



MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

An Educational Service Agency Supporting School Excellence

To The Point. . .

Key points and highlights from the March 23, 2011 Board Meeting

Board Actions

The Board accepted the resignation of Board member, Malcolm Gran, School District of Springfield Township, and appointed Anthony B. Quinn, Esq. to serve in the position until this year's elections.

The Board appointed Jeffrey Sultanik to serve as Judge of Elections.

The Board approved a motion directing the MCIU to draft a resolution supporting the blended pension plan put forth by PSBA to present to the legislators.

Executive Director's Report – Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley

Dr. Shiveley invited the Board to attend a Budget Summit hosted by the MCIU on Tuesday, March 29, 2011, at 7 p.m. at PaTTAN King of Prussia. The summit is open to superintendents, business managers, human resources directors and school board members. Additionally, board members are invited to a Health Care Workshop at 7 pm, March 30th at PaTTAN. Topics of discussion include strategies used by employers in the region to reduce health care costs, the advantages/disadvantages to self-insurance and developing a multi-county consortium.

DIVISION REPORTS

Human Resources—Jane W. Mansuy

Mrs. Mansuy requested and received approval for various personnel items, including 4 professional recommendations which include (3) unpaid leave requests and 1 salary adjustment; 4 teacher assistant and support staff recommendations including 1 unpaid leave request and 3 transfers; 1 request for a temporary teacher assistant for the Autistic Support Program; 23 supplemental contract positions for 2011-2012 for PaTTAN educational specialists; two conference requests; and PaTTAN Summer/Winter Project staff requests including 2 summer/winter temporary maintenance workers and 2 summer/winter temporary clerical workers.

Management Services – Stan H. Wisler

Mr. Wisler asked for and received approval on the following action items:

- Recommendation to approve the Southeastern Pennsylvania Schools Trust agreement and resolution related to prescription drug benefits
- Recommendation to approve a contract with Converge to participate in the Demand Response Program which identifies users of high amounts of electrical power and provides financial incentives to them to curtail their usage during peak demand periods.

Mr. Wisler also provided a transportation project update advising that the 6 districts that joined the pilot are meeting regularly and are still on schedule to implement the shared services model, effective with the start of the 2011/12 school year.

Mr. Wisler also noted that the Montgomery County Schools Benefits Trust is continuing to review and debate the timing for the self-insurance medical benefits.

Special Education Division – Dr. Lois Robinson

Dr. Robinson reported that the Office of Child Development and Early Learning completed its verification process in our early intervention program on March 15, 16, & 17, 2011 which is required by federal regulations. The verification team visited our classrooms, observed IEP meetings, monitored service delivery, and attended transition to School Age meetings in our districts.

On February 23, 2011, the MCIU hosted the TAC Advisory Committee which is comprised of special education administrators from each Montgomery County school district. TAC consultants presented targeted information on the state initiatives including Autism, Transition, Assistive Technology, Inclusive Practices, Reading, Math, RtII, and Progress Monitoring. District representatives were impressed with the number of significant initiatives offered.

Division of Legislative Services and Grant Development - Dr. Mary Jane Gales

Dr. Gales reported that on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, a group of senators introduced a package of 18 bills to lift some of the 60 years worth of state mandates that drive up school costs. These mandates would:

- Allow for professional staff to be furloughed for economic reasons. The Senate version requires a proportionate reduction of administrators with a waiver available if administrative reduction is burdensome. An amendment is to be offered that removes seniority rights and requires that the positions stay vacant for at least one year unless the suspended employee is reinstated.
- Increase the threshold for bidding to \$25,000, permit single prime bid, reauthorize the Mandate Waivers for school construction projects and review and overhaul the PlanCon process
- Address some certification issues(e.g. providing an alternate pathway for certifying principals and teachers, allowing districts to hire superintendents who have a graduate degree in business or finance, and allowing districts to hire registered nurses rather than school certified nurses)
- Allow districts to advertise in newspapers printed in the school district or on the district's website
- Suspend continuing education and professional development for teachers for two years and waives professional education for administrators (PILS) if the district makes AYP or is showing adequate PVAAS growth
- Discontinue the requirement for districts to transport students who attend out-of-state private schools
- Repeal the entitlement in the Code for 10 paid sick days and paid sabbatical leave
- Suspend nonessential reporting but retain annual financial report, annual budget information and other information required by the federal government or the Tax Payer Relief Act
- Require 2/3 vote by school boards to raise property tax

The Governor has stated that he will not sign a budget that exceeds his proposal. A poll by Franklin & Marshall College of 521 residents stated that 78% oppose reducing state funding for local schools. The President of PSEA, Jim Testerman, has encouraged his members to seriously consider accepting a one-year wage freeze as suggested by the Governor.

