



MCIU CONNECTION

The bi-weekly newsletter of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

August 8, 2008

Online: www.mciu.org



YouTube Video Contest

Whether you think you're the next Steven Spielberg or just enjoy playing with a video camera, the Montgomery Bar Association's YouTube Video Contest is a great way to show off your filmmaking skills

and win cash prizes!

"This is an excellent project for students and a fun approach to politics for everyone," said Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Executive Director/CEO and a member of the Montgomery Bar Association Community Outreach Committee.

The MBA launched the YouTube Video Contest with the topic "Why Vote?" to encourage citizens to vote in the upcoming elections and to promote political activism in our community. The contest is open to Pennsylvania residents of all ages—no one is too young or too old to enter. The contest is sponsored by the MBA, Commerce Bank and the Montgomery Bar Foundation, and offers participants a chance to win \$1,000 in one of two categories: Ages 18+ or Under 18 years of age.

The video should be three minutes or less in length and answer the question "Why Vote?" in a creative and original manner. Entries will be accepted between now and Thursday, October 9, 2008 at 12:00 pm. The videos will be judged by the MBA Community Outreach Committee. Additional information can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/group/whyvote>, or by calling 610-279-9660 x213.

The contest is part of an initiative by the Community Outreach Committee to raise political awareness and remind citizens to vote.



Extended School Year offered for IU Classes

This summer the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit contracted

with Easter Seals of Montgomery County to provide Extended School Year (ESY) services to the eligible students enrolled in the IU's Life Skills Support (LSS) and Multidisabled Support (MDS) programs. There are 48 full time students enrolled in the program, 14 LSS and 34 MDS students representing 17 Montgomery County School Districts. The MCIU is also serving 74 students through ESY classes in autistic and emotional support. These ESY classes are housed in the following school districts: Colonial, Wissachickon, Upper Perkiomen, North Penn and Perkiomen Valley and Upper Moreland.

The IEP team determines which measurable goals and objectives the ESY program must work on and the Intermediate Unit coordinates the dissemination of IEPs and supplemental aids and materials to the students' ESY classroom. The Program Supervisor meets with the staff prior to the first day of class to discuss Intermediate Unit expectations, disseminate sample data collection formats and to answer questions about individual students. At the conclusion of the ESY session data collected and progress reports are completed by the ESY classroom teacher and forwarded to the students' regularly assigned classroom teacher for their review as a measure of student progress. Additional staff members involved in the program this year included a speech and language pathologist and a behavior management specialist.

"The working relationship that we have with the school districts and Easter Seals is top notch. They have accommodated our requests and go above and beyond to support the students we serve for our school districts. The teachers, support personnel and supervisors of MCIU work collaboratively to support each other and the students. We are extremely fortunate," said Dr. Jeanmarie Mason, Director of Special Education at the IU.

Mileage Increase: Based on the MCIU board action on June 25, 2008, MCIU will reimburse employees 58.5 cents for their approved mileage expenses based on the IRS rate effective July 1, 2008.



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 Intermediate Unit**
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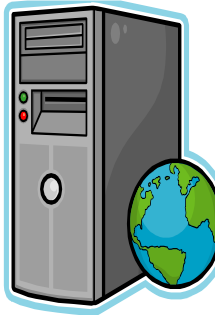
MCIU Snapshots



On August 19-21, the Special Education Division will be hosting its Summer Academy for staff members. In addition to attending workshops specific to special education, staff will learn about all of the IU divisional goals and operations.

The Communications Division has contracted with Wissahickon School District to provide communications services, including the production of print and electronic newsletters and media relations.

New TIS Offerings



The IU's Technology and Information Services Division has partnered with Lightspeed Systems to get consortium pricing on their Total Traffic Control (TTC)

product. It is a software product that contains full network security, anti-virus solutions, content filter, spam filter, desktop management, computer inventory (hardware/software), portable media control, packet shaping, and an email archive solution. Seven districts will have the product installed this summer.

Another new TIS service offering is BitLeap Aggregate Storage Services Provider. TIS has partnered with BitLeap Systems to provide offsite data storage services for eastern Pennsylvania. BitLeap's LeapServ backup appliance is placed at the school site to provide an automated backup solution that compresses and encrypts data. Then the data is replicated at MCIU and finally, the data is stored at one of three data centers owned by BitLeap. The entire process is controlled by an easy to use web control panel that can be easily customized to meet a school or district's needs. The data cannot be accessed by anyone but the school's designated person. BitLeap also has a complete email archiving and discovery solution.

TIS also has entered into a partnership agreement with Camcor, Inc. Audio visual equipment can be purchased through MCIU at below PEPPM (Technology Bidding & Purchasing Program) pricing. Camcor will also provide audio-visual equipment for demonstration purposes throughout the MCIU building. MCIU will offer the equipment, installation, support, and training for all Camcor products.

State Budget Summary

The state budget passed this July included a 5.5% boost for public school operations and instruction--the largest increase in two decades. Dr. Sharon Richardson, Legislative Services Director, summarized some of the key education changes in the budget. The following highlights may assist MCIU divisions and school districts in planning and/or training purposes.

a) Educational agencies statewide were successful in slowing down the movement on Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs). The issue is not completely dismissed, but there is a moratorium on it for the coming year.

b) Classrooms for the Future was cut by 50%.

c) Any school district that receives a funding increase over the previous year in excess of 4.4% will be required to submit a plan to the department for approval and expend the amount of the funding increase that exceeds 4.4% on programs designed to increase student achievement. Eligible uses include: increased instructional time (tutoring or extending the school day), new curriculum, reducing class size, pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten, and incentives for teachers to work in certain schools. In addition, a school district that has not met adequate yearly progress (AYP) must have the plan approved by the department.

d) \$271.4 million was appropriated to continue funding accountability grants for 2008-2009. (This is slightly less than the governor's proposal of \$275 million). The budget bill adds the following as acceptable uses for the block grants: career awareness programs; the purchase of library materials and expansion of service hours.