



THE TWENTY



*This Month: Business, Human Resources,
Administrative Offices*

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Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

August 2011

Executive Director's Message

BY DR. CHARLENE M. BRENNAN

The Twenty for August

It is that time of year already! On Monday, August 15th, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 welcomed back our staff for the start of the 2011-2012 school year with our Orientation Day program at Nazareth High School (see "CIU 20 Opens the 2011-12 School Year for Faculty and Transportation Employees" on page 3 for more details.).

This was my seventh year addressing our staff on opening day and as always, finding a balance between having a high energy, positive day and an open conversation about the struggles facing public education was a challenge.

After spending time celebrating our successes, including agreeing to concessions to get us through this tough budget time, I focused my message around what we need to do as an organization to be of value to our districts and Pennsylvania Department of Education during what is sure to be a fundamental shift in public education in Pennsylvania. New funding systems, referendum, and new accountability measures will serve as the foundation for the shift.

That fundamental shift will create the necessity for the intermediate unit and all public school entities to ask and answer fundamental questions, especially "what is our 'value'" to children and families, how do we show it, measure it, and communicate it?

At IU 20 we will tackle these tough issues during our upcoming strategic planning effort. We will work with your district staff to form the IU's answers to these important questions.

In the meantime, we are excited to begin another school year and look forward to working with you to ensure every child in our IU region has a successful school year.

New Timeline Implemented for Special Education Contracts

BY MR. JON WALLITSCH, *Assistant Director of Business Services*

For the first time, 2011-2012 Special Education contracts are being sent to each of the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 school districts prior to the school year. The data used for the contracts is based on prior year data that was thoroughly reviewed by both the intermediate unit and school district personnel. A complete list of the students used to prepare the contract is included with the contract, and since prior year data is used, districts are advised to review the report with caution as the data does not account for students first coming into intermediate unit programs, nor leaving them, but adjustments have been made for district take-backs. The intermediate unit Business Office has recommended that district Business Managers and Special Education Directors meet and review the data so that any changes will be reflected in their 2011-2012 budget.

In continuing with a process that began just a few years ago, the intermediate unit will provide the districts with two mid-year estimates as well as providing final costs at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. The process of providing estimates was implemented so that the districts are better able to monitor their costs, proper adjustments can be made to the data, and districts are charged properly.

The Fee Schedule is comprised of 17 Service Categories. Costs are allocated by the total EFTs (Equivalent Full Time or full time position) in each category. Districts are not being charged by the EFT per classroom, but by EFT per Service Category. The intermediate unit's overall Special Education budgeted expenses are not increasing from 2010-2011 through 2011-2012, and the fee schedule was developed in accordance with a zero percent increase.

This process was implemented and approved in an effort by Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 to demonstrate commitment to keep the districts informed of their special education costs and to continue to provide them with accurate data.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Dependent coverage to age 26, per the Health Care Reform Act, went into effect as of July 1, 2011. A special "Open Enrollment" period was offered from June 1 – June 30. An affidavit was required which verified no coverage available through the dependent's employer or dependent's spouse's employer.



The Garden of Giving: IU 20 Bus Driver Leads a Major Community

BY DR. MARY BETH BIANCO, Assistant Executive Director

For CIU 20 bus driver Tammy Graeber, work does not conclude at the end of a day's bus run. Tammy is the Founder and President of the Board of Directors of the Garden of Giving, located in Monroe County. The Garden, established in 2008, is housed on 2.5 acres in McMichaels, PA and grows high-quality, high-yield vegetables that are then donated to local food banks and soup kitchens in Monroe County. This non-profit organization makes it their mission to "feed the hungry" and educate residents in the Monroe County area on the "value of healthy eating."

Since its inception, the Garden of Giving has grown with an expanded planting area and is able to provide much needed produce that may not typically be found in local food banks. In 2010, four local food banks and three local soup kitchens were served with fresh vegetables grown in the garden, including tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, broccoli and more – over 12,000 pounds worth!

More than 100 volunteers from communities throughout Monroe County partner with the Monroe Career and Technical Institute's horticulture department to till, plant, maintain, harvest, pack and distribute produce. Other partnerships include: Northampton Community College, service learning projects for students; Penn State University, Cooperative Extension Harvest and Health program; and volunteers from the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Women's Clubs, employees from Timberland and Sanofi, and other community members.

As an organization, CIU 20 is proud of Tammy and the work done by the many volunteers throughout the community who dedicate their time and energy to the success of this very necessary project and the mission they seek to fulfill.

More information about the Garden of Giving can be found at www.thegardenofgiving.org.

