise in fiscal planning, resource allocation, and strategic funding development.
- Scheduled and budgeted for the Before Care program, the Extended School Year program, and the annual preschool program, ensuring alignment with IEP needs and service delivery timelines.
- Budgeted, scheduled, and planned for multiple programs (Before Care, Extended School Year, 25-26 school year, etc.), ensuring fiscal responsibility while maintaining high-quality services.
- Developed and enhanced multiple programs (Before Care, Extended School Year, 25-26 school year, etc.) with robust safety protocols, structured daily activities, and improved operational efficiency.
- Improved the Before Care program through the development and implementation of comprehensive health, safety, and operational protocols.
- Worked jointly in the EXAID process for claiming extraordinary special education costs, contributing to state reimbursement and fiscal efficiency.

- Cooperatively coordinated the design and implementation of a 6-day rotating schedule with a 3:1 related services model (three weeks of direct therapy, one week of consultation), enhancing student access to services and strengthening interdisciplinary planning of a 6-day rotating schedule with related services embedded in a 3:1 model (three weeks of direct therapy, one week of consultation), improving service access and cross-disciplinary planning.

Ethics and Professional Norms

- Conducted informal teacher observations, pre-/post-conferences, written evaluations, and feedback cycles aligned to district expectations the Marshall Rubric.

Teaching Experiences

Hillside Elementary School, Closter, NJ Teacher Leader and Integrated Preschool Teacher September 2017-Present

- 2025 [National Media Voice](#) on Youth Mental Health Prevention
- 2024 Educational leader at grade level, building level, department level, and district level
- 2022: Teacher Mentor Certification: [NVCC](#)
- 2020: Teacher Instructional Coach Certification: [NVCC](#)
- 2018: Applied Behavior Analysis Certification: [Valley Program](#), Norwood
- Designed and implemented developmentally appropriate, play-based, and academically aligned instruction within an integrated preschool model, ensuring access for all learners. Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment to New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards while differentiating through scaffolding, multisensory strategies, and individualized supports.
- Developed, implemented, and monitored IEP goals, ensuring fidelity, compliance, and measurable progress. Collaborated with CST members and related service providers to deliver an integrated service model, using data to inform instruction and interventions across domains.
- Led and managed a multidisciplinary team of paraprofessionals and service providers, ensuring consistency and high-quality support. Facilitated coaching and professional learning while establishing systems that promoted student independence, regulation, and positive behavior.
- Created a safe, inclusive environment supporting social, emotional, behavioral, and academic growth. Implemented proactive strategies to address dysregulation and build resilience while fostering independence, problem-solving, and communication.
- Partnered with families through consistent communication via video messages, conferences, and guidance aligned to student needs. Supported preschool transitions and strengthened home-school connections to reinforce student growth across settings.
- Collaborated with teams and administration to ensure program alignment and contributed to MTSS and school-wide initiatives. Maintained a structured, safe environment, managed daily operations efficiently, and ensured compliance with district policies and procedures.

Traphagen Elementary School, Waldwick, NJ K-5 Special Education Teacher and Basic Skills Instructor September 2014-June 2017

- 2017 Certified in ELA Units of Study: Reading: [Paramus Schools Literacy Institute](#)
- 2016 Certified in ELA Units of Study: Writing: [Paramus Schools Literacy Institute](#)
- 2015 Certified in IMSE Orton-Gillingham Certification, [Institute for Multi-Sensory Education](#)
- Provided targeted academic support and differentiated instruction across grade levels in inclusive and pull-out settings. Delivered data-driven interventions aligned with IEP goals, resulting in measurable gains in student literacy and math achievement.
- Chaired the district's *One Book, One School* initiative, fostering schoolwide literacy engagement and community connection through cross-curricular activities and family involvement. Organized and facilitated literacy-focused parent evenings to strengthen home-school partnerships and increase at-home reading participation.
- Turnkey professional development in the Readers and Writers Workshop model, equipping teachers with research-based strategies for balanced literacy instruction. Led collaborative planning, instructional coaching, and data analysis to improve teacher consistency and student performance, recognized for bridging instructional gaps through innovative, inclusive, and family-centered approaches.

Family Leave

Dedicated to raising a family and maintained professional engagement with educational practices and child development.

