

# CAIU: ALL IN!

## CAIU: CELEBRATING AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK



### Did You Know?

ANDRIA SAIA

At the corner of Valley Road and First Avenue in Summerdale sits the Miller-Longsdorf house, famous for being the birth place of Enola Miller, for whom the town of Enola was named.



Enola Miller, age 14.

The house was built of mountain stone by Henry Longsdorf in 1841. In 1903, Henry's son-in-law Wesley Miller sold part of the farm to create a railroad station and was given the honor of naming the station, which he dubbed "Enola" after his then 4 year old daughter.

The Miller-Longsdorf house was officially added to the Cumberland County Historic Registry on February 27, 2019. There has been a resurgence in attention to the house with the planned

development of the 50 +/- acres that the house sits on. For a number of years there have been plans to develop the land that sits under and around the house, with each set of plans calling for the house to be torn down or moved. The East Pennsboro Historical Society has fought to preserve the house through many different iterations of plans for the land.

In September, 2019, the CAIU Board of Directors unanimously voted to enter into an agreement with the East Pennsboro Township and the developers, with the blessing of the East Pennsboro Historical Society, to donate a one acre tract of land at the corner of First Avenue and Miller Street for the relocation of the Miller-Longsdorf house so that the land it currently sits on can be developed. It is expected that development will start in 2020. After its relocation, the Historical Society plans to turn the home into a museum.

Want to read more?:

<https://ephistory.org/2017/05/29/the-enola-yard/>  
<https://tinyurl.com/enolahouse>



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CAIU collected over 870lbs of food donations, enough to put nearly 1000 meals on the tables for local folks in need! Thank you all for your kind generosity!



Hill Top Academy staff raised \$400 to support breast cancer research through "wear pink" dress down days during October.



Hope Hoover displaying epic holiday spirit!



### IN THIS ISSUE

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## CAIU: CELEBRATING EDUCATION

ANDRIA SAIA

In the early days of our country, educational options existed, but they were largely private, and the majority were neither compulsory, nor free. Thomas Jefferson was a great proponent of education, even proposing a bill in 1784 to establish free schools. He believed that basic education was instrumental to securing “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” for Americans, because education would allow individuals to “understand his duties” and “know his rights.” By providing equal access to primary schools, Jefferson hoped to teach children “to work out their own greatest happiness, by showing them that it does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed them, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.” Alas, Jefferson was unable secure his vision of free public education in his lifetime. It was not until the 1840s that public schools began to pop up in communities that could afford them, and not until 1852 that Massachusetts passed the first compulsory school laws. By 1918 all American children were required to attend at least elementary school. Since then public education has undergone many changes, all more or less devoted to ensuring that public schools fulfill their purpose, which to John Dewey, leading educational theorist at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was to assist students in reaching their full potential, and the ability to use those skills for the greater good.



American Education Week (AEW) presents all Americans with the opportunity to celebrate public education, and to honor the countless individuals who are changing lives by ensuring that every student receives a quality education. AEW was created by the National Education Association (NEA) in 1919, in an effort to generate public support for education for all. The first observance of the AEW occurred in 1921, cosponsored by the NEA and the American Legion.

AEW is celebrated in November every year, and is a great opportunity to celebrate public education, inform the community of the accomplishments and needs of public schools, and to find ways to collaborate with our communities. CAIU will be celebrating AEW with the following events taking place:

**Monday, November 18, 2019: Kickoff Day:** The Monday Kickoff begins a weeklong celebration spotlighting the unsung heroes of education, the back-office staff that support the work of ensuring that we have all we need to change lives. CAIU is celebrating business and operations staff.

**Tuesday, November 19, 2019: Parents Day:** Tuesday’s spotlight shines on the parents of our students. CAIU will be thanking all our parent partners for all that they do as their children’s first teachers.

**Wednesday, November 20, 2019: Support Professionals Day:** Wednesday’s spotlight shines on our secretaries, without whom we could never be great!

**Thursday, November 21, 2019: Educator for a Day:** The Exec and Asst. Exec will be “guest teaching” in our EI classrooms Thursday afternoon, after the Board meeting and Thanksgiving luncheon at Hill Top Academy.

