



educational excellence through leadership, partnership, and innovation

Substitute Executive Director's Report

November 21, 2013

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Hill Top Academy

The Hill Top Academy (HTA) is a school serving K-12 students on behalf of the school districts in the CAIU region. Hill Top Academy opened in September 2008 and houses several School Age Class Placement Programs and Services. Currently, 93 students attend HTA and there are 4 referrals for services in process.

The programs and services currently offered at HTA include:

- (1) **Diagnostic Class** – This is a short-term, comprehensive program designed to provide intensive and wide-ranging evaluation services in order to assess individual needs and provide information to school teams regarding the most appropriate longer-term placement for each student. This is a K-12 class in which a student is assigned for a maximum of 45 days. Currently, there are five students enrolled with another student beginning in the near future.
- (2) **Multiple Disabilities Class** – This class placement provides students with services designed to maximize each student's level of independence in his/her daily life. The curriculum addresses daily living skills, functional academics, communication, socialization, language arts, leisure activities, community living, and prevocational and vocational training. Currently, four students attend this class with one pending referral.
- (3) **Intensive Autism Support Class** – The Autism Support classroom program serves students with a diagnosis of Autism. Intense focus on the core deficit areas of autism: communication, social engagement, and self-regulation, is provided in the context of a variety of models designed to support students with autism. Currently, four students are enrolled in this class.
- (4) **1:1 Placements** – These classroom placements are designed to provide a highly structured and supervised environment for students with uniquely challenging behavioral, safety or educational needs that prevent them from participating in a typical school setting or a larger classroom environment. We currently have three classes where students are enrolled in a 1:1 placement.
- (5) **Emotional Support** – Students in the Emotional Support classrooms experience a highly structured program designed to diminish the severe behavioral problems that prohibit participation in their home schools. The primary goal of this program is to assist students and their families in learning replacement behaviors and coping strategies in order to return to a less restrictive environment. The HTA offers co-ed primary, upper elementary, middle and high school classes. Currently, there are eight emotional support classes with fifty-six students enrolled in this program and two pending referrals.
- (6) **Capital Area Partial Program (CAPP)** – This program provides professional mental health treatment services for children and families in a school-based environment. CAPP is a licensed partial hospitalization program. It is designed to benefit children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders and significant functional impairments so that they



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can receive intensive treatment services while maintaining educational progress. Four classes providing services for twenty-one students are at HTA.

Additional programs and services are provided for the students attending HTA. The students have opportunities to participate in Art and Physical Education classes. Breakfast and lunch are available through the Cafeteria services. A school nurse is on site to assist with the medical needs of the students. Intervention services are provided by the Social Workers and the Crisis Intervention Team.

Currently, nineteen of our twenty-four districts and one charter school have students enrolled at Hill Top Academy. They are Big Spring, Camp Hill, Carlisle Area, Central Dauphin, Cumberland Valley, Derry Township, East Pennsboro Area, Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg Area, Middletown Area, Millersburg Area, Northern York County, Shippensburg Area, Steelton-Highspire, Susquehanna Township, Susquenita, Upper Dauphin Area, West Perry, West Shore, and Sylvan Heights Science Charter School.

NEWS

Hill Top Academy (HTA)

On Wednesday, November 13, at the Capitol, Senator Mike Folmer honored Dr. Tracy Geist, a social worker who founded and supervises the therapy dog program at Hill Top Academy. Six students were selected to attend the recognition ceremony based upon the responsibility and care they have shown to the therapy dog in their classroom; two of the HTA Service Dogs also accompanied the group. Senator Folmer met them and took them to the Senate floor for a photo opportunity with a private tour. Students had the opportunity to eat at the Capitol before traveling back to Hill Top Academy to finish the day. Dr. Geist, Ms. Shannon Ellison (teacher) and Mrs. Gail Reynolds (paraeducator) chaperoned the students.

On Monday, November 11, the school observed Veteran's Day with red/white/blue day. The main bulletin board in the upstairs hall was decorated for the holiday with stars containing names of current and veteran service members that are family members of students and staff.

The student council started a canned food drive that is to continue until the second week of December.

School-Age Speech & Language

Emily Sidelinger, CAIU School-Age Speech/Language Clinician, will be presenting "Using Wikis to Access and Distribute Speech/Language Homework" at the PA Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention in Pittsburgh in April 2014. The presentation will discuss how to use a parent and student friendly wiki to access and complete speech-language homework assignments, as well as maintain student confidentiality. The presentation will also cover how to check which students have been completing the online assignments. The results and feedback from students and parents who have used a speech-language homework wiki will be shared.



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Student Services

Arlene Moll will be presenting a poster session at the National AUCD Conference (Association of University Centers on Disabilities) in Washington DC the week of November 18. Her session focuses on the success we have achieved with students using Behavior Imaging in our Autism Support classrooms.

The CAIU Data Quality Council met on November 6 to discuss Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) reporting implications affecting multiple teams, specifically issues related to reporting of the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS) data for Educator Effectiveness teacher evaluation system.

Student Services is working on implementation of the PowerSchool Student Information System as part of the CAIU's commitment to Data Quality. The staff is working on standardizing systems and procedures to meet state and federal reporting requirements.

SAVE THE DATE

Turkey Day – Thanksgiving Luncheon – Tuesday, November 26, 2013 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Hill Top Academy, 405 E. Winding Hill Road, Mechanicsburg, PA

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Holiday Program – Thursday, December 12, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in Susquehanna Room at Enola Office

NOTIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES

- Attended “Responding to a School Crisis” at Lincoln Intermediate Unit on October 28
- Attended PAIU monthly Executive Director’s meeting and the monthly PAIU Central Region meeting
- Currently taking an Act 45 Course offered through Penn State – “Ethics in Educational Leadership”
- Attended the Open House at Delbrook Preschool Center
- Attended the PAIU-Curriculum Coordinators’ meeting on November 14-15 as the Executive Director Liaison
- Met with the new Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Shippensburg Area School District to provide an overview of the CAIU and our services
- Met with the new Superintendent of Cumberland Valley School District to provide an overview of the CAIU and our services
- Brian Griffith and I met with Acting Superintendent of Derry Township School District to provide an overview of the CAIU services
- Held two communications meetings with CAIU staff – offered Live Streaming so staff at various locations could participate