CIU 20 Institutes New Substitute Reporting System

BY MR. ANTHONY PIDGEON, Director of Human Resources

For years, the IU has relied on a dedicated person to record absences and fill any and all positions that require a substitute on a daily basis. This year, CIU 20 will transition to an automated system for absence reporting and substitute procurement. The system is called AESOP.

In the past, about 30 hours per week were spent manually recording absences and attempting to find substitutes. Additionally, another staff member manually entered the absences into the payroll system. Now, utilizing the AESOP system these two functions are eliminated as AESOP allows employees to enter their absence into the system and also finds a substitute to cover their absence as necessary, thereby freeing staff to accomplish other tasks.

AESOP's data collection and reporting capabilities allow personnel to better analyze absence trends. Through improved absence tracking, CIU 20 can reduce absenteeism and save on substitute costs. As in most districts, CIU 20 is facing additional costs in regards to unemployment compensation from substitutes. A substitute's claim is based on their report that the district did not offer work opportunities in a particular period of time. AESOP helps us fight unfounded claims by offering detailed reports of outbound phone calls to subs and their response to each call. Additionally, administrators can see how substitutes have configured and changed their availability for work in AESOP. All this information can be quickly and easily pulled into reports to help the district fight claims and save money.

CIU 20 Receives Approval from School Districts Insurance Consortium

BY MR. HANS BALTZERSEN, Director of Business Services

In an effort to continue the pursuit of cost effective as well as value added services, the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 made a decision to move from a commercial insurance policy to a consortium self-insured insurance policy for workers' compensation coverage in the 2011-2012 school year. CIU 20 applied for membership into the School Districts Insurance Consortium (SDIC) and is happy to share that the organization received approval from the SDIC consortium membership.

SDIC began operations in 1979 and is the largest and oldest group self-insured trust in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All members jointly assume their workers' compensation liabilities. SDIC also provides a wide range of Loss Control Services at no cost to the members; and even though self-insured organizations are not required by the Commonwealth to establish a safety committee program, SDIC still offers the 5% premium reduction for members who meet the safety committee program guidelines.

The SDIC claims staff average over 20 years of experience in the area of Workers' Compensation Claims Management and the Executive Director participates on the Advisory Board for the PA Department of Labor & Industry Bureau of Workers' Compensation and is also President of the PA Self-Insured Association. SDIC negotiates discounts for medical bills, prescriptions, physical therapy, radiology and other related services well below the fee schedule. They have also been instrumental in expanding CIU 20's panel of treatment providers for work-related injuries.

Currently the SDIC consortium is comprised of 80 member school districts/intermediate units including Nazareth Area School District and Wilson Area School District in the CIU 20 catchment area. Insurance premium costs are broken into two major components. The District's Self-Insured Retention component is reserved for payment of actual claim costs/payouts. Immediate savings can be realized when losses are lower than the retention cost. The Central Fund Contribution component is fixed and covers SDIC operational costs. CIU 20 is pleased to report that a real savings of nearly 45% (over \$300,000) in premium costs alone has been realized by joining the SDIC team. This does not include any potential savings through loss control efforts and more effective administrative processes in claims reporting. Monies are retained in the association's interest bearing account until disbursed to pay claims and operational expenses. Interest earned then reduces future costs for all members.

CIU 20 is excited about the new partnership with the SDIC group and will continue to promote safety for all staff, students and partners.

For more information concerning CIU-20 Programs and Services, visit our website at www.ciu20.org or contact:

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CIU 20 Opens the 2011-12 School Year with Annual Orientation Day for Faculty and Transportation Employees

BY DR. MARY BETH BIANCO, *Assistant Executive Director*

During the week of August 15th, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 faculty and transportation employees began the 2011-12 school year with their Orientation Day programs. The week started with a kickoff day for teachers, classroom aides, and program administrators, which was held at the Nazareth Area School District in their High School Auditorium.

Opening day presentations included an address by Executive Director Dr. Charlene Brennan, whose remarks were uplifting for staff, given the tough economic times throughout the educational community. "Our opportunity," Dr. Brennan shared, "is to continue to build and keep our relationships," which is also a major component of the CIU 20 Strategic Plan mission that is focused on *Relationships, Responsiveness, Results*. Dr. Brennan also included a new set of R's: *Renew, Recharge, Reinvent*. These three new concepts will be the focus of the next strategic plan as we wind down the final year of the current five year plan and gear up for the beginning of a new plan for the 2012-13 school year.

Mr. Tony Pidgeon, Director of Human Resources and Research Services, also addressed the group to provide an overview of the New Employee Portal, which is a component of the Alio™ Integrated Human Resources and Financial Package system. Included with the new system is the AESOP substitute calling program, which is an automated system for substitute calling and is fully integrated into the human resources and financial software (see "CIU 20 Institutes New Substitute Reporting System" on Page 2 for more information on AESOP). Employees were provided with a video navigational tutorial, and key components of the system were demonstrated and highlighted. The new system is expected to be fully functional and available to employees by January of 2012.

