



MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

An Educational Service Agency Supporting School Excellence

To The Point. . .

Key points and highlights from the September 23, 2009 Board Meeting

Board Actions

The MCIU Board approved the Executive Director's goals for the 2009-2010 school year.

The Facilities Committee reported that it continues to review potential sites for the MCIU to relocate. The committee is looking for a facility with about 120,000 square feet that is located in the most central part of the county.

The Board viewed a video produced by the Association of Educational Service Agencies which provided an overview of the nationwide impact of ESAs. ESAs operate in 45 states reaching over 80% of the public school districts, over 83% of the private schools, over 80% certified teachers, and more than 80% non-certified school employees and 80% public and private school students.

Report of the Executive Director – Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley

Dr. Shiveley reported that at the request of superintendents, the MCIU has organized a workshop on budget issues/preparation and bargaining strategies. The workshop, held on October 19 at PaTTAN, will be relevant to superintendents, business manager and human resources staff.

DIVISION REPORTS

Human Resources—Jane W. Mansuy

Mrs. Mansuy requested and received approval for various personnel items, including 2 professional staff appointments and four resignations; two teacher assistant and support staff appointments, three transfers and two resignations; a request for a new teacher assistant position with the Hearing Support Program and the appointment of three volunteer induction professionals who will mentor our new teachers.

Management Services – Stan H. Wisler

Mr. Wisler reported that although there has been a tentative state budget agreement, the MCIU and school districts are still unsure as to when state funds will be received due to continued negotiations on controversial budget items. Failure to receive state funds is particularly problematic for the Nonpublic School Services Division which is entirely dependent on state dollars. The MCIU's reserves will keep operations stable through the end of November, but after that point it is likely that the MCIU will have to consider loan options in the amount of approximately \$10 million.

The MCIU submitted a survey regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) IDEA funds on behalf of the county's school districts. Additional information on reporting requirements is expected soon since there is a report that is due by October 2. The MCIU plans to assist districts as appropriate with the completion of these reports.

This month, a subcommittee of business managers and human resource managers for the MCIU and school districts presented a recommendation to superintendents to move to a self-insured prescription option through Independence Blue Cross effective January 1-June 30, 2010. Twenty districts currently use the Rx plan. The next step is to develop a request for proposal (RFP) for IBC and other pharmacy benefit managers to determine the best program for Rx self insurance. More information will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Special Education Division – Dr. Jeanmarie Mason

Dr. Mason highlighted the information and resource sharing opportunities that the Special Education Division provides to districts and the community. These include the District Special Education Administrators Meeting, the Right to Education Local Task Force, the Special Education Directors Meeting and the Equitable Participation/Consultation meeting with nonpublic principals.

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

Dr. Gales reported that the House and Senate leadership have tentatively agreed on a \$27.9 billion dollar budget deal that is considered to be favorable to education. Very little information on the proposal has been made public at this time. We do know that there are additional revenue sources that will necessitate a change in the tax code. These changes include taxing small games of chance and cultural performances, museums, and zoos, but not movies or sports events. The plan does not include any increase in the personal income tax or sales tax and does not include approval for video poker at corner bars and taverns. Dr. Gales anticipates that it may take at least another two weeks to iron out the details, and another two weeks before state funds are released.

Dr. Shiveley and Dr. Gales attended the AESA legislative conference in Washington, DC last week. They met with staffers in both of our senate offices and the Pennsylvania house members who sit on the House Education committee. They discussed issues of importance to the school districts, including adequately funding the federal government share of the Title programs and IDEA, the Reauthorization Elementary and Secondary Education Act and lifting the funding cap on E-Rate.

They also met with Massie Ritsch, Deputy Assistant Secretary for External Affairs and Outreach, US Department of Education who discussed the parameters for Race to the Top and the Innovative Grants. Further information will be available within the next two weeks.

Division of Curriculum, Instruction, & Professional Development –Kendall Glouner

Mrs. Glouner highlighted that the MCIU has provided a forum for supervisors, gifted teachers and administrators to discuss revised Chapter 16 regulations (Special Education for Gifted Students) and the impact of the regulations on their programming. CIPD brought in a consultant on September 17 who will return on September 30 to further assist teachers who write the gifted individual education plans (GIEP).

