



THE TWENTY

This Month: Executive, Business and Human Resources Offices



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Colonial Intermediate Unit 20

February 2010

Executive Director's Message

BY DR. CHARLENE M. BRENNAN

The Twenty for February

It seems that most months are consumed these days with talks of budget. I know that is how it is here at IU 20, and I know that is how it is also in your school districts. This month, of course, the big news was the release of the Governor's budget proposal for 2010-2011.

The good news is that education was one of the few line items for which a significant increase has been proposed—6.4% in fact to the basic education subsidy. According to the Governor, this proposal will fund the third year of the Adequacy formula that came out of the Costing Out Study completed by the state a few years ago.

The bad news is that while funding the adequacy formula is to be applauded, the truth is that it is not being fully funded. The adequacy formula builds in supplements for items found in the study to add significantly to the cost of educating a student. So, there is a supplement for poverty students, a supplement for English As a Second Language students, a district size supplement, and a geographic adjustment.

Glaringly missing is a supplement for special education students, one of the items found in the costing out study to add significantly to the cost of educating students. I can only think that the Governor believes that because special education has its own line item in the budget that a separate supplement in the adequacy formula is not needed. However, the special education line has for two years been at a 0 percent increase. Districts have received federal stimulus monies from the federal government for special education, and perhaps this is why the Governor has not felt a compelling need to increase the special education line item. As we all know, though, stimulus money is going away in another year, and districts will be hard pressed to fill the gap, if they can at all. That leaves districts with the consequence of siphoning money from the basic education subsidy, where there is no supplement for special education, to pay for special education, money meant for regular education students.

We will be following closely the budget discussion at the state level during the upcoming months and believe the state-level funding for special education should be a significant concern for everyone.

Capital Projects Near Completion

BY DR. MARY BETH BIANCO, Assistant Executive Director

Last spring, CIU 20 began three Capital Projects to update the Central Office building. Phase 1 replaced the roof, which began in May 2009, followed by Phase 2, the replacement of the parking lot, in June. Each of these project phases were completed with little incidence.

The June rains significantly impacted the completion of the parking lot, stretching it well into the summer. In the end, the parking lot was completed in

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Health Care Amendments to Impact IU Medical Plan

BY HANS BALTZERSEN, Business Manager

There are six amendments that have or will have an impact on the IU's and school districts' medical plan. Three of these amendments are federal amendments: Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA), Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity of 2008, and Michele's Law PL 110-381. Federal amendments require the IU to amend their medical plan to add these coverages.

The CHIPRA Amendment effective April 1, 2009, permits an employee who is eligible, but not enrolled for coverage under the terms of the medical plan, to enroll for coverage under the terms of the medical plan if the following conditions are met: 1) Termination of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage, 2) Eligibility for Employment Assistance under Medicaid and CHIP.

The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Resolution effective July 1, 2010, requires group medical plans to apply the same treatment limits on mental health or substance-related disorder benefits; however, if the plan does include the benefits, the Act requires that these benefits are provided in a manner no more restrictive ("parity") in their financial requirements or limits than what is available for medical and surgical benefits.

Michele's Law Amendment, effective July 1, 2010, requires group medical plans to continue to provide coverage to a dependent that otherwise would lose coverage under the plan for failing to maintain full-time enrollment in a post-secondary institution in the event the dependent requires a medically necessary leave of absence. To qualify for coverage under the law, the dependent must suffer from serious illness or injury and lose eligibility due to the medically-necessary leave. The coverage under Michele's Law must be extended for at least one year; however, coverage may end earlier for certain reasons such as aging out of the plan.