**Friday, November 22, 2019: Substitute Educators Day:** Friday’s spotlight shines on our floater subs, swooping in like superheroes, supporting our programs anytime, anywhere we have a need.

**Reach. Educate. Inspire.**



HAPPY AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK!

Celebrating public education and honoring all who work to ensure that every child receives a quality education.

### Message from the Executive Director



ANDRIA SAIA

November is “Practice Gratitude” Month, and as such now is the perfect time to investigate the amazing power gratitude has.

What is Gratitude? Dictionary definition – gratitude is the quality of being thankful, or a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. Other ways gratitude is described is appreciation for something that is valuable to you, the affirmation of goodness, and in particular the celebration of the good things outside of ourselves. Gratitude is a feeling, and also a choice. We can choose to be grateful or not. As a choice it is also an attitude or disposition. Gratitude celebrates the present, shifting your focus to and magnifying positive emotions.

What is it to practice gratitude? Grateful living is a way of life in which we actively notice all that is present and abundant in our lives, taking nothing for granted. Acts of gratitude every day, lift us up, make a difference to others, and help change the world, one small act at a time. We can practice gratitude by paying attention, or taking active steps such as journaling or taking time out to reflect on all there is to be grateful for. Another way to practice gratitude is by expressing it – thanking those that have made an important contribution to your life.

Why practice gratitude?

- Gratitude blocks, toxic, negative emotions.
- Grateful people are happier, more stress resistant, and have a higher sense of self-worth and satisfaction with life.
- In research on positive psychology, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness.
- Gratitude helps people to feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal better with adversity, and build strong relationships.

What can you do to make gratitude a bigger part of your life?

Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.

– John Milton

Want to read more?:

<http://ei.yale.edu/what-is-gratitude/>

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why\\_gratitude\\_is\\_good](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good)

# Student Services



**ALICIA MCDONALD**

**PEAK Curriculum**

Administrators and specialists from 12 different school districts and cyber schools attended an overview training on the PEAK curriculum; a curriculum based on Relational Frame Theory and Applied Behavior Analytic principles that is designed for students in Autism support programs.

PEAK is one of a number of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs rooted in B.F. Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior. The purpose of PEAK is to prepare students for effective learning in school and in life. PEAK stands out from other ABA-based programs in its scope across skills and age/grade levels. Relatively speaking, PEAK is new and benefits from programmatic improvements learned from years of experience in Autism and communication support. The strengths of the PEAK program make it a popular choice of parents and behavior support agencies. Knowing the details of PEAK and the opportunity to embrace its instruction is vital to IEP teams as the popularity of the program increases.

CAIU educational consultants and board certified behavior analysts, Heather Smith and Kellie Custer are trained in PEAK programming, and are experienced in using PEAK assessments and designing individual student programming. Heather and Kellie provided an overview of the four PEAK modules and detailed how PEAK might be implemented at a school/district level.

**PRESCHOOL**

Preschool Program participated in a professional development day on November 5th.



Shana Montgomery and Geri Schaffer, CAIU Assistive Technology Consultants presented on the AT Tier 1 foundational training and connected the vision of the Preschool Program to the importance of assistive technology within the classroom. The focus was on universal design of learning, accessible instructional materials, classroom environment, communication and early literacy skills through the lens of assistive technology. The second part of the training was led by Jamie Gordon, Preschool Inclusion Consultant. She focused on sharing and developing activities related to the PATHS Curriculum (Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills).



The Preschool Program hosted the 3rd Annual Social Emotional Literacy Night at the CAIU from 4-7 PM on 11/4. Jamie Gordon, sphere headed this event and recruited 53



CAIU staff to provide hands-on activities focusing on social emotional books for the 42 children and their family members. Families who are currently receiving early intervention services in the Infant/Toddler Program and the CAIU Preschool Program were in attendance. A fun time was had by all!



Jamie Gordon presented a training at Follow Me Early Childhood Center on November 12 for staff and parents, The training was titled, "Understanding the Meaning of Your Child's Challenging Behaviors".



