



THE TWENTY



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

Volume 7 Issue 4

Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

December 2011

Executive Director's Message

BY DR. CHARLENE M. BRENNAN

The Twenty for December

As the holidays approach and days get hectic and stress-filled, it is always important that we stop to remember the important work we do for children. Reflecting on the year of good work in our school districts, career centers, and the IU, despite the seemingly endless challenges thrown our way, is a wonderful way to feel good this holiday season. Children need us more than ever and we have risen to the challenge and opportunity to serve them. Our recent Charter School Study demonstrates the excellent work occurring in our public schools. This study, done in collaboration with Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit 21, showed that children in our five county region have greater academic gains than their charter school/cyber school counterparts, despite perceptions to the contrary. We should take great pride that our performance dispels the notion that charter schools are a better solution for children than our public schools.

Also, this holiday season, I am pleased to share with you that for a second year, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20's budgets are at a 0% increase for the 12-13 school year. This is largely due to our dedicated and caring staff who all agreed to a reduced salary increase this year and a total salary freeze for next year. Our concern for children and our fellow colleagues brought us together to find solutions that would maintain our programs and yet contain costs for our districts. We hope you are pleased.

As always, if you have any questions, you may always call me at the Intermediate Unit at 610-515-6402.

Please have a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderful new year!

New Law Regarding Background Checks Affects Public and Private School Entities

BY TONY PIDGEON, *Director of Human Resources and Research Services*

Act 24 of 2011 amends section 111 of the public school code, which provides for background checks for employees of public and private schools, intermediate units and area vocational-technical schools. The changes to section 111 became effective on September 28, 2011.

The law, as it was previously written, created a significant loop hole, which would allow an employee who was arrested and convicted of an offense listed in section 111(e) of the code to potentially remain employed. Section 111(e) outlines the offenses for which an individual and now an employee cannot be employed. The new law includes an important mechanism to help ensure that current school employees, who may not have been subject to a previous background check, are now required to provide assurances that they have not been previously arrested or convicted of a section 111(e) offense. Section 111 also applies to independent contractors and their employees who have direct contact with children and to student teachers assigned to your schools. According to the law, if an employee refuses to submit the form created by PDE (PDE 6004) by December 27, 2011, the employee will be required to submit new clearances, and this employee will be responsible for the cost of these clearances.

In addition, school employees will be required to report to the School Administrator within 72 hours any arrest or conviction of an offense listed in Section 111(e) that occurs after September 28, 2011. PDE 6004 should be used to report these arrests or convictions to the School Administrator.

Act 24 of 2011 was designed to enhance the safety of school children and closes the previously discussed loop hole.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Keystone  ON DEMAND

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- **Keystone on Demand, powered by PAIUNet, is a portal that houses locally created video content for instructional use and provides efficient distribution of information to local school districts, communities, and intermediate units.**
- **Among others, watch recorded video broadcasts on:**
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 - **Teens OnQ:** Outreach initiative that introduces adolescents to career education.
 - **Virtual Conferences:** Technology related conferences hosted and run via PAIUNet.

Online Portal Provides Cost Savings to the Intermediate Unit

BY TONY PIDGEON, *Director of Human Resources and Research Services*

The intermediate unit recently started using a new employee portal, which allows employees to access their personal information, including payroll information, online. Most questions can now be answered by the employee themselves by simply reviewing their information, which saves time for office personnel in both the Payroll and the Human Resources departments.

Approximately 900 CIU 20 employees use some aspect of direct deposit for their IU pay. In the past, the IU mailed out a pay statement to each of these employees. At .44 cents per stamp over 24 pay periods, the intermediate unit incurred costs of about \$9,500.00 per year in just the cost of the stamps. This calculation does not include special pay processing such as sick leave rebates and with these additional mailing expenses the cost to the IU is well over \$10,000.00 per year.

December 15, 2011, will mark the first pay period where employees who choose to utilize direct deposit will not receive a mailed pay stub. These employees can now access their written pay statement in electronic format on the employee portal, where they can save it to a file or simply print the remittance themselves. This will save the IU a significant amount of money, not just on the cost of stamps and the actual remittance notice but also the time and effort it takes to put together these mailings.