Additionally, each year various awards are presented to staff members to recognize their contributions to the intermediate unit and educational community. Numerous awards were presented to deserving staff at this year's Orientation Day.

The Annie Sullivan Award recognizes a staff member who exemplifies caring involvement with disabled students and who goes above and beyond the duties of the classroom in helping others in the school and community to understand and accept the disabled. The Annie Sullivan Award was presented to Melissa Owens – Teacher, Autistic Support Program, located at Pocono Mountain West High School.

The Leadership Award and Program Partnership Award are given to individuals who have demonstrated their abilities to inspire interest and enthusiasm for learning. The awards are



CIU 20 Supervisor for Partial Hospitalization and Autistic Support, Chris Wolfel, presents at the Transportation Orientation Day.

for persons who are unique for the positive personal experiences they bring to the classroom and the impact they have on the students, their families, the school, and the community. The Leadership Award was given to Karen Muller – Teacher, Physical Support Program, located at Paxinosa Elementary School. The Program Partnership Award was given to Gayle Chiavaroli – Associate Teacher, Life Skills Program, located at the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20's Central Office.

The Margaret Kahler Memorial Fund is a monetary award (\$40.00), and is to be used for the classroom. It is presented annually to the recipient of the Leadership Award, this year being Karen Muller.

Dr. Neila Connors from the National Middle Schools Association (NMSA) concluded the Orientation Day program with a presentation entitled "Teach with Passion." She also provided a follow-up session with intermediate unit teachers and classroom aides the following day at their in-service day, which was hosted at East Stroudsburg University. The remainder of the week featured national presenters, and mandatory trainings to prepare staff for the upcoming year.

The Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 Transportation employees gathered for a two-day session this year, beginning with the same kick off and opening remarks from Dr. Brennan, as well as an overall picture of the organization including program updates and important financial information. As part of a review of the CIU 20 Transportation services, new policies and procedures were reviewed and staff was given an opportunity to provide input and share questions.

The second day of in-service for bus drivers and bus monitors focused on behavioral strategies with presenter Mr. Chris Wolfel, IU Supervisor for Partial Hospitalization and Autistic Support. This interactive, full day workshop included strategies for dealing with behavior incidents on the bus; differences in dealing with the varied exceptionalities for Special Needs students; and preventative and relationship building ideas for working with students and families in a proactive rather than reactive manner.



Melissa Owens is pictured after receiving the Annie Sullivan Award on Orientation Day.

CIU 20 to Participate in Process of Designing New Teacher and Principal Evaluation Tool

BY MR. ANTHONY PIDGEON, *Director of Human Resources*

As most are aware, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) initiated a survey last year gathering data regarding the evaluations of teachers and principals in order to best meet the needs of all stakeholders. PDE has taken the data from this survey and is in the process of revamping the evaluation tool and procedures. Colonial IU 20 will be involved in the process of designing and supporting the pilot of this new process and new tool. The new tool is based on Charlotte Danielson's work in regard to teacher effectiveness and evaluation. The four domains identified in the current evaluation tool from the state will not be changed at this point, but the new tool also has a rubric with performance descriptors for each of the 22 components in these four domains, as well as an evaluation matrix. The tool is being designed to support the teacher as both a formative as well as a summative instrument.

PDE has also expressed that there will be different performance

expectations defined by the rubric developed for the tool for new and experienced teachers establishing that teachers with experience should continue to grow and develop and therefore will be held to a higher standard.

The evaluation will also be tied to a multi-measure of student achievement component. Although this component of the evaluation process has not been specifically defined, administrators and teachers should prepare to show student growth through a variety of means, not just PSSA testing.

This pilot will give IU 20 the unique opportunity to be part of the development and implementation of this new evaluation system thereby giving districts in the CIU 20 area a say in this process and an inside understanding of this process in order to better support districts during the evaluation process. If you have any questions or comments regarding the new evaluation system please contact Tony Pidgeon, tpidgeon@ciu20.org.

CIU 20 anticipates holding its next Substitute Teacher Training in the spring of 2012. Please continue to check the CIU 20 web site at www.ciu20.org periodically for updates and announcements.

Revolutionary Thinking . . . Makes A Difference



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For information regarding this statement, or special accommodations, please contact Mr. Anthony Pidgeon, Director of Human Resources and Research Services, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, 6 Danforth Drive, Easton, PA 18045-7899, (610) 252-5550, TDD/TTY Hearing Impaired (610) 252-3786.