**OT/PT Department Training**

On October 24, The Shriner's Motion Analysis Lab presented a program for OT's and PT's. We had participants from other IU's via Zoom. Dr. Ross Chafetz, PT, PHD, MPH, DPT who is the director of the Motion Analysis Center was the main speaker. Ms. Rachel Singer, Director of Business Development for Shriner's also gave an overview of the services offered to families at no cost to them. The program was very well received.

Ms. Christine Achenbach, M.Ed. OTR/L from Elizabethtown College presented to the IU OT staff on how to mentor Level 1 and Level 2 field students. She discussed the expectations for supervising OT students and the benefits to the OT's and to the students.

**ELECT held its annual Fall Festival event.**

Teens and their children came for a program and dinner on October 23rd. Presenters from Safe Kids (Penn State Hershey Medical Center) spoke about safety for infants and toddlers. The teens and their children also had the opportunity to make Jack Lanterns and show off their Halloween costumes.



CAIU Early Intervention Preschoolers had a great time participating in Trick or Treating at the Enola offices.



## Tech Services



DAVE MARTIN

### WELCOME

to the  
First Annual  
AgendaManager  
User Conference

### AgendaManager

Meetings. We spend a lot of time in them. But for most us, the thought of trying to fit another meeting in our busy schedule can make us cringe. Why? Could it be the fact that some of the meetings we attend are disorganized, meaningless, and seem like a waste of precious time? An article in Inc. reported results from a study of 19 million meetings across the US, UK and Germany. The results showed the cost of poorly organized meetings in 2019 could be as high as \$399 billion in the US alone. In the report, respondents said that poorly organized meetings meant employees didn't have

the time they need to do the rest of their job and it also created confusion because action steps were unclear.

But if you've ever been in a well-run and organized meeting, you know how much can be accomplished. Employees value efficient and productive meetings. They leave you with a sense of satisfaction, knowing that you and your team are contributing and making a difference. And that's why the CAIU created and has been using AgendaManager since 2010. AgendaManager is an online meeting management solution that supports best practices for running efficient and effective meetings and improves communication both vertically and horizontally within an organization. Districts use it for board meetings, administrative meetings, faculty meetings, and curriculum meetings, to name a few.

The use of AgendaManager within the CAIU for our board meetings and job-alike meetings created the opportunity to share the solution and best practices with districts within our footprint. AgendaManager grew by word of mouth from 2010 – 2015, but in 2016 we attended our first national conference to share the value and capabilities with educational service agencies from across the country. Since our first year of marketing on a national level, we have seen positive results, with growth both inside and outside of Pennsylvania. Since the versatility of the application lends itself to use both inside and outside of K-12 education, we are now looking for opportunities to expand the use of AgendaManager to higher education, non-profit organizations, municipalities and the private sector.

### AgendaManager Factoids

- Expanded to New Jersey, New York, and Wisconsin
- Service agency in Washington currently in transition to adopt AgendaManager
- Percentage growth of total clients over the past 4 years: 170 %
- Strategic Partnerships
  - CESA7 (a Cooperative Educational Service Agency in Wisconsin)
  - Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)
  - Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA)



On November 7, 2019, the AgendaManager team hosted our First Annual User Conference at the CAIU. We had 46 registered attendees from 23 different service agencies and school districts, including our strategic partners from CESA 7 in Wisconsin. Our intent was to gather our users together and provide them with an opportunity to network, share their experiences, and provide input, as we continue to develop the AgendaManager application to support meeting best practices. The day culminated in a collaborative discussion focused on setting a culture that would create or promote efficient and productive meetings supported by our solution, AgendaManager. One district shared a success story on how a change in meeting culture, facilitated by their implementation of AgendaManager, has cut their meeting time in half and provided more meaningful discussions. Guest speakers from Carlisle Area and Eastern Lancaster County school districts shared their implementation stories with attendees and provided opportunity for discussion and questions. Initial feedback from the day was very positive, and we've already begun planning for an event in 2020.



## Tech Tip of the Month

### Secure your Home Wi-Fi Network

Be aware of all the devices connected to your home network. Internet connected devices: baby monitors, gaming consoles, TVs, appliances, cell phones or even your car are all potential vulnerabilities. To secure your home network, always start by making sure your wireless router has a strong and secure password. This is the front door to your network. Ensure all of those connected Internet devices are also protected by a strong password when possible. In addition, update your router and Internet connected devices to the latest version of their operating system. Many times people choose easy passwords so they remember them, but that is what cybercriminals are counting on.



