



MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

An Educational Service Agency Supporting School Excellence

To The Point. . .

Key points and highlights from the October 26, 2011 Board Meeting

Board Actions

In accordance with Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley's goals approved by the Board, the MCIU Facilities Committee completed its study related to upgrading the existing building or relocating the organization and made a recommendation to seek a more adequate facility for the MCIU.

DIVISION REPORTS

Human Resources—Dr. Robert Shields

Dr. Shields (filling in for Jane Mansuy) requested and received approval for various personnel items including: 1 appointment, 1 request for unpaid leave and 1 transfer for professional staff; 4 appointments, 2 requests for unpaid leave, 1 reclassification, 1 resignation, 1 retirement and 1 return to service for teacher assistant/support staff; the award of a professional contract for 2 staff members; the appointment of volunteer induction professionals, 3 conference requests, the award of 1 professional contract, and one separation and release agreement/resignation.

Management Services – Stan H. Wisler

Mr. Wisler presented the 2012-2013 General Operating Budget which totals \$8.1 million for first review. School district contributions represent a total of \$1.4 million (an increase of \$1,059 on average per district or 1.65%). District contributions represent 17.69% of the total General Operating Budget. The individual district contribution is calculated by a state formula, including factors for enrollment and wealth. Other revenue sources include local, state, federal and fee-for-service funds. The MCIU is focused on developing and offering fee-based services that support the districts' needs by reducing their costs and enhancing operational and instructional capacity.

The four (4) budgets that make up the proposed Intermediate Unit's General Operating Budget for 2012-2013 include:

- General Administrative Services (no district contribution)
- Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development (CIPD) -Total district contribution countywide is \$67,908
- Legislative Services and Grants Development -Total district contribution countywide is \$111,100
- Technology and Information Services (TIS) -Total district contribution countywide is \$1,256,023

Understanding the difficult economic climate, Mr. Wisler stressed that the 2012-2013 budget was crafted with a continued focus on streamlining and restructuring the MCIU to reduce costs. A number of strategies were used to accomplish this including:

- Staff reductions and redefinition of positions
- Energy savings initiatives and electricity curtailment
- Internet costs reduced by 50% - from \$6/MB to \$3/MB
- Maximize use of federal grant dollars for cooperative trainings

Mr. Wisler also noted that the increases reflected in the budget assumes the growth of fee-based services which are not expended unless purchased by school districts. TIS, for instance, includes \$389,479 for a Hybrid Learning Service which is anticipated to be developed and utilized by districts in 2012-2013. The overall percentage increase in the 2012-2012 budget is 4.4%; however if the Hybrid Learning Services were not included in the budget, there is actually a decrease of .61%

He also noted that the work of the MCIU divisions has resulted in considerable cost reductions for school districts, most notably through consortium savings. TIS has reduced costs associated with the following services:

- School Messenger – 25%
- Atomic Learning – 8% discount
- Barracuda Products: 20% discount

The budgets were reviewed and presented to the Superintendents at the Council meeting on October 13, 2011. Action on the budgets will be requested at the November 10, 2011 Superintendent Council meeting. The Intermediate Unit Board of Directors will be asked to approve the budget at the November 16, 2011 Board meeting. Local districts must vote on the budget in January and February.

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

- Recommendation to accept the Technology Integration Mentor Program grant in the amount of \$14,700
- Recommendation to submit an application to PDE for the Title III Program in the amount of \$163,433
- Recommendation to approve the resolution for the MCIU to join SEPAST for medical insurance
- Recommendation to accept a subcontract between the Eastern Center for Arts and Technology and the MCIU in the amount of \$65,000
- Recommendation for approval of revised application and MAWA agreement in the amount of \$14,711,930

Special Education Division – Dr. Lois Robinson

Dr. Robinson reported that enrollment at the Anderson School is up from 16 students at the start of the school year to 23 with some pending referrals.

In September 2011, MCIU's new BrainSTEPS team participated in a two-day training at PaTTAN and launched an exciting new service. This multidisciplinary team of MCIU professionals is now available to provide school districts with the technical assistance they need in order to effectively support children and adolescents with brain injuries, including concussions and other acquired head injuries.

The number of students served in the Early Intervention Program during the 2010-2011 school year was submitted by the Special Education Division to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). In total, the MCIU served 2,454 students - an increase of 136 students over last year. The number of students served in Early Intervention has steadily grown each year from 1,378 students in 2000-2001. However, funding for the services has not increased.

Legislative Services and Grants Development Division – Dr. Charles Amuso

Dr. Amuso reported that the Senate passed SB 1, legislation that creates a program for taxpayer funded tuition vouchers, expansion of charter schools and the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. The measure was adopted with a vote of 27-22.