Three of these amendments are state amendments: Pennsylvania Act 62 Autism Spectrum Disorders Coverage, Colorectal Cancer Screening Coverage and PA Senate Bill 189 dependent coverage to age 29. These amendments are not mandatory. However, the EBTEP solicitor stresses that we abide by the spirit and letter of these laws even where the application is in doubt, since these laws represent the spirit of the legislature. Act 62 Autism Spectrum Disorders Coverage Amendment effective July 1, 2010, provides the following coverage: 1) Coverage is provided for participants under 21 years of age; 2) Maximum yearly coverage is \$36,000 with no limits on the number of visits to an autism service provider. Beginning December 31, 2011, this maximum dollar benefit will be adjusted each year based upon the consumer price index for the preceding year; 3) Autism coverage shall be subject to co-pay, deductible and co-insurance provisions of the plan and any other general exclusions or limitations to the same extent as other medical services under the plan; 4) Provide for licensure or certification of behavior

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CIU 20, Member Districts, and Vocational Schools Continue to Address Substitute Shortage

BY MICHELE DAVIDSON, Management Assistant, Human Resources and Research Services

On February 9th and 22nd, 2010, Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 conducted its second substitute teacher training for the 2009-10 school year. Interviews for these trainings were conducted on January 5, 2010, at the Central Office. Twenty-two school administrators from across the CIU 20 member districts, vocational schools, and CIU 20 served as interviewers.

The trainings were coordinated and conducted by Kathy Emeigh, Assistant Director of Curriculum Services for Special Education and Literacy, and Donna Lloyd, Training Consultant, from CIU 20, who reviewed many different aspects of the substitute teaching experience. Dr. Sandra Fellin, Superintendent of Saucun Valley School District, delivered the welcoming address, sharing her insights on the importance of the role as a substitute teacher and her top 10 tips for success. Additional participants included: Michele Davidson, Management Assistant, Human Resources and Research Services, CIU 20, who spoke on human resources issues facing substitutes and the emergency permit process; Amaal Awadalla, Assistant Director of Curriculum Services for Mathematics and Science, CIU 20, addressed the emerging importance of diversity awareness; and Donna Lloyd also provided technology information and tips for substitute teachers. A key component of the training was classroom management. Erica Walters and Tresa Malligo, Assistant Principals, Pleasant Valley School District, presented on the "Responsive Classroom." Dr. Barbara Bradley, Principal, Stroudsburg Area School District, presented "Surviving and Thriving."

The second day of the training was scheduled for February 22, 2010. This day opened with a special speaker, Patrick Foose, a student at Northampton Community College, who spoke on his experiences as a student with special needs and how he overcame obstacles with the guidance and support of school personnel.

The group then made visitations to local schools to observe the classroom and teaching environment. Host schools were: Tracy Elementary School (Easton Area School District), Nazareth High School and Nazareth Middle School (Nazareth Area School District), and Colonial Academy (CIU 20). Although the trainees could only visit one school during this time, they were encouraged to visit a school where they felt hesitant in serving as a substitute as a means to expand their comfort level.



After speaking at the substitute teacher training, Northampton Community College and former Bethlehem Area School District student Patrick Foose (right) stands with Kathy Emeigh (left) as they talk with each other and the audience regarding Patrick's experiences in school.



Donna Lloyd presents a session to the substitute teachers on Day 1 of the IU spring training. The session began with an activity that asked participants to consider their expectations for the training.

During lunch, students from the CIU 20 Life Skills Support class, along with their teacher Judy Csencsits, and associate teachers Jan Drosnock and Kathie Schoeneberger assisted with serving lunch and discussed their program.

Evaluations and verbal responses received from the trainees over the years regarding these trainings have been most positive and highly regarded as some of the best training they have received regarding substitute work.

CIU 20 has completed 24 trainings with an average of 175 individuals each year. The IU is also responsible each year for contacting trained candidates and renewing permits for the following school year. Approximately 400 permits were renewed for the 2009-10 school year. As a result of this pilot program, these types of collaborative training programs are being conducted across the state.

Our next substitute teacher training program will be held on September 21 and 22, 2010. An interview day for this training will be held on July 7, 2010, at Colonial Academy. The Colonial IU 20 is currently accepting applications for this training – www.ciu20.org.

CIU 20 is proud of the results of this collaborative effort in providing substitutes in our classrooms. This program has inspired many individuals to pursue careers in education. CIU 20 is dedicated to the quality of this training

and looks forward to continuing this training in collaboration with our school districts and vocational schools.