## Educational Services



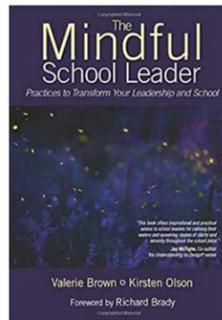
### BRIAN GRIFFITH

Over 85 educators from across the State attended the Fourth Annual Tinker Expo held at the CAIU on October 22. The day was filled with 15 breakout



sessions on a variety of innovative topics such as robotics, design challenges, STEM curriculum and lessons, aquaponics, and tools with fun names like Scratch, Makey Makey, and Raspberry Pi. The afternoon Drones in Education session was literally buzzing with excitement while attendees learned about drone safety, configuration and flight logistics of their new Tello drones.

sessions on a variety of innovative topics such as robotics, design



Thirty three school leaders from fourteen school districts and the CAIU attended the Fall Curriculum Leadership Conference in State College on October 16-18. Dr. Kirsten Olson, co-author of *The Mindful School Leader*, was the keynote speaker and facilitator of the event. Dr. Olson led the group in a variety of interactive sessions where mindful strategies were both shared and practiced. The group also enjoyed collaborations in a PechaKucha activity surrounding the topics of College and Career Readiness, STEM/Coding, Profile of a Graduate, and Responsive Classrooms, to name a few. An interactive and competitive game of GooseChase was also played to model the importance of teamwork, communication, and technology integration in educational settings.



Ami Healy, Supervisor of Training and Consultation, was recently interviewed by Dr. Pam Kastner from PaTTAN as part of their "Leaders and Learning in Literacy" podcast. Ami was chosen for the interview based on the great success she has had in growing and supporting the Reading Network within the CAIU region. In response to being interviewed Ami said, "Pam interviews so many of the top literacy experts in the field and it is such an honor to be chosen to share and highlight the CAIU Reading Network." The interview can be viewed at the following link: <https://youtu.be/b8hc6Ol6oyQ>



## Business Services



### DAREN MORAN

#### "Who do you work for?"

Did you ever have someone ask you where you work and when you



answered the Capital Area Intermediate Unit, you were returned with "What's an Intermediate Unit?" My goal for this month's article is to equip you with enough information to answer the question with more than just what you do in your role at the IU.

Pennsylvania's 29 intermediate units were established in 1971 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly to serve as a liaison between local school districts and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

When I started working for the Capital Area Intermediate Unit many years ago I had the misconception that IUs only provided special education services to local school districts. I quickly learned that, although all IUs are a bit different, IUs provide extensive programs and services to the schools in their region.

IUs also use their positions to leverage the purchasing power of schools to generate savings for the districts that they serve. Just a few quick examples of this are managing health insurance consortiums, energy purchasing consortiums, bulk purchasing of technology and providing cost-effective transportation to 431 school districts for more than 13,000 special education students. Every year, more than 175,000 students and 50,000 educators receive services from one of the 29 IUs. Intermediate Units are entrepreneurial, highly skilled, technology-rich, and agile providers of cost-effective, instructional, and operational services to school districts, charter schools, and over 3,000 non-public and private schools.

Great school leaders and classroom teachers are essential if our students are to achieve and succeed in our highly competitive global economy. Every year, IUs deliver high quality training and professional development for school administrators and teachers in critical areas such as: positive behavior intervention, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), technology integration, student data analysis, curriculum development, school safety and substitute teacher services, just to name a few.

Most recently, IUs are helping establish educational opportunities to the ever-growing population of online learners. IUs provided education opportunities to 25,000 students who take over 10,000 unique courses through cyber education programs.

I hope that my article shows you just a glimpse of the width and breadth of the services that IUs are providing on a daily basis across Pennsylvania. Next time you are asked what an IU does, just tell them we are in the business of changing lives.



