



# THE TWENTY



*This Month: Curriculum and Technology Departments*

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Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

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## Executive Director's Message

BY DR. CHARLENE M. BRENNAN

January is School Director Recognition Month, and I would like to take this time to thank our Colonial Intermediate Unit board members for their outstanding service and commitment to the more than 8,000 students from our 13 school districts that CIU 20 serves throughout a school year.

Each of our 13 board members gives up yet another night of their personal time to come to the IU to oversee the programs and services we offer to children, staff and parents from our school districts. The CIU 20 is a large, complex organization serving the needs of many of our most challenged and vulnerable children. Often this requires our board members to balance decisions that affect their school district with those that are of benefit to the entire region of students. Many times the decisions for the region are different than those they would make back home, but it is with courage and the best interests of our student population that they cast their vote.

Please take special time this month to thank your representative to our CIU 20 board for the time and commitment they give for special students in Monroe, Northampton, and Pike Counties. Here at IU 20 we are most grateful to them.

Jane F. Erdo, Northampton Area SD (President)  
Susan Baxter, Saucon Valley SD (Vice-President)  
Pamela Colton, Bangor Area SD  
Irene Follweiler, Bethlehem Area SD  
Pam Lutfy, Delaware Valley SD  
Eileen Featherman, East Stroudsburg Area SD  
Robert Moskaitis, Easton Area SD  
Kenneth N. Butz, Nazareth Area SD  
Ethan Habrial, Pen Argyl Area SD  
Thomas J. Murphy, Sr., Pleasant Valley SD  
Dorothy Sirolly, Pocono Mountain SD  
Laurie Woods, Stroudsburg Area SD  
Cindy Nester, Wilson Area SD

## DID YOU KNOW . . .

...the Colonial IU 20 spam filter prevented 259,277 e-mails from getting to our staff's e-mail boxes in the month of December.

...there is an online Moodle Course to support teachers who administer the PASA. Access this tool by contacting Heather Brown, Coordinator of Educational Technology, at [hbrown@ciu20.org](mailto:hbrown@ciu20.org).

## New E-mail Server Improves Efficiency

BY TOM KALINOSKI, *Coordinator of Administrative Technology*

Many CIU 20 employees spend a large amount of their time away from the Central Office, serving and supporting our districts. This makes e-mail communication an extremely important means of correspondence amongst our staff members, and the educators we support. Recognizing that e-mail communication is so critical, the CIU 20 Technology Department has installed a redundant system, which would provide continued connectivity in the event of a server failure. After extensive research to determine a way to accomplish the upgrade with little to no cost, an aggressive implementation plan was achieved through final installation of the new server in the middle of January.

The addition of this new server improves the availability of e-mail to everyone inside and outside of the central office in Easton. CIU 20 now has a total of five e-mail servers to handle the 1200+ mailboxes that are housed on the system. This high level of redundancy was able to be achieved with no additional expenditures for hardware.

Our staff and member districts don't always hear or see about what is going on in the CIU Technology Department, and that can be attributed to the fact that much of our work is spent on maintaining and improving availability of various existing systems. This e-mail server upgrade is just one example of the many solutions that are implemented by the CIU Technology Department, that may not be seen by our member districts.

## PASA Updates for 2012 Announced

BY KIRSTEN DEROCHE, *Training and Consulting Staff*

The Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) is a state-wide assessment designed to be administered for students with the most complex cognitive needs. It is intended to be used as an assessment to meet the state and federal accountability requirements of assessing all students, including those who are unable to participate meaningfully in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

On January 18th, the CIU 20 hosted a webinar on the updates and administration of the PASA for the coming year. To follow up on information learned at the webinar, a training with live facilitation will be administered by the CIU 20 on February 13, 2012 from 12:00pm until 3:00pm. Training and Consulting Staff are always available to support your program and/or district in the administration of the PASA for 2012.

If you would like assistance from the CIU 20, please request a training online: <http://www.ciu20.org/curriculum-Services/request-training.aspx>

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE . . .

**Collaboration of Special Education and Curriculum Administrators Results in Student Growth With PVAAS Data Diagnostic.**



*Administrators from several member districts converge at CIU 20 to chart and diagnose their PVAAS data.*

## Technology Department Welcomes New Network Administrator

BY DR. THOMAS BAILEYS, *Director of Technology*

The Technology Department at Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 is pleased to introduce Brian Dravec, the new CIU 20 Network Administrator. Brian's role involves installing and maintaining network and server infrastructure across the entire IU-wide system. He is a graduate of Delaware Valley College, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems Management. Brian has over 9 years of experience as a Network Administrator in public education.



