



Executive Director's Report May 22, 2008

CASA Performance and Silent Auction – Congratulations to the students and staff who created a tremendous performance for the full house at the Whitaker Center on May 7. The Silent Auction preceding the event netted over \$10,000 for the school. Alyce and Mort Spector were the recipients of the Stephen R. Reed Champions of Arts Education Award.

CAIU Superintendents' Retirement Dinner – On May 13 we held what we hope will become an annual event – a dinner to recognize our retiring superintendents. We recognized John Fronk of Millersburg, David Hoover of West Perry, Richard Domencic of West Shore and Norma Mateer of Steelton-Highspire.

CAIU Employee Recognition Dinner – On May 15 we held our annual dinner to recognize our retirees and employees reaching milestones in years of service to the IU. Many thanks to Jean Rice who represented the CAIU Board of Directors.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Concerns – Since last month's CAIU Board meeting: 1) a CAIU team including Board Member Nancy Fishman met with PDE leaders from the Bureau of Special Education to clarify concerns; 2) Amy responded to John Tommasini's letter; 3) the advocates indefinitely postponed their demonstration at the new school; and 4) Alicia and I met with PDE's chief legal counsel, Judy Shopp, who initiated this meeting to have firsthand knowledge of the situation and to obtain documentation associated with this ongoing situation. In addition, the Regional Special Education Strategic Plan Steering Committee (comprised of district special education directors and superintendents) as well as the Local Task Force (comprised primarily of parents) met and discussed regional LRE efforts.

PA Academic Standards Revision Project – Special Projects Coordinator Mark Hennes, Jean Dyszel (contracted consultant), and I met with Secretary of Education Dr. Jerry Zahorchak, State Board of Education Chairman Karl Girton, State Board Executive Director Jim Buckheit, and Deputy Secretary Diane Castelbuono and several of her staff on May 1 to review any needed modifications to the draft revised standards. The process is on schedule and on budget.

PA Department of Education Liaison to Harrisburg School District – On Thursday, May 15, I met with members of the University of Pennsylvania team who are conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the school district. I also met with Secretary Zahorchak to review the IU's role in the district, which this month included several of our staff members receiving training on the new reading programs Harrisburg teachers will utilize this fall so that our staff can provide support to help ensure successful implementation. CAIU is compensated by the district for these services.

Facilities Update – Parking lot expansion is completed except for final landscaping. Internal office changes are moving forward as planned. The Technology Offices in Lemoyne are prepared for move-in once the furniture is installed.

Annual Goal #1: Entry Plan

The Executive Director will develop and complete an entry plan which focuses on establishing relationships with key stakeholder groups (CAIU Board, CAEA, CAIU staff, Superintendents, PDE, local legislators, PAIU executive directors, area business and community leaders, state professional associations, and regional higher education leadership personnel).

- ✓ Continued visitations to district board meetings to introduce myself and share information about CAIU services associated with our districts' contribution to our general operating budget. To date, I have visited 15 districts (CV, NY, Susq Twp, WP, Susquenita, Mech, CH, LD, Carlisle, Shipp, WS, BS, EP, SM, Middletown) and have 3 more scheduled (Newport, Millersburg, Upper Dauphin). Central Dauphin, Harrisburg, Greenwood, Steelton-Highspire and Halifax will be priorities for next year.
- ✓ Participated in a dinner with the PAIU Executive Directors and Speaker of the House Dennis O'Brien on May 1. We discussed special education issues with him.
- ✓ On May 5 the PA Inspired Leadership Advisory Committee met with Director Mike Clemens. This group is responsible for advising the implementation of the new legislation (Act 45) requiring school administrators to receive standards-based continuing professional development.
- ✓ The CAEA/CAIU Health Care Committee held its second official meeting on May 9 to review the implementation of the new health insurance program. All present (CAEA President Kathie Thomas, CAEA rep Peter Fidgett, Shawn Farr and me) commended Theresa Kinsinger (also present) for the fine job she did with the employee presentations last month.
- ✓ The May 14 Superintendents' Advisory Council included conversations with Beth Olanoff, PDE's Policy Office Director; Tom Gentzel, PSBA's Executive Director; and Michael Hanes, President and CEO of the Whitaker Center.