# HR & COMMUNICATIONS



**TOM CALVECCHIO**



**All Staff:** The CAIU Benefits Open Enrollment period officially began on 10/28/19. This is your annual opportunity to make benefit election changes for yourself and your family. Please check your

email for the digital postcard with access the open enrollment video and accompanying forms. Please note, you must submit any changed forms to [openenrollment@caiu.org](mailto:openenrollment@caiu.org)

## Harrisburg Young Professionals

(HYP) is looking for co-ed teams for their Winter Sports Leagues. HYP has networking intermural teams for Basketball and Dodgeball available. If you are interested in coordinating a team to represent CAIU, please contact [tcavecchio@caiu.org](mailto:tcavecchio@caiu.org).



This month Amy Beaver and Lisa Klingler presented for the **Harrisburg Chamber** at their **Education & Business Partnership Committee Meeting** to discuss some of CAIU's educational and partner-based initiatives around the region. Amy and Lisa gave an overview of our programs and services, and were able to share "Our Story" with local business and educational leaders from the region.



HARRISBURG REGIONAL CHAMBER & CREDC.

# CAIU Compliments

## CAIU STAFF IN ACTION



**Sally Mentzer:** Please accept this submission of my Compliment for one of your staff members: I have worked with Sally Mentzer, Program Assistant, through multiple avenues as another intermediate unit personnel, and her customer service is top-notch! She understands that she is in the business of serving people, and does her best to accommodate changing needs – even at the last minute. I wanted to pass along my compliments to her for her service with a smile! Many thanks, ~ Laura B. McCusker, Ed. D. Asst. Director of Educational Services Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12

**Christie Esworthy:** I am writing to share with you how grateful we are to have the opportunity to work with Christie this year. In the short time she has been a part of our community, she has already made such a substantial and positive difference. The teachers are relying on her expertise both in working with individual students, but also providing consultation for working with the entire class. She is, in short, wonderful and we feel so lucky to have her at our school. ~ Abby S. Mahone, Ed.D. Asst. Head of School Head of Early Childhood and Lower School Harrisburg Academy

**Autumn Evans:** She does an awesome job. She is very employee friendly and quick to help with your needs - especially absences. She is very understanding if not able to get your absences in the portal. One of the best HR staff at the IU! ~ Anonymous



**Cassie McCabe & Rita Harvey's Team & Admin:** Hello! I just wanted to send a note of thanks for the partnership that happened to support the transition of a student back to MASD. Hill Top prepared our student for this transition and saw it through step by step. Your staff kept in constant communication with my staff and provided previewing lessons and support to prepare the student for each step in the process. In a profession where we don't see much praise, I wanted to let you know that your staff did a phenomenal job with this one. Thanks for always being supportive of us at Mechanicsburg! ~ Jaime Bott, Special Ed. Supervisor, Mechanicsburg ASD

**Karl Mohler:** Recently, I needed some assistance in my office with moving furniture and replacing an overhead light cover. Karl graciously assisted even when he was pressed for time with a half-day off from work. He could not finish everything, and upon arriving at work the following day... all was complete. A huge thank you to Karl, his pleasant demeanor and helpful attitude! ~ Cheryl Rudawski

**Kristin Wilson:** Kristin Wilson is an amazing teacher, team member, and person! She goes above and beyond in her role as the ESL teacher at Upper Dauphin Area School District. She helps the teachers learn how to best help their students and also forms strong bonds with her students. Kristin looks for new ways to communicate with families and her students, then shares these new techniques/resources with the general education teachers. She takes the time to get to know her students and then does whatever it takes to provide them with any support that she can...going way beyond academic support. She is a blessing to UDA and our students! Jessica Megonnell Principal, Upper Dauphin Area Elementary School ELD/ESL Program Supervisor

IN CASE YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY INFORMED, PLEASE CONSIDER THIS OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION THAT YOU ARE AWESOME.

## CAIU Wellness

### RENNIE GIBSON

The CAIU Wellness Committee has been very busy this year, providing mindfulness and stress relief activities and resources.

This month, we will wrap up our 5-week yoga series. Many were able to take advantage of a weekly yoga practice with Mike from Evolution Power Yoga.

With the holiday season fast approaching, we will continue to focus on mindfulness and stress relief during the months of November and December.

The CAIU Wellness Committee will be running a six week Healthy Holiday campaign from November 11 – December 16, providing health education newsletters intended to help you stay healthy and well over the holiday season!

