



educational excellence through leadership, partnership, and innovation

## Executive Director's Report December 17, 2009

### NEWS

Race to the Top (RTTT), the federal stimulus program intended to encourage bold reform of education, has been a major topic of discussion these past few weeks. I have been working with Department of Education officials on the role of the intermediate units in implementing RTTT should PA be successful in its application for \$400 million. Tom Gluck, PDE Executive Deputy Secretary and liaison to CAIU, met with our superintendents on December 9 to discuss this opportunity. The superintendents then met again on December 11 to review more specifically the expectations for participating districts. Most districts seem to be leaning toward participating, with further work to be done at the state level with PSEA regarding the issue of teacher evaluation being significantly influenced by student achievement.

Superintendents from our member districts participated in the December 9 Partnership for Career Development (PCD) luncheon which highlighted career development activities occurring in our districts. Students involved in internships, job shadowing, nurse aide and EMT training, and other experiences designed to prepare them for life after high school were on hand to meet and talk with the superintendents, PCD Board members, and career coordinators. Former students who are now gainfully employed were the featured speakers, with one of those students joining the group through a Skype connection.

On that same topic – the Partnership for Career Development – we are in the throes of restructuring the organization to more fully engage the larger community. Mark Hennes will be taking over the executive leadership of the Partnership and Shawn Farr is working with him to achieve a 501(c)(3) status. This change will allow us to be more successful securing funding from businesses to sustain and grow the programs that are critical to career, workforce and economic development in our region. The PCD Board reviewed the changes at their December 16 meeting and will be working with Mark Hennes, Betty Holmboe and Mark Henderson to further define and implement the new governance structure.

In accordance with our strategic plan goal of generating sustainable revenue sources, Holly Brzycki, our Online Learning Supervisor; her new assistant Jaime Auchey, Brian Griffith, and I traveled to New York City to meet with the CEO and several leaders of Edison Learning to finalize our partnership to bring online learning solutions to Pennsylvania. In addition to student courses, we will be working with Edison Learning to provide a series of professional development courses which can be customized to the individual needs of teachers.

Also related to that goal, we have been working with Dellicker Strategies on developing a systemic approach to new program/product/service inception, development, and evaluation, using our newly created and 'almost ready for prime time' solution, Agenda Manager (AgendaMan), to test the process. Cabinet members will be holding a mini-

retreat so we can ensure that all teams are engaged at the appropriate decision-making points along the way.



Cindy Mortzfeldt was officially sworn in as a commissioned officer – Assistant Executive Director – by Secretary Zahorchak at PDE. Congratulations Cindy!

Secretary Zahorchak visited the CAIU earlier this month to greet participants from across the state who were engaged in a train-the-trainer session we hosted on Resiliency. He and I met afterward with Bruce and Ellen Eisenberg to discuss future funding of the PA Institute for Instructional Coaching (PIIC), a program we administer on behalf of PDE.

Several of the Cabinet members have been visiting our student programs and holiday special events. Some recent highlights include the annual Thanksgiving luncheon at Hill Top Academy, the annual holiday open house at Susan Way's multiple disabilities support classroom in Camp Hill High School, the holiday luncheon at the Focused on Living house in downtown Mechanicsburg, the Deaf/Hard of Hearing holiday program at Middlesex Elementary School, and the holiday luncheon at the Diakon program in South Middleton Township.

A special thanks to the staff who assisted me in hosting Catie, a delightful nine-year-old girl from the Big Brother/Big Sister program in Harrisburg. She participated in a job-shadowing experience with the CAIU. Her day included lunch with Cindy Mortzfeldt, an exploration of audiology testing in our lab with Joe Curry, learning how to read and produce Braille with materials specialist Lyn Rothermel, and then a trip to CASA in Strawberry Square.

## **NOTIFICATION of ACTIVITIES**

- On December 16, I met with Senator Mike Folmer and his chief of staff, at their request, to discuss the role of intermediate units in relationship to PDE contracts. This meeting was a follow-up to the testimony I provided previously to the Senate Education Committee, of which Senator Folmer is a member.
- Dave Martin, Joan Adams and I met with Bureau Director Ed Vollbrecht, and special assistant, Michele Bortner, on December 15 to discuss future growth and development of a more robust eStrategic Planning tool. CAIU provides the application development, Helpdesk support, and training of trainers on this tool used by all districts across the Commonwealth.
- The Superintendents' Curriculum Committee met on December 9 to discuss: 1) the possibility of a regional effort to conduct surveys of postsecondary students to assess the quality of their high school experience, and 2) how to address the new Chapter 49 teacher certification requirements which mandate students in teacher preparation programs accumulate 150 hours of "teaching" experience prior to their actual student teaching assignment. Mark Hennes and Brian Griffith led these discussions.

- The Superintendents' Finance Committee, along with the Board Finance Committee, met on December 2 to review and discuss the proposed 2010-2011 CAIU General operating Budget. Shawn Farr facilitated this meeting.
- Cabinet members and I conducted four separate Staff Communications Sessions to provide information to and hear concerns and ideas from any interested staff members. Participation is strictly voluntary. Attendance was less than 20 in each session, but the discussions were quite good.
- On November 25 Brian Griffith and I met with Dr. Audrey Uteley, education transition team leader for Mayor-elect Linda Thompson, and Marion Echols-Clark, transition team member, to discuss the CAIU's current and continued role within the Harrisburg School District.
- Brian Griffith, Alicia McDonald, Cindy Mortzfeldt and I traveled to Austin TX for the annual Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) conference. We came away with many great ideas for further exploration, including substitute teacher training, consortium bidding for art and athletic supplies, technology tools to achieve greater efficiencies, transforming education through the use of technology, and more.
- I met with Peggy Hockersmith, Jerry Fowler and Bob Bartos at Shippensburg University late last month to discuss the future efforts of the Shippensburg School Study Council. Improved relations between higher ed and K-12, Chapter 49 certification issues, and a renewed effort to development and administrator recognition program were topics on our agenda.

*Upcoming Activities:*

- *Alicia McDonald and I, along with Rhonda Brunner, superintendent of West Perry School District, will be meeting today with Myrna Delgado at the PA Department of Education to discuss the possibility of transferring education responsibilities at the Loysville Youth Center from West Perry SD to the CAIU.*
- *Brian Griffith and Cindy Mortzfeldt will be meeting today with leaders from WITF to discuss potential partnership opportunities.*
- *The Cabinet members will be holding a half-day retreat at the Lemoyne Office on December 21 to work on our efforts to ensure that programs, services and products we develop or distribute to diversify our revenue sources are deliberately and thoroughly embedded in a sound business plan.*
- *PAIU Executive Directors' monthly meeting will be held January 7-8 here at the CAIU and PDE. I will be introducing the group to AgendaMan.*
- *I will be meeting with Charles Zogby, former PA Secretary of Education, on January 8, regarding opportunities associated with online learning.*
- *On January 20 Senator Piccola, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, will be filming a 30-minute TV show at the CAIU to help explain the role of IUs in PA education. The program will air on local channels and on his website.*