Budget Estimates Distributed to Member Districts

BY HANS BALTZERSEN, *Director of Business Services*

Due to 2011 being an election year, this has shortened the timeline for school districts to prepare their 2012-2013 budget. This shortened timeline has led to the IU pushing up their annual budget estimates for school districts.

On November 23, 2011, budget estimates were sent out to districts. These estimates were prepared by taking the most current program enrollment information (2011-2012 or 2010-2011 depending on the program) and multiplying by projected 2012-2013 enrollment costs. This year, in large part to intermediate unit staff salary concessions, the enrollment costs are, for the second year in a row, at a 0% increase. Estimates include projected costs for the following programs:

- General Operating Budget
- CPETracker
- Special Education Contract
- One-on-One Aide, Associate Specialist or Mental Health Workers
- Partial Hospitalization
- Colonial Academy
- Detention Home
- Extended School Year
- Preschool Services
- Chapter 15 Services
- Transportation
- IDEA Flowthrough Fund – Revenue Item

Additionally, it is important to consider that if school district costs are increasing in a program, these increases are due to increased students or increased services to students.

CIU 20 Working with Local Districts to Reduce Natural Gas Pricing

BY HANS BALTZERSEN, *Director of Business Services*

In an effort to save tax dollars, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, East Stroudsburg, Nazareth, Pen Argyl, Stroudsburg and Wilson Area School Districts have agreed to seek consortium pricing for natural gas services. Following a presentation by Joseph Solomon and Michael Lang of Provident Energy Consulting, LLC (PEC) at the September 23, 2011, Business Managers' Meeting, it was agreed to move forward to solicit quotes for natural gas.

On October 24, 2011, quotes were received from five different suppliers. Although pricing looked attractive, PEC asked the supplier to refresh and finalize their quotes by November 10, 2011. All five suppliers refreshed and responded with a final request. Because the five school districts and the IU span different rate types, PEC asked each supplier to breakout pricing into four categories: UGI DS (delivery service), UGI NT (non-residential transportation) and Central Penn Gas and Central Penn Gas NT.

Not all suppliers were able to serve all four types; only Hess Energy and UGI Energy Services were able to provide quotes across all four options. UGI DS and Central Penn Gas DS received 0% tolerance (providers are able to charge a fee, at market price, if the consumer is below their projected usage) and 100% tolerance pricing (although slightly more expensive, this option locks in the consortium rate regardless of usage). 100% tolerance was an additional 7¢ to 10¢ up front, but customers who have additional tolerance would not have to worry about usage fluctuations from month to month. With 0% tolerance each customer is subject to market rates for any usage above or below contract volumes. PEC recommended that the small up front cost is worth it for the insurance against fluctuations.

PEC recommended 24 months, 100% tolerance pricing starting January 1, 2012, as follows:

UGI DS – UGI Energy Service at \$.608/DTH;

CPG DS – Hess Energy at \$.928/DTH;

UGI NT – Hess Energy at \$1.96/DTH;

CPG NT – Hess Energy at \$1.129/DTH.

Winter is Finally Here!



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

Colonial IU 20 Board of Directors

Ms. Jane F. Erdo, President
Ms. Susan Baxter, Vice-President
Mr. Hans Baltzersen, Treasurer
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39th Annual Summer Administrative Workshop

Leading in an Age of Accountability:
Doing More with Less

Save the Date!!

Historic Hotel Bethlehem

Tuesday, July 31, 2012

437 Main St, Bethlehem, PA 18018

Making the Grade—Virtual Town Hall Meeting

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

On November 1, 2011, a virtual town hall meeting was held through a statewide videoconference to discuss the newly proposed teacher evaluation system being piloted in various sites across the Commonwealth. In conjunction with the PA Partnerships for Children, a children's advocacy organization funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the PA Department of Education held a live, virtual town hall meeting to provide information regarding the proposed teacher evaluation system currently in the pilot phase.

The meeting opened with comments from PA Secretary of Education, Ron Tomalis, who along with Governor Corbett has made teacher evaluation a priority for the education agenda. During Secretary Tomalis' opening remarks, his statements included that legislative and state leaders believe that the time is right for addressing this issue in "an effort to ensure that every child in the Commonwealth has the opportunity to experience such a great teacher."

Superintendents, teachers, principals, union leaders and others contributed to the discussion, sharing their thoughts on the pilot process and the next steps for implementation and the second pilot phase. Secretary Tomalis posed questions for the pilot participants, to which responses were given for

the first segment of the meeting. A live Q & A session concluded the two hour event.