The Newsletters include the following topics:

- Cold and Flu
- Physical Activity
- Manage Stress
- Holiday Beverages
- Portions and Healthy Substitutions
- Home and Holiday Safety

In addition, CAIU Wellness Committee offered Flu Shot Clinics at Hill Top and CAIU Enola in November.

#### Here is what is coming up:

- **November 28 – January 1- Stay Active Over the Holidays – 1 Mile Challenge** ~ Activity challenge that can be done anywhere!
- **December 5 @ 2PM, CAIU BOARD ROOM – WELLNESS - HOLIDAY STRESS** ~ UPMC PRESENTATION – **REGISTRATION NOW OPEN ON 48 CARATS**
- **JANUARY 2020 - EMPOWER PROGRAM** ~ 6-week onsite progressive-build multi-session program that will enable participants to create forward moving goals and arm them with the basic facts of physical activity and nutrition.

**STOP IN ITS TRACKS**  
Everybody gets stressed sometimes. Do you have a plan for the next time your mental pedal is to the metal?

**TRY THESE TIPS TO GET OUT OF STRESS FAST.**

1. Count to 10 before you speak or react.
2. Take a few slow, deep breaths until you feel your body unclench a bit.
3. Go for a walk, even if it's just to the restroom and back. It can help break the tension and give you a chance to think things through.
4. Try a quick meditation or prayer to get some perspective.
5. If it's not urgent, sleep on it and respond tomorrow. This works especially well for stressful emails and social media trolls.
6. Walk away from the situation for a while, and handle it later once things have calmed down.
7. Break down big problems into smaller parts. Take one step at a time instead of trying to tackle everything at once.
8. Chill out with music or an inspirational podcast to help you rage less on the road.
9. Take a break to pet the dog, hug a loved one or help someone out.
10. Work out or do something active. Exercise is one of the best antidotes for stress.

GET MORE WELLNESS TIPS AT [HEART.ORG/HEALTHYFORGOOD](https://HEART.ORG/HEALTHYFORGOOD)

- **The Window for CAIU Service Projects for 19-20 is open!** It is time to rise by lifting others! Looking for a project? Check out 48 C.A.R.A.T.S. Click on the link for details about service projects: <https://caiu-employee.caiu.org/welcome/hr-contact-list/caiu-service-project>
- **December 2 is National Special Education Day!**
- **A Crafternoon is Coming!** December 12<sup>th</sup> we are getting together to get our craft on, creating winter holiday themed board art. Watch for the survey to sign up and pick your design.
- We are collecting **Toys for Tots** in our area to support this very important holiday program for families in needs. There will be a box for toy collection in the Enola lobby from November 1-December 1. Please put a new unwrapped gift in the bin for any age.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

*“Change is inevitable, but transformation is by conscious choice.” ~ Heather Ash Amara*

### December, 2019

12/3/19

- School Counselors Network

12/5/19

- High Impact Strategies for Student Teachers
- Holiday Stress Management Session

12/6/19

- CAIU Reading Network

12/10/19

- Discovery Education: Experience Instructional Inspiration

12/12/19

- Curriculum Advisory Council
- Executive Functioning Training

12/17/19

- Promising Practices in Literacy

12/18/19

- LETRS Module 2: The speech sounds in English

**CAIU Staff! Check out all the NEW opportunities for virtual learning on New Horizons [LINK](#)**

**Check Out all the offerings at 48 C.A.R.A.T.S.:**  
<https://48carats.caiu.org/48caratsDN2/LogIn.aspx>

## Help Wanted!



Do you want to know what positions are open at the CAIU? Below is a list and a link to our application portal.

*Know someone looking – please share!*

- Teacher(s)
- Paraprofessionals
- Support Staff
- Technology Help Desk

Link to CAIU Job Search:

<https://www.applitrack.com/caiu/onlineapp/>

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle." - Steve Jobs

## State of the Union



**CAEA**  
Capital Area Education Association

The impact of poverty on students is well documented. Yet, despite the fact that correlation of academic achievement with family income has been demonstrated now for half a century, policymakers often turn to punitive school district takeovers, preferring to blame public school teachers and administrators instead of using the resources of government to assist struggling families who need better access to healthcare, quality childcare, better jobs, and food assistance.