Euclid and Lincoln Elementary Schools, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ Grades 2-5 Home-School Instructor January 2004-January 2005

- Designed and implemented fully individualized, standards-aligned instruction based on assessment data, student interests, and collaborative input from CST members and related service providers. Delivered multi-sensory, differentiated instruction across content areas, developed measurable academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals, monitored progress, maintained ongoing communication with school personnel and families, and provided data-driven reports to support informed decision-making and successful student reintegration.

Family Leave

Dedicated to raising a family and maintained professional engagement with educational practices and child development.

James Caldwell High School, Caldwell-West Caldwell, NJ Grades 9-12 Special Education Teacher, HS Varsity Cheer Coach 9/2003-6/2005

- Delivered individualized, standards-aligned instruction and case management for high school students with diverse learning needs, fostering academic growth, executive functioning, and post-secondary readiness through data-informed, inclusive practices.
- Led and developed a high school varsity cheer team, promoting teamwork, discipline, and school spirit while ensuring student safety and performance excellence.

Washington Elementary School, Caldwell-West Caldwell, NJ Grade 4th Grade G.E. Homeroom Teacher, HS Varsity Cheer Coach 9/1999-6/2003

- Mentored student teachers through comprehensive coaching, modeling, and feedback cycles, resulting in successful clinical placements and strong instructional growth. Turnkey district professional development in instructional best practices, fostering staff-wide implementation and improved instructional consistency.

(Cont'd) Washington Elementary School, Caldwell-West Caldwell, NJ 4th Grade G.E. Homeroom Teacher, HS Varsity Cheer Coach 9/1999-6/2003

- Collaborated with NJIT to co-develop and pilot STEM curriculum enhancements for Caldwell-West Caldwell Schools, integrating inquiry-based learning, engineering practices, and real-world problem solving. Contributed to cross-grade curriculum writing teams, ensuring vertical alignment and differentiated instructional pathways that supported student engagement and achievement in science and math.
- Presented at Board of Education meetings to share student achievement outcomes, instructional initiatives, and schoolwide programs. Acted as a liaison between staff and administration to support curriculum alignment and foster a collaborative school culture.

Harrison Elementary School, Roselle, NJ Grade 4 General Education Homeroom Teacher 9/1998-6/1999

- Delivered standards-aligned instruction as a Grade 4 general education homeroom teacher, fostering academic growth, classroom community, and differentiated learning to meet the needs of all students.

Education

M.Ed., Educational Leadership, Ramapo College, 2025

M.Ed., Special Education, New York University / University of Geneva, 2002

(Selected for NYU's study abroad program)

Supervision & Administration (16 credits), Rutgers University, 2005

B.A., Elementary Education and English Literature, William Paterson University, 1999

Honors, Awards, Distinctions, Specialized Certifications, and Advanced Training Link

Media Features and Guest Appearances Link

Speaking Engagements and Presentations Link

Leadership Professional Learning Link

Publications and Thought Leadership Link

Professional Summary Link

Guiding Principle: *"Leadership is not about being in charge. Leadership is about empowering those who are in your charge."*

~ Simon Sinek, *Start With Why*

Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership, a program centered on visionary, data-informed, and equity-driven leadership, emphasizing a comprehensive approach to managing organizational systems, driving school improvement initiatives, and fostering inclusive learning environments to meet the unique demands of today's educational landscape. Transformational PK-12 educational leader with 20+ years of experience in general education and special education. Proven success in implementing effective support to all teaching staff members, evaluating curriculum, program, and IEP fidelity, and facilitating impactful professional development for each member of the educational community.

Testimonials and Letters of Recommendation Link

- *"What distinguishes Ms. Hunt as a strong candidate for a supervisory role is her ability to balance compliance with compassion."* -Mr. Ron Durso, Supervisor
- *"Dynamic, student-centered leader recognized for 'high expectations with deep compassion' grounded in 'data-driven decision-making,' 'collaborative leadership,' and a 'relentless commitment to student well-being.'"* -Dr. Courtney Carmichael, Principal
- *"Ms. Hunt saw what others missed. Thanks to her early intervention, our son is now receiving needed critical services, something we are forever grateful for."* -Ms. Chen Weiner, Parent
- *"Ms. Hunt quickly coordinated a meeting with the school social worker and other professionals so we could get an assessment underway, identifying needs that had been overlooked."* -Ms. Nicole Santos, Parent
- *"This was an eye-opening topic with actionable steps towards building resilience in students of all ages."* -Ms. Sonya Goldstein, HS Science Teacher.
- *"You were and are amazing!! So important for parents to hear. The statistics are mind-blowing. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and passion with us."* -Kristen Haenelt, Hillside School Nurse