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

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Colonial IU 20 Administrators

Dr. Charlene M. Brennan, Executive Director
cbrennan@ciu20.org
Ms. Dawn M. Miller, Executive Secretary/Board Secretary
dmiller@ciu20.org
Dr. Mary Beth Bianco, Assistant Executive Director
mbianco@ciu20.org

VLINC Cyber Options Program Begins for CIU 20 School Districts

BY DR. MARY BETH BIANCO, Assistant Executive Director

In January, CIU 20 launched a cyber services program to assist districts in their ability to offer an online option to students and families. The goal of this cyber services program is to offer administrative support that will allow the school district to:

- Differentiate instruction in order to meet the various needs of its diverse learners.
- Offer a district led alternative.
- Recognize a cost savings to their cyber charter school bills.

This program began in IU 19 and is currently being offered in IUs 17 and 18 as well. In partnership and collaboration, working in tandem allowed the IUs to maximize and share resources to provide assistance as this program grows.

Virtually Linking Instruction and Curriculum (VLINC), which is offered in partnership with the three other Intermediate Units, provides a menu of options from a variety of sources to meet the individual needs. The comprehensive program is designed to provide full-time cyber charter services, credit recovery, advanced placement and expand the curriculum currently offered by districts.

Additionally, opportunities are provided for students who may be considering dropping out of school or an alternative education placement. The online curriculum can provide opportunities for students including remediation, enrichment, course recovery, gifted education and summer school.

Participation may be particularly advantageous to current resident students not enrolled in the traditional program offered at their main school district campuses. An opportunity for participation in the school district's extra-curricular and curricular programs is available for students enrolled in the cyber services program. This feature allows students to remain enrolled in their home school district and upon completion of district graduation requirements, receive a school district diploma.

VLINC is designed to meet the needs of the district and its students through a collaborative effort between the district and the Intermediate Unit. Admission into the VLINC program is based on assessment of the student's academic background, transcripts and school district graduation requirements, allowing a flexible and district aligned program. Full time cyber services students may complete their coursework entirely online or through a blending of online and traditional on-site coursework. Online facilitators are highly qualified teachers in their respective content areas and have received professional development related to ePedagogy.

The Bangor Area School District is the first of the Colonial IU 20 school districts to partner in this initiative, beginning implementation of the program in the spring 2010 semester. Bangor is currently providing this opportunity for their resident students. As the program grows, CIU 20 hopes more of the constituent districts will sign on as partners in this student-focused, flexible program.

"The IU has been a supportive partner, from the initial parent meeting to supporting our guidance counselors, tech directors, families and administrators navigate the path to offering an online learning environment. I am hopeful that this partnership will decrease the number of students who are disconnected from the Bangor Schools, and provide a viable, flexible option for parents who need a flexible education schedule."

*Pat Mulroy, Assistant Superintendent,
Bangor Area School District*

DID YOU KNOW...

St. Luke's Hospital graciously donated an audiology booth for conducting hearing tests for students. This sound-proof booth arrived at our facility during the week of October 14th, has been installed and is prepared to accommodate the work of our Audiologist, Pam Schaffer. The timing of this installation allowed us to coordinate with the HVAC schedule, making the transition seamless and efficient.



Health Care Amendments to Impact IU Medical Plan

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specialists; 5) There are provisions concerning payment to autism providers for diagnosis and treatment of autism; 6) There are specific appeal procedures relating to denial of claims concerning diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

The Act 62 Colorectal Cancer Screening Coverage Amendment effective July 1, 2009, provided Colorectal Cancer Screening Coverage in accordance with the American Cancer Society guidelines published as of January 1, 2008 and "consistent with approved medical standards and practices." More specifically:

- 1) Coverage for non-symptomatic persons who are 50 years of age or older shall include but not limited to:
 - a) An annual fecal occult blood test,
 - b) A sigmoidoscopy, a screening barium enema or another approved test to detect colon cancer at least once every five years,
 - c) A colonoscopy at least once every ten years.