*Brian Dravec, CIU 20 Network Administrator*

## Two TaC Staff Members Become Certified in Behavior Analysis

BY DR. KRISTIN STAROSTA, *Training and Consulting Staff*

Two Training and Consulting (TaC) staff members, Natalie Sokol and Kristin Starosta, recently received certification through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board ([www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com)). This certification in behavior analysis required: completing 225 hours of graduate class work, supervision by an experienced behavior analyst for 18 months, and passing the behavior analyst certification exam. Both Dr. Sokol and Dr. Starosta completed their coursework through the special education program at Lehigh University, and were supervised by their doctoral advisor, Dr. Lee Kern.

As Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's), they are qualified to conduct descriptive and systematic behavioral assessments, analyze the resulting data, develop behavioral interventions, and supervise and monitor the implementation of these interventions. These skills will assist them in their work providing professional development and coaching to the CIU 20 member districts in the areas of Autism, Inclusion, and Positive Behavior Support.

## What Does "Presuming Competence" Actually Mean?

BY KIRSTEN DEROCHE, *Training and Consulting Staff*

In the education world we hear buzz words on a regular basis. "Presuming Competence" is one such concept gaining momentum within the public education system in Pennsylvania and across the nation. One would think the literal translation has to do with "presuming someone is competent". Therefore, the question is: Who should be presumed competent and in what capacity? The answer: ALL people and in ALL circumstances.

"Presuming Competence," a term coined by researchers such as Anne Donnellan and Cheryl Jorgensen, is a philosophy with the mission of eliminating the practice of "ableism" in schools and in society at large. As advocates for children of diverse needs and backgrounds, presuming competence is the right thing to do for students of all disability categories. Most recently, the terminology is used primarily to describe and promote fair education for students with complex support needs.

The idea behind presuming competence is just as simple as it seems. When we meet someone new, we generally presume that they are competent. This, unfortunately, is not the case when talking about students with complex support needs. The current paradigm is that when we meet someone with disabilities, these presumptions of competence are often replaced with those of incompetence and prejudice toward the person, solely based upon their perceived disability label.

There are many negative consequences that occur based upon these presumptions of incompetence; students are often segregated, spoken to in a childish manner, and opportunities for age-appropriate interactions and friendships are limited. These students are often viewed as "not intelligent." Some may even think that they are not able to understand and participate in social or academic circumstances, to the same degree as their general education counterparts.

It is the intention of trainings labeled "Presuming Competence" to reduce and eliminate "ableist" practices, and to realize a more inclusive and equal community for all members of our society, including those with disabilities. CIU 20 Curriculum Department staff remain committed to providing professional development for our member districts on "Presuming Competence" and other teaching practices that foster inclusion and a greater sense of community.

For more information concerning CIU-20 Programs and Services, visit our website at [www.ciu20.org](http://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  
Mrs. Dawn M. Hales, Secretary

### Colonial IU 20 Administrators

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Dr. Mary Beth Bianco, Assistant Executive Director  
[mbianco@ciu20.org](mailto:mbianco@ciu20.org)

## CIU 20 and Member Districts Learn About Instructional Coaching

BY MELISSA PETRILAK, *Training and Consulting Staff / PIIC Mentor*

Over 100 school leaders, coaches, mentors, and regional mentor coordinators from across the Commonwealth converged at the Penn State in State College earlier this month, to participate in a three-day conference focusing on the area of instructional coaching. The conference, hosted by the Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching (PIIC), provided those in attendance an opportunity to network and learn from other school leaders about topics critical to increasing student engagement and student performance. Six area school leaders, representing the CIU 20 region, participated in sessions centered on the use of technology; learning portals; and PIIC's Before, During, and After Cycle of Effective Coaching.

Kelly Galbriath, PIIC Mentor from IU 13, and Lisa Hartsock, Principal of Bellwood Antis School District, spoke to the audience about the impact of the new Framework for Teaching on instructional coaching and teacher effectiveness. The Framework for Teaching is a model for teacher evaluation currently being piloted in several school districts throughout the state. Joe Ginotti, Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Literacy Network, delivered the keynote address on day 2 of the conference. Ginotti highlighted the work Penn Literacy Network has done with research pertaining to evidence-based literacy. "Kids need to read, write, and talk on a daily basis. That's literacy," stated Ginotti. Penn Literacy Network has partnered with PIIC to provide staff development to a select number of school teams, with respect to the philosophy and research behind literacy-based best practices.

"If you want to impact a larger picture, you need school and district initiatives around literacy-based practices and instructional coaching", remarked Ginotti. Sixteen educators representing four schools in the CIU 20 area, are responding to Ginotti's statement by participating in a graduate level course through Penn Literacy Network (PLN). School teams representing Bangor and Nazareth began attending the course last month at Luzerne County Intermediate Unit. The PLN course combines theory with classroom practice of evidence-based research strategies pertaining to literacy. Those attending the course will implement activities introduced during class time, and reflect on their application of these strategies through journal and seminar discussions.