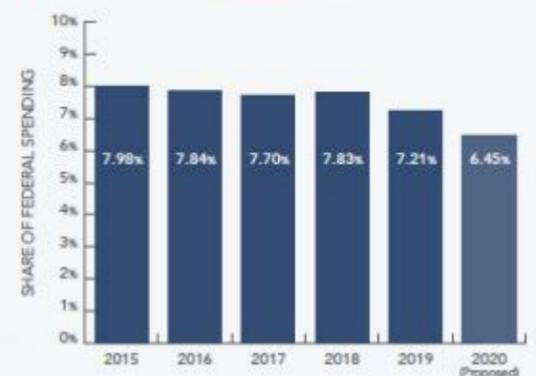
A new report from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), *Children and Families in Trouble*, examines the persistence of child poverty and the federal government's failure to address it: "Poverty in the United States continued a sluggish decline in 2018, falling to 11.8 percent, with children and young adults still experiencing the highest rates. Child poverty (ages 0-18) and young adult poverty (ages 18-24) remained unacceptably high at 16.2 percent and 15 percent respectively with alarmingly large racial and ethnic disparities in poverty. Young children, under age 5, remain the poorest of all, at 17.7 percent..." "Racial disparities are persistent, stark, and caused by structural factors... Black and Hispanic children are more likely to be poor (29.5 and 23.7 percent respectively) compared to 8.9 percent of non-Hispanic white children, despite high levels of work among their families."

America's educational problems are predominantly in the numbers of kids and their families who are homeless; whose families have no access to Medicaid or other medical services. Our educational problems have their roots in families where food insecurity or hunger is a regular occurrence, or where those with increased lead levels in their bloodstream get no treatments before arriving at a school's doorsteps. Our problems also stem from the harsh incarceration laws that break up families instead of counseling them and trying to keep them together. And our problems relate to harsh immigration policies that keep millions of families frightened to seek out better lives for themselves and their children... Although demographics may not be destiny for an individual, it is the best predictor of a school's outcomes—*independent of that school's teachers, administrators and curriculum.*" (Emphasis in the original.) In a country where more than 40 percent of children live in low-income families, we should ask how communities are failing struggling families. To tackle poverty and educational issues, programs need to focus on providing access to food, housing, education and health care — all necessary to thrive — and not the potential inadequacies of parents. Children can't learn without food, adequate shelter, good health and quality schools. By focusing on the perceived inadequacies of their parents, we're failing as a society to attack the far more severe impediments to closing education gaps — in part because it's easier to blame poor people than to have hard conversations about unfairness and inequity in our society.

First Focus on Children has recently released its 13<sup>th</sup> annual Children's Budget publication, a comprehensive analysis of how kids and families have been faring in the federal budget over the past five years. The budget summarizes several areas in which Congress needs to support children with increased spending:

- "Almost 80 percent of eligible 3-5 year old children lack access to Head Start programs.
- "The Federal Government is not fulfilling 55 percent of its funding commitment for Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) grants.
- "Of the households on the waiting list for housing assistance, 60 percent are families with children.
- "75 percent of poor families in the U.S. who are eligible for cash assistance do not receive it.
- "Nearly 83 percent of children who receive free or reduced price lunch during the school year do not have access to the summer meals program."

Children's Share of Total Federal Spending Declined between FY 2015 and FY 2019



"That all citizens will be given an equal start through a sound education is one of the most basic, promised rights of our democracy. Our chronic refusal as a nation to guarantee that right for all children... is rooted in a kind of moral blindness, or at least a failure of moral imagination... It is a failure which threatens our future as a nation of citizens called to a common purpose... tied to one another by a common bond." —Senator Paul Wellstone

Want to read more?: [https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019/09/2019\\_povertydatabrief.pdf](https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019/09/2019_povertydatabrief.pdf); <https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Key-Takeaways-from-Childrens-Budget-2019.pdf>

Do you have a story for *ALL IN!*? Do you know a member of the CAIU family we should recognize? Please send all stories and ideas to [asaia@caiu.org](mailto:asaia@caiu.org)