- 2) Coverage for symptomatic person shall include a colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy or other cancer screening tests at a frequency determined by a treating physician.
- 3) Coverage for non symptomatic persons at a high or increased risk for colorectal cancer who are under age 50 shall include a colonoscopy or any combination of cancer screenings in accordance with American Cancer Society Guidelines as of January 1, 2008.

Senate Bill 189 Amendment effective July 1, 2010 allows children of employees to obtain health benefits on a self pay basis until age 29. Rates will be determined by the employer. Eligible children do not need to reside with the employee but should be a resident of PA. Their marital status will be single with no dependents of their own.

The IU Board and self-funded school districts will be discussing these amendments in the coming months.

Capital Projects Near Completion

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time for the August opening, allowing CIU 20 to hold in-services and other trainings as scheduled. Upon completion of the parking lot, CIU 20 picked up a few extra parking spaces, replaced the lighting fixtures and added some additional handicapped accessible spots.

Phase 3, replacement of our HVAC system will close out on March 1, 2010, with 54 new heat pumps replaced and a duct work overhaul in several areas. A few minor issues were discovered with our very old, existing pipe fittings early in the process that also resulted in minor delay and schedule changes. The engineers and the contractors worked diligently to research and resolve these by providing a viable solution that put the project right back on track.

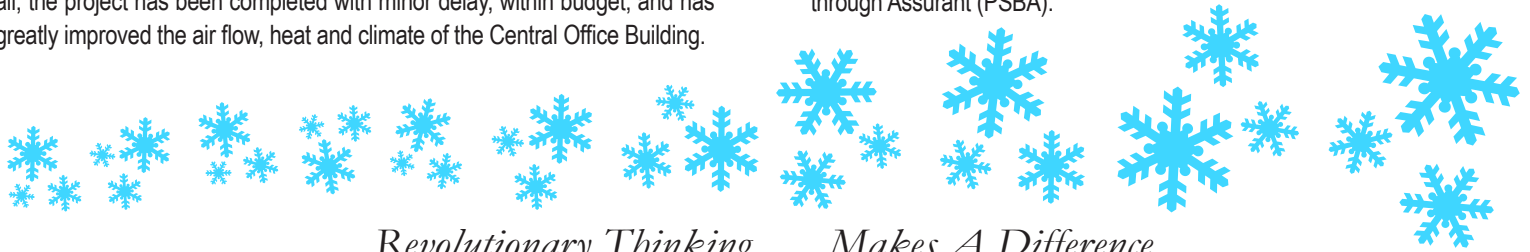
As the building was occupied during this process, Skip Flowers, Coordinator of Buildings and Grounds, worked carefully to schedule unit replacements that resulted in as little disruption to the workflow as possible. All in all, the project has been completed with minor delay, within budget, and has greatly improved the air flow, heat and climate of the Central Office Building.

Life Insurance Consortium Proposals Received

BY HANS BALTZERSEN, Business Manager

On December 31, 2009, the Northampton, Monroe and Pike Counties Joint Purchasing Board Life Insurance Consortium's contract with Harleysville Insurance Company was due to expire. Consortium members, Colonial IU 20, Bangor Area SD, Delaware Valley SD, Northampton Area SD, Pen Argyl Area SD, Pleasant Valley SD, Wilson Area SD and Monroe Career and Technical Institute looked to their long time insurance broker Greg Strawn, President of R.L. Strawn Associates, Inc. to attempt to secure a new proposal.

Sealed proposals were received from both Assurant and Harleysville. When the final proposals were received, Assurant, rated "A-" by A.M. Best, offering a 27% rate reduction guaranteed for 5 years and Harleysville, rated "B++" by A.M. Best, quoted a 22.6% rate reduction guaranteed for 5 years. After this lengthy renewal process, the consortium members will recognize a total monthly savings of \$8,590.64, or \$515,438.40 for the guaranteed 5 years through Assurant (PSBA).



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COLONIAL INTERMEDIATE UNIT 20
6 Danforth Drive
Easton, PA 18045-7899

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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.