Technology & Information Services – Gail Kennedy

Mrs. Kennedy reported that TIS participated in a desk audit review conducted by the Human Resources Division. The TIS staff were interviewed and assisted with updating job descriptions which allowed management to see areas requiring cross training of staff.

TIS and Management Services have started an initiative to determine if there is an opportunity for cost savings by consolidating phone lines across the county. They will work with two third-party companies to set up a possible pilot with the goal of capturing call data used to determine a Return on Investment (ROI) for the project.

Nonpublic School Services – Dr. Kenneth Voss

Dr. Voss reported the annual needs assessment process with the administrators of the nonpublic schools will be conducted in April, May and June. All schools with students receiving Act 89 services will be visited by an administrator from the Nonpublic School Services Division (NPSS). The information gathered will be used to plan 2011-2012 services and service levels for each school.

Dr. Voss reported that on March 28, 2011, NPSS will conduct a focus group with the nonpublic school administrators to identify staff development trainings for the 2011-2012 school year. The directors of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development Division and the Technology and Information Division will attend to determine how their divisions can provide training support for the nonpublic schools. Both Doctors Robinson and Voss will present information about Special Education Equitable Participation and the Child Find chart.

Lastly, Dr. Voss highlighted that the NPSS Directors' spring meeting was held March 10th and 11th at Penn State University. Among the speakers were representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Education who gave an update on ACT 89 funding for the 2011-2012 school year, effect of the proposed vouchers on ACT 89 funding, and an update on federal programs.

PaTTAN – Dr. Janet Sloand

PaTTAN coordinated the "Making a Difference: Educational Practices that Work" Conference on behalf of the Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education. This year's conference was held January 11 -14th in Hershey with over 1500 in attendance. A few highlights included:

- 49 sessions addressing various topics including school improvement, reading, mathematics, universal design for learning, legal issues, transition, behavior and inclusive practices.
- 125 parents attended via parent scholarships. PaTTAN Parent Consultants provided networking sessions for the parents.
- Over 800 individuals attended the conference via live streaming.
- Sessions were videotaped and are archived on the conference website, www.pdeconference.com.

Next year's conference will be held February 28 to March 2, 2012 in Hershey. Confirmed speakers include James Hiebert on Mathematics and Debra Pickering on Standards Aligned Grading.

Division Spotlights:

Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development –Kendall Glouner

Mrs. Glouner highlighted the many ways that the Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development Division (CIPD) supports school districts with service solutions to help maximize their human resources, financial and material resources, and time. CIPD has expanded training opportunities to help district staff develop a deeper understanding of PDE initiatives and requirements related to the Standards Aligned System (SAS), Common Core Standards and Keystone Exams.

Other highlights include:

- Facilitation of three new curriculum councils – World Language, Social Studies and Middle School Principals – to help inform the work that teachers/administrators do in these areas.
- Approval to provide American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) and American Psychological Association (APA) CEUs.
- Potential to receive a second Teaching American History Grant – the first grant, now in its last year, provided \$300,000 a year for three years to enhance American History instruction

- Expansion of services including a new Advanced Placement (AP) Summer Institute
- Consortia opportunities to reduce costs on Scholastic Read 180 materials and professional development for Performance Tracker through Sunguard/EduPlanet
- New graduate program partnerships with higher education, including Drexel University. CIPD is exploring an Autism Certificate Program and Classroom Management Certificate Program
- Offered MyChinese 360 (and provided scholarships to 9 students) as a creative and nontraditional way to engage students in language instruction
- Offer a Virtual High School consortium for students to access online courses
- Hosted nationally known expert, Heidi Hayes-Jacobs, through a grant, to emphasize the importance of technology integration in instruction

Communications Division—Kristen Rawlings

Mrs. Rawlings reported on the Communication Division’s responsibilities and shared highlights from the past year. The Division is responsible for the internal and external communications for the MCIU and is available to support school districts/nonpublic schools with their communications projects on a contractual basis. Services include:

- Publication Development
- Media Relations
- Strategic Communications Planning
- Developing Website Content
- Special Event Assistance
- Public Relations Trainings

Highlights from the past year include:

- Supported Pottsgrove and Springfield school districts with projects including their district calendars, Springfield’s annual report and newsletters, templates for departmental communications, Pottsgrove High School’s parent newsletters and the district office’s faculty newsletter
- Creation of strategic marketing plans for various MCIU services
- Development of 25+ brochures/flyers or other publications to promote the MCIU’s services and professional development offerings
- Receipt of an Award of Excellence from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) for the MCIU Annual Report and an Award of Honor from PenSPRA

**The next MCIU Board of Directors meeting will be held on
April 27, 2011
at 7:45 p.m.**