PLN is based on the Pennsylvania Comprehensive Program II from the University of Pennsylvania. The course provides a literacy framework for education in all content areas. This framework engages students in reading, writing, and transacting with text. New to this year's course is a special program component just for those who teach math. Afternoon sessions during the course will allow teachers of mathematics and their coaches an opportunity to apply the foundational pieces of PLN to their subject area. Lynn Dietrich, who is representing one of the Nazareth PLN teams, states, "This is an exciting opportunity for teachers to work with their peers across content areas, to refine their instructional practices, and to learn how literacy can apply to student learning."

## Curriculum Department Welcomes New Staff Members

BY KATHY EMEIGH, *Director of Curriculum*

The Curriculum Department at Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 is pleased to announce the addition of several new members to our team.

Marian Beck, Assistant Director of Curriculum, provides leadership, technical assistance, expertise, and project management for varied federal, state, and district initiatives, to our member districts. Marian received a Bachelor of Science in Elementary and Kindergarten Education from the Pennsylvania State University, and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from George Mason University. She has over 10 years of experience in public education.

Michell Ressler, Training and Consulting (TaC) Staff, comes to the Curriculum Department from the CIU 20 Partial Hospitalization program, where she was a long term substitute. Michell is a graduate of East Stroudsburg University, where she earned a Master's of Special Education, as well as Bachelor's Degrees in both Political Science and Environmental Science. She has taught and volunteered with special needs students in and out of the classroom for over 15 years.

Julie Eates, Coordinator of Professional Development, focuses on promoting Colonial IU 20 programs and services to our districts, and the community at large. Julie is a graduate of Gannon University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing. She has over eight years of professional experience in the fields of marketing, public relations and advertising.

Gretchen Stoudt, Curriculum Department Secretary, assists several curriculum administrators on numerous on-going projects and initiatives.

Gretchen studied Early Childhood Education, Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy and Hematology at Northampton Community College and East Stroudsburg University. She has over 10 years of experience in customer service, most recently in supervisory roles.

The Curriculum Department is certain that the addition of these team members will enhance our ability to continue to serve our member districts effectively and efficiently.



From left to right: Gretchen Stoudt, Michell Ressler, Marian Beck and Julie Eates

## CIU 20 Trainings on Membership Participation and Learning (MPL) Assist Schools on Inclusive Educational Practices for Students

BY KIRSTEN DEROCHE, *Training and Consulting Staff*

Throughout the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 region, focused training and technical assistance are currently being administered, with the intent to support our schools in the design and implementation of inclusive educational practices for students with complex support needs. Students with complex support needs require thorough instruction, modification and intensive supports to participate meaningfully and progress in the general education curriculum. Additionally, they may require augmentative communication systems and assistive technology, in order to access, communicate and participate and progress in learning. Therefore a partnership in achieving these goals was created. This partnership is operationalized through the MPL Project.

This project is a three year endeavor for both Bangor Middle School and Easton Middle School. It requires a devoted leadership team for facilitation and technical support, comprised of: school leaders, parents, CIU 20 consultants, and PaTTAN (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network) consultants. This support includes multiple strategic and action planning sessions, based around professional development for the school staff, as well as implementation of new programs to assist in developing inclusion for students with complex support needs.

One exciting development of this project is occurring at Bangor Middle School. The team there is developing a natural peer program for building

community, and providing supports to the members of the student body with more complex educational and social needs. This is accomplished as part of an additional piece to the MPL project, with consultation from Dr. Erik Carter, from Vanderbilt University. The team is creating a program that will provide more opportunities for all students to become members of the Bangor Middle School community, thus enabling them to learn together as Bangor Slaters.

As the MPL project progresses, both Bangor and Easton teams are working diligently on creating more inclusive environments for all students. This increases the placement data for students with more complex support needs as they are included with their peers in the general education population. Teams are also looking at access points to include students in both academic and social interactions. Curricular resources are being planned to provide students with complex support needs the opportunity to learn in a predominately general education setting. These teams continue to plan for sustainability, and are examining the expansion of these programs into other schools within their districts.

Looking to the future, our consultants in the Curriculum Department are dedicated to supporting our districts as we help facilitate learning in the Least Restrictive Environment. If you need more information on the MPL Project, contact Kirsten DeRoche at [kderoche@ciu20.org](mailto:kderoche@ciu20.org).

*CIU 20: Dedicated To Your Children and the People Who Serve Them*



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*“The Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 declares itself to be an equal rights and opportunity agency. As an equal rights and opportunity agency, it does not discriminate against individuals or groups because of race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status or non-relevant handicaps and disabilities as defined by law.”*

*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.*