The bill includes the following key provisions:

- Opportunity scholarships – vouchers to attend private, parochial or other public school will be provided for students residing in the “lowest performing 5% of schools across the Commonwealth.” There are approximately 145 schools statewide that qualify – none of which are in Montgomery County.
- EITC –The amount of tax credits provided for businesses which provide scholarships and funds for improvement of education programs was increased from \$75 to \$100 million. However, the amount available for education foundations was reduced from 25% to 20%.
- Charter schools – provides for the creation of additional charter schools with provisions to increase accountability, including annual independent audits of charter schools and cyber charter schools and public disclosure.

The bill now moves to the House of Representatives and will be considered in the House Education Committee. Dr. Amuso encouraged the Board to call Senators Greenleaf, Hughes, and Leach to thank them for opposing the bill.

Technology and Information Services – Gail Kennedy

TIS is exploring solutions to reduce telephone costs throughout the county including bundling of phone lines which would create a shared dialing plan and reduce the per call rate for members of the consortium. TIS is preparing to release an RFP.

Additionally, Microsoft Lync Messaging Features – a complete voice over IP phone system - would provide collaboration tools, such as instant messaging and desktop video conferencing that can be used independently of the district’s existing telephone system. For a district looking to replace their internal phone system, Lync may be a good option.

Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development – Kendall Glouner

Ms. Glouner reported that CIPD will be assisting districts with preparing students for the Keystone Exams for civics and government by developing a K-12 civics and government curriculum framework that can be used and adapted by the districts. Funding for the project will be supported in part by the Teaching American History grant.

CIPD will be exploring the application requirements of the Striving Readers Grant: Pennsylvania’s Vision for Sustainable Growth in Reading Achievement. PDE has received \$38 million dollars per year for the next 5 years through the United States Department of Education to address reading programs and initiatives from birth through 12th grade. A set amount of the grant will be available to districts through a competitive application process. The application is due to be released in mid-October. Intermediate Units will be responsible for rolling out initiatives related to the grant as plans from PDE unfold.

Ms. Glouner will be attending a training at PaTTAN Harrisburg on the multi measure teacher evaluation system on October 27-28. The training is for IU staff. CIPD will support districts during a pilot of the new process in late November and December.

Nonpublic School Services – Dr. Kenneth Voss

Dr. Voss reported that funding has been secured by PDE to support an additional training for Student Assistance Programs (SAP) which is a mandated program for all public schools. Jean Miksch, NPSS psychologist who is an approved lead trainer for SAP training, will provided the additional training in the spring of 2012.

PaTTAN – Dr. Janet Sloand

Dr. Sloand highlighted that more than 2,200 educators statewide participated in a video conference training, “iPads and iPods in Classroom and Therapy Settings: Powerful Tools for SLPs and Special Educators” sponsored by PaTTAN on October 19. Different applications were demonstrated to show educators how to use the devices for more effective instruction.

Communications Division—Kristen Rawlings

Mrs. Rawlings highlighted the completion of MCIU publications, including the Annual Report, the Montgomery County School Directory and MCIU Update. She also supported Pottsgrove and Springfield school districts with the completion of their community newsletters.

Mrs. Rawlings noted that a positive article about Explorations, the new partial hospitalization program, was included in *The Reporter* and the MCIU now has nearly 200 fans of its new Facebook site.

Division Spotlight: Management Services – Stan Wisler

The Management Services Division serves a dual role of providing fiscal and management support to the MCIU and cooperative and other support services to school districts. Support for schools is provided through a number of services designed to reduce costs and enhance operational capacity, including cooperative purchasing, consortium efforts, job-alike meetings, consultative services and facilities support. Mr. Wisler provided more detailed information about some of the major initiatives of the division:

- Energy Buying Group: With electricity rate caps being lifted on 1/1/11, the MCIU worked with districts to capture consortium pricing, taking advantage of rates being offered at near historical lows. Thirteen entities are participating with a steering group of five districts. Savings from January 2011-September 2011 are \$678,000.
- Self-insured Rx program: Through an RFP process, discounts, rebates and administrative fees have been determined for a three year period. The MCIU helped establish a trust for administration of the program and has 20 districts and vo-techs participating. Savings total more than \$7.3 million in 2010-2011. Additionally the self-insured medical plan will become effective on July 2012.

Other successful initiatives the division is working on include:

- Potential Outcomes of the Superintendents Cooperative Services Task Force
- Access Services provided to 3 districts (results from one district showed an 82% increase in funding)
- Additional Cooperative Bids for Supplies and Services, including 12 joint purchasing bids, 12 fixed rate discount catalogue bids and the fuel bid which saved \$270,000 in delivery costs and an additional \$200,000 in supply costs related to a change in the purchasing process

**The next MCIU Board of Directors meeting will be held on
November 16, 2011
at 7:45 p.m.**