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## Executive Director's Report

March 27, 2014

### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

#### Autism Support Program

The Autism Support **classroom program** serves students within a broad spectrum of diagnoses, including autism, pervasive development disorder (PDD/NOS), and Asperger's Syndrome. 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, including, but not limited to the Treatment Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children (TEACCH) and the Competent Learner Model (CLM). Teachers use research-based interventions such as Direct Instruction and Applied Behavior Analysis strategies to provide instruction in academic content and in skill areas related to the core deficits of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Students have access to both general and specialized curricula based on their individual needs. Students' individual needs for Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy are identified in the IEP. Other related services are also available if needed to implement the IEP. An integrated related services delivery model is utilized to allow for a high degree of generalization of skills across people, activities and settings.

The Autism school age classroom program has six self-contained classes located in three school districts and at Hill Top Academy:

- Elementary Level (Grades K-2) at Hershey Early Childhood Center (Hershey ECC)
- Elementary Level (Grades 3-5) at Elmwood Elementary School
- Middle School Level (Grades 6-8) at Hershey Middle School
- High School Level (Grades 9-12) at East Pennsboro Area High School
- Elementary Level (Grades 3-5) at Hill Top Academy
- Middle Level (Grades 6-8) at Hill Top Academy

The Early Intervention/Preschool Special Education program has four classes located at:

- Delbrook Preschool
- Conewago Elementary
- Foose School
- East Pennsboro Elementary (the most intensive class)

I had the opportunity to visit the elementary autism classroom at Hershey ECC where Michelle Krolczyk is the teacher and the middle school autism classroom at Hershey Middle School with Samantha Forsythe as the teacher.



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### **Autism Programs as Supports to School Personnel**

The Educational Consultants are also available to continue working with the referring district team following itinerant services.

- This Supports to School Personnel service includes providing assistance through site-based guided practice and action-planning to strategically and systematically train other district staff. Co-teaching as well as guided practice will be utilized to promote skill transfer from autism educational consultants to district staff. This is included in the service provided by supports to school personnel to guide district staff in full delivery of effective and efficient services once the CAIU consultant completes the referral.
- Each of the Educational Consultants possess particular expertise in a variety of specific autism related areas of social cognition, pragmatic language, functional behavioral assessment/and behavior plan design and self-regulation. Additionally, related staff expertise for consultation to the autism program include speech/language and occupational therapy, assistive technology, oral-motor and feeding, behavioral support, school psychology, secondary transition.
- The Educational Consultants also provide consultation support for our districts and our classes in the areas of CLM Coaching and Verbal Behavior Coaching.

## **NEWS**

### **PA Excellence in eLearning Forum 2014**

The first eLearning conference was held in Valley Forge on March 12-14, 2014. Holly Brzycki, Supervisor of Online Learning, and her team organized this conference on behalf of the Intermediate Units and School Districts who participate in the Capital Area Online Learning Association (CAOLA). The conference was a great success with 140 district personnel and IU partners in attendance.

### **2014 Superintendents' Spring Leadership Conference**

The Superintendents' Spring Leadership Conference was held on March 19-21, 2014 at the Omni Bedford Springs Hotel in Bedford, PA. The conference featured speakers, educational sessions, and many opportunities for networking.

Featured presentations included *School Finance and the 2014-15 Commonwealth Budget update and implications, Federal Legislation Update, overview of services provided by PSBA, overview of the new Chapter 4 regulations, and round table discussions about the implementation of Educator Effectiveness, Principal Effectiveness and Student Learning Objectives at the school district level.*

### **2014 Regional Computer Fair**

The 2014 Regional Computer Fair will be held at the Capital Area Intermediate Unit on Tuesday, March 25, 2014 from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The event will showcase both Middle and High School students' products/projects created using technology.



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One hundred twelve (112) students representing 10 regional districts will participate in the competition. Specific categories include: Animation, Computer Fair Logo, Digital Movie, Graphic Design, Programming, and Web Page Design.

### **Hershey Medical Center Children's Hospital**

"Beads of Courage" Program ~ Children who are hematology/oncology patients receive beads of courage so they can create a chain/strand of various beads representing courageous moments. The staff at the hospital has various types of beads so the strands are very varied. This year, each teacher was also given a small bag of ceramic apple beads so they too can participate in the recognition of the work the children are doing in keeping up their studies. A child can get one bead if they are in the Beads of Courage program from one of the teachers the first time they work with them and then another bead if they do something really great related to their schooling.

### **Surrogate Parents**

Surrogate parents are trained volunteers who can be assigned to a child for parent representation and advocacy throughout the special education paperwork process. The pool of volunteers to be a surrogate parent is low. We are looking toward retired employees who may be interested in serving in this capacity to assist with special education students in districts who need someone to speak on their behalf regarding their educational services. Parent trainings will be offered in the spring for the 2014-2015 school year for the new volunteers.

### **Preschool/Early Intervention**

The preschool program successfully completed the bi-annual verification process (compliance and fiscal audit) and we were informally congratulated and told that our Verification rating is 97%, which is "Meets Requirements" for compliance. We deeply appreciate our preschool supervisors and staff for all their work in preparing for the event and for the day to day work they do to support children and families!

### **Hill Top Academy**

On St. Patrick's Day, we celebrated by "Going for the Greens" with students having an opportunity for sampling of a vegetable stir fry prepared by our Mrs. Moser and student and staff helpers. Additionally, Irish Dancers, Mrs. O'Neill's daughters, also performed. The building wide activity in March is a trip to the circus on Friday, March 21. On the March 14 Act 80 day, the staff was very engaged in collaboratively developing and refining the Hill Top Vision and Mission Statements. Students are also completing the PASA and PSSA testing this month.

Larry Adams, our long-term, recently retired custodian and CAIU graduate, sadly passed away this month from health complications. Larry had been such a long-term valued employee and his retirement left a void that was deepened by his passing. The staff are working on creating a memorial plaque to place at Hill Top Academy honoring his service and life.



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## **NOTIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES**

- Attended the monthly Central Region Executive Directors' meeting
- Attended the monthly PAIU Executive Directors' meeting
- Participated in the Chief Recovery Officer's committee meeting with the Harrisburg School District
- Provided an overview of CAIU Services at two School District Board Meetings:
  - Upper Dauphin Area School District on February 27
  - Mechanicsburg Area School District on March 11
- CAIU Administrative Cabinet will meet with Northern York County SD's administrative team on March 25
- Met with Mr. Joseph McFarland, new superintendent at Derry Township School District, to provide an overview of the CAIU and our services
- Completed individual transition discussions with members of the CAIU Leadership Team. Will review feedback and include identified needs in future goal setting
- Attended one day of the PA Excellence in eLearning Forum 2014 in Valley Forge

## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **Champions for Children 15th Annual Basket Bingo - April 11, 2014**

Let's play Bingo--and help support Champions for Children! Bingo and raffle prizes at this year's event will include Thirty One bags and accessories and Longaberger Baskets. Food will be available and raffles will be held throughout the evening.

Champions for Children offers assistance to children in need within the Capital Area Intermediate Unit's service area. Since 2000, Champions for Children Basket Bingo has helped to raise over \$40,000!

Doors open at 6 p.m., bingo starts at 7 p.m. Adults only. Tickets, \$25 for 20 games of bingo.