Nonpublic School Services Division – Dr. Kenneth Voss

Dr. Voss reported that NPSS counselors responded to and provided services to one of the nonpublic schools where a murder-suicide of a students' parents had taken place.

Through the Homeless Project and help from the Special Education Division, NPSS identified students in the public schools who could benefit from book bag and school supply donations and distributed these materials.

Dr. Voss reported that funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Grant from the federal government may be in jeopardy. This funding helps pay for Student Assistance Program training, among other services provided by NPSS. Meetings are being scheduled to discuss alternative funding if needed.

Two nonpublic schools, Epiphany Elementary School – Plymouth Meeting & Waldron Mercy Academy – Merion Station, were named Blue Ribbon Schools by the Department of Education Secretary.

PaTTAN – Dr. Janet Sloand

PaTTAN, in conjunction with PDE Bureau of Special Education, has developed a Credential for Competency for special education professionals to help them achieve “qualified” status as required by Chapter 14. Paraprofessionals must be able to demonstrate competencies in 10 standards. To date, 5,673 participants have completed 28,792 PaTTAN offered courses.

Communications Division—Kristen Rawlings

Mrs. Rawlings reported that she has contracted with Pottsgrove High School to write and design four parent newsletters. In addition, she is working with Wissahickon School District to create their 2008-2009 annual report.

Mrs. Rawlings also reported that 2,000 school staff are now registered for the first annual Montgomery County Schools Fitness Challenge: Fit in 60 Days. Upper Dublin is in the lead with nearly 300 registrants. For more information, log on to <http://fitnesschallenge.mciu.org>.

Division Spotlight: Technology & Information Services – Gail Kennedy

Mrs. Kennedy highlighted the services of the Technology & Information Services Division (TIS). TIS provides the following services to districts as part of their core contribution to the MCIU:

- ▶ Advisory Councils
- ▶ Consultation and Leadership
- ▶ Consortium Purchase Coordination
- ▶ Digital Video Content Streaming
- ▶ Educational Technology Resources
- ▶ eRate for Consortium Application
- ▶ Grantwriting for Technology
- ▶ Internet2 access
- ▶ MCTV
- ▶ Basic Moodle Hosting
- ▶ PAIUnet Membership
- ▶ Satellite and Streaming Video
- ▶ Technology Planning
- ▶ User Group Coordination
- ▶ Vendor Workshops
- ▶ Video Conferencing Coordination

The Division’s focus for the 09-10 school year will be to develop and enhance services in the following areas:

- ▶ Cost Effective Services such as distance learning tools and developing Smart classrooms
- ▶ Content for the regional network that can be accessed by all districts, including an internet safety event and online training courses
- ▶ Collaboration tools such as live virtual classrooms, video conferencing/bridging/streaming
- ▶ Communication with districts about available services and improved resource sharing with technology and curriculum staff

TIS is partnering with the IU1 and Westmoreland IUs and Lower Moreland School District to apply for and secure an Act 183 grant that would increase capacity in the area of video streaming and online course delivery. The partnership with the other IUs would allow shared access to a videoconferencing bridge and video streaming server and provide connectivity to three additional school buildings. Last year, all districts received videoconferencing unit or related equipment as part of the 2007 Act 183 grant TIS received.

TIS is also partnering with Bucks and Lancaster-Lebanon IUs to offer services such as Safari Montage Video Content; Barracuda Backup; PowerSchool and Virtual Server Hosting. TIS plans to develop additional shared services with Chester and Delaware IUs.

Mrs. Kennedy noted that districts may take advantage of developing the following technology services using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds:

- ▶ Data Applications Development
- ▶ PowerSchool
- ▶ Digital Video Content
- ▶ Moodle
- ▶ Technology Training

- ▶ AV Smart Classroom Design and Installation
- ▶ Equipment Purchases (extending Classrooms for the Future)
- ▶ Technical Services

New services this year include a Virtual Helpdesk and an after-school video camp for high school students.

**The next MCIU Board of Directors meeting will be held on
October 28, 2009
at 7:45 p.m.**