Annual Goal #2: Strategic Plan

The Executive Director will develop and begin to implement a strategic plan designed to achieve and sustain the CAIU mission.

- ✓ All draft client satisfaction surveys for each team have been completed. The Tech, Curriculum, Special Education, Admin and HR Team surveys will go to their respective advisory committees. Business & Operations and a second HR survey will be administered to internal clients of those services.
- ✓ Met with Doug Wendt on April 30 to further develop our Strategic Plan components and processes.
- ✓ Leadership Team worked on our strategic plan during their May 20 meeting.

Annual Goal #3: Student Facilities

The Executive Director will secure student facilities which meet programmatic needs for center-based students.

- ✓ A CAIU Team for CASA met again with Brad Jones of Harristown Development Authority along with two of his colleagues to consider potential relocation of CASA at the conclusion of the current lease at Old Salem Church (the lease is currently between Open Stage and the church and expires in June 2009). The CASA subcommittee on facilities, which includes several superintendents, met subsequently to visit the potential sites as well. The next step will be a feasibility study.
- ✓ Shawn Farr and I met with Nancy Saidis, professional fund raiser, after tentative approval from the Superintendent/Board Finance Committee to proceed with a fundraising campaign for the new school. Nancy will submit a proposal. CAIU's Champions for Children Board of Directors will be the vehicle through which this effort is undertaken, if approved by that Board.
- ✓ Three furniture vendors presented their proposals and sample items to Shawn Farr, Alicia McDonald and several program supervisors on May 8. Two vendors will continue in the process. The next step is to secure specific price quotes.

Annual Goal #4: Public Awareness

The Executive Director will enhance public awareness of the CAIU through improved public relations efforts and through the internal organization's awareness of the CAIU mission.

- ✓ Finalized the homepage of the newly designed CAIU website, set to launch on July 1, 2008. Cabinet members and Leadership Team will be working to coordinate content on the remaining pages.
- ✓ Conducted three communications meetings with employees during staff appreciation week (May 7, 8, and 9) to share information, listen to ideas and concerns, and answer questions. About 100 people in all participated in these voluntary sessions.

Annual Goal #5: Instructional Technology Solutions

The Executive Director will provide leadership in 1) establishing PAIUnet, a private, high speed, statewide internet service for IUs and school districts; and 2) developing a strategic regional approach to distance learning solutions.

- ✓ Participated in first official meeting of the PAIUnet Operations Committee on April 28. Named to subcommittee to establish RFP for Project Management Team and determine initial approach to vendor negotiations, cost sharing/revenue sharing among 29 IUs. Subcommittee subsequently met with Dellicker Strategies on these matters.
- ✓ Met at PDE with fellow IU Executive Director Larry O'Shea and representatives from the Bureau of Educational Technology, Dellicker Strategies, and Casenex to discuss evaluation of the PAIU eFund grant (administered by Chester County IU – 4.3 million dollars over four years). Also met with PDE's new Chief Information Officer and several others to discuss PDE's role with PAIUnet.
- ✓ Our PAIUnet Governance Committee met in my office on May 14 to finalize all changes recommended by PDE to the Articles of Agreement.
- ✓ Met with CAIU Special Projects Coordinator Mark Hennes and Consultant Tom Begandy to coordinate Tom's work on the distance learning needs analysis he is conducting with all 24 districts and 2 AVTS on behalf of PVAC. Tom conducted interviews with district personnel during the weeks of May 12 and May 19. On June 2 he will share his preliminary findings with district representatives.

Coming Up:

- ❖ The Cabinet members will be participating in the annual PAIU Spring Conference in State College from June 4 through June 6. The focus of this year's conference is PAIUnet. Cheryl Giles-Rudawski will be the administrator in charge during that time.
- ❖ I will be on vacation with my mother and daughters from June 6 through June 11. Brian Griffith will be facilitating the Superintendents' Advisory Council Meeting on June 11.
- ❖ Cabinet discussed the possibility of creating alternate work schedules and telecommuting options in the interest of being both environmentally responsible and employee-friendly. Brian Griffith will chair a work group or representative employees from all six Teams.
- ❖ June 19 – I have been asked to present on the topic of leadership in career education at the Governor's Institute on Career Education and Work.