CIU 20 was among the 30 host sites, which included 28 intermediate units, with about 40 participants present, including superintendents, IU personnel, board members, teachers, central office administrators and principals.

Making the Grade was broadcast over PAIUNet and was attended by approximately 1,200 people at various host sites. PAIUNet, the PA Association of Intermediate Units' statewide, wide area network connects 485 of the 500 PA school districts via a high speed, dedicated broadband connection. The live event went off without a hitch – demonstrating the power of the network with clear, crisp video quality and "virtually" no technical problems.

A recording of this event can be viewed at the following link:
<http://video.paiunet.org/videos/view/249>.



IDEA Funding Reduced

BY HANS BALTZERSEN, *Director of Business Services*

On October 21, 2011, intermediate units throughout the state were notified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) that the projected 2011-2012 School Age Planning Allocations for IDEA, Part B, were reduced by 1.503%. This reduced the amount to be distributed by PDE statewide from \$345,812,912 to \$341,372,827, amounting to a reduction of \$4,449,085. This reduced IU 20's allocation from \$14,787,662 to \$14,586,671, amounting to a reduction of \$200,990.

Consequently, the amount of "pass thru" funds distributed to CIU 20 member school districts and charter schools was reduced by \$143,551, from \$10,561,555 to \$10,418,004. Reductions to individual school districts ranged from a high of \$75,019 to a low of \$2,872.

Information regarding the funding reduction was presented by the intermediate unit to district Business Managers at their November 11, 2011, Business Managers meeting and to Superintendents at the November 18, 2011, Superintendents Meeting.

CIU 20 Welcomes Two New Board Members

BY CHARLENE BRENNAN, *Executive Director*

Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 is pleased to welcome two new board members at their December board meeting.

Eileen Featherman of the East Stroudsburg Area School District is a retired nurse. Elected on November 8, 2011, Eileen was elected to serve on the ESASD Board of Directors until 2015. Eileen is the spouse of the late Roland Featherman, CIU 20 Board Member Emeritus, who served from 1975 until 2003.

Laurie Woods, representing the Stroudsburg Area School District is an Advanced Distribution Supervisor with Met Ed and serves as the board treasurer for her district. Laurie has served as a member of the Stroudsburg Board of Directors since 2005.

IU 20 board members show a great amount of dedication as they serve on both the IU and their individual school districts boards, attending both sets of board meetings monthly. CIU 20 is thankful to all of its board members for their service and dedication and is pleased to welcome the two new members.

CIU 20 Student Earns Eagle Scout

BY DR. MARY BETH BIANCO, Assistant Executive Director

Allen Rutan, a senior at Nazareth High School and a student in CIU 20's High School Rotation program, received high honors for completing his project and earning the rank of Eagle Scout in September of 2011. This rank is the highest in the Boy Scouts of America™ organization, with only about 5% of all scouts reaching Eagle.

Assuming a leadership role is one of the key components in the journey to Eagle Scout. The requirements include: being active in one's troop, earning 21 merit badges, actively serving in a position of responsibility for six months, and completing a service project, among others. (Boy Scouts of America, <http://www.scouting.org>, retrieved, 12/2011)

Allen's Eagle Scout project was the construction of six hay racks for an organization called Equi-librum, which helps people with special needs in coordination, social development and self-esteem through work with horses. Allen's work toward earning this rank spanned



a two year period and 359 man hours. The hay racks include feeding tables that catch the hay that falls while the horses are feeding, which in turn reduces the amount of waste while the horses are out in the pasture. At a height of six feet tall, the hay racks are also portable so they can be moved in inclement weather to an alternate location for feeding. Allen planned fundraisers, secured donations and supervised the construction of the hay racks.

Allen is the son of Robert and Deborah Rutan and the brother of Shannon Rutan. He has come through all the ranks in the Boy Scout organization beginning with the Cub Scouts, where he also earned the highest award, Arrow of Light, two religious medals, the Heavy Shoulder Award and the United States Heritage Medal. He then moved to Troop #43, earning Star Scout, and finally to Boy Scout Troop #44, where he also earned two additional religious medals, served as Chaplain Aide and earned the ranks of Life through Gold Palm.

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.