



*All-in!*

NEWSLETTER

Executive Director's Report | December 2023



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## CAIU Executive Team

**Dr. Andria Saia**  
*Executive Director*

**Dr. Kevin Roberts**  
*Assistant Executive Director*

**Maria Hoover**  
*Director of Educational Services*

**Dr. Andrew McCrea**  
*Director of Student Services*

**Daren Moran**  
*Director of Business and Operations*

**David Martin**  
*Director of Technology Services*

**Blake Wise**  
*Manager of Human Resources*

## Our Mission

CAIU provides innovative support and services in partnership with schools, families, and communities to build capacity and model courageous leadership to help them be great. #BeGreat

## Our Vision

Recognized as a trusted and influential partner in achieving life-changing outcomes in the Capital Area. #ChangingLives

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**On the Cover:** Students playing in the leaves at Capital Area Early Learning Center

Do you have a story about staff or students living our values out loud, being great, and changing lives? Share your Giving Voice to Our Values stories, student successes, #begreat and #changinglives moments and more! Email stories for All-In or social media to [communications@caiu.org](mailto:communications@caiu.org).

**Deadline for January All-In: Friday, December 29**

## All-in! NEWSLETTER

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# Communicating the Alignment of What We Do to Our Strategic Plan



As you might be aware, each year the CAIU engages in a process of strategic planning. Through this process, we identify the goals and action steps that are necessary to move our organization in the direction that fulfills our mission: to provide innovative support and services in partnership with schools, families, and communities; to build capacity and model courageous leadership to help them be great; and to carry us closer to our vision of being recognized as a trusted and influential partner in achieving life-changing outcomes in the Capital Area.

The 23-24 plan has three goals:



The CAIU will make it easier to do business with us - with a focus on internal and external improvement, as demonstrated by evidence outlined in team, program, and individual goals by June 30, 2024.



The CAIU will improve staffing by creating internal processes that improve retention, recruitment and recognition, as demonstrated by evidence outlined in goals, by June 30, 2024.



The CAIU will foster a culture of dignity and belonging, as demonstrated by evidence outlined in goals, by June 30, 2024.

[View the 23-24 Plan Here](#)

To better communicate how our daily work moves us forward towards meeting our goals, we are adding the above icons to our communications. Similar to how we now regularly reference our vision, mission, and values, the icons will identify where the actions/work/projects/updates align with our goals. We are doing this to:

- Increase the comprehensiveness of our communication, both in content and audience. The leaders of the organization are frequently talking about and working on

our strategic plan, however frontline staff will likely not have the same level of contact, requiring us to improve our communication about the plan.

- Make the goal work personal. The stories in All-in! generally highlight the amazing work of our staff. Understanding how the work of others align to the goals may help others to see the connection between the plan and their own work.
- Matching our message to our Mission Moments. We can describe our strategic plan – process and intended outcomes – through slide shows and other less engaging presentations, or we can ignite our passions through the mission moments highlighted. There is nothing more powerful than the impact of the work we do. Therefore, we think messaging our strategic plan by connecting it to the work is the best way to bring the plan to life for everyone.
- Empowerment through transparency. Often, the communication about strategy is limited to a handful of people. By sharing the connection between the plan and the work, we are co-opting everyone exposed to the information to be part of the communication strategy, crowdsourcing by sharing.
- Continuous communication. By ensuring that we consistently communicate strategy, we bring our attention and focus back to the plan and the work, refreshing and renewing our collective understanding. Pair this with the new monthly single survey question – Thought Exchange, we can accelerate the changes we are seeking, and ensure that we reinforce positive outcomes.

Finally, through increasing communication and connection to our plan, we hope to maintain interest and encourage commitment. Please let us know what you think, through the Thought Exchange question on [page 8](#) of this All-in! or by emailing your suggestions [here](#). 🍏



*Andria Saia*  
**Dr. Andria Saia,**  
Executive Director

# Celebrating American Education Week

American Education Week (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 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. This is a great time to inform the community of the accomplishments and needs of public schools, and to find ways to collaborate with our communities.

## Monday:

CAIU kicked off the week by encouraging all to celebrate and recognize their colleagues by submitting a CAIU Compliment to spotlight and celebrate all the unsung heroes of education!



## Tuesday:

The spotlight was shone on the families of our students. CAIU students joined us in thanking all our family partners for all that they do as children's first teachers with a personalized certificate and thank you letter. Students sent home an appreciation letter and an individually colored certificate.



## Friday:

Substitute Educators Day – a big shout out to our floater subs, swooping in like superheroes, supporting our programs anytime, anywhere we have a need.

Thank you to everyone that makes public education work! 🍏

## Wednesday:

We expressed appreciation to all of our support staff, without whom we could never #BeGreat!

## Thursday:

Educator For a Day! Many CAIU staff experienced a snippet of a day in the classroom by going out and reading books to our students. Thank you to our teachers and classroom staff!







# A Successful Transition

By Rima Wilson, EI Teacher at CAELC

At the end of the 2022-23 school year, George Peslis transitioned from the CAIU Early Intervention Program to Kindergarten. He had made great gains in his progress over the past year and a half while receiving speech and occupational therapy in a specialized classroom.

His mother, Sarah, expressed joy in seeing her son's progress, so the company she worked for wanted to further support the CAIU's ability to continue helping student success. They asked for a wish list from teachers located at CAELC where this child received services. Each teacher submitted items and all of the requests were received. It was so exciting to receive these new toys and supplies for our classrooms.

A huge THANK YOU to Syncreon, a 3rd party logistics company that specializes in Technology, and Sarah for your support of our program! We greatly appreciate it! George, we wish you much success in Kindergarten and beyond! 🍏



“My son George Peslis started at the CAIU in 2020 for his speech delay and occupational therapy. Throughout the one and a half years at the CAIU, I got to see George **improve greatly** with his speech, interaction with others, and occupational therapy. George enjoyed coming to school, seeing his teachers and friends, and of course the gym. **I couldn't be more grateful for their dedication** to my son and his needs. He is now in Kindergarten and speaking full sentences and it's because of his teachers at the CAIU who all helped him get there. **Special shout out to Rima Wilson, Stacy Paul** (SLP), and **Kristen Schreiber** (Occupational Therapist) who have all been with him along the way.”





*Nurturing Growth*

## The Role of *Comprehensive Mentoring Programs* in Educational Organizations

By **Maria Hoover**, *Director of Educational Services*

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, where the success of an institution is intricately linked to the growth and satisfaction of its staff, the implementation of a comprehensive mentoring program emerges as a strategic imperative. Such programs not only contribute to individual professional development but also play a pivotal role in supporting organizational growth and staff retention.

A cornerstone of comprehensive mentoring programs is their ability to foster professional growth among educators. In an environment where pedagogical methodologies, technological advancements, and educational trends are in constant flux, the guidance of experienced mentors provides invaluable support for all educators. Mentoring relationships facilitate the transfer of best practices, as well as, next

### *A Letter of Gratitude...*

We would like to express our **sincere appreciation and gratitude** for the training provided to our elementary staff members by the CAIU team. This was quite an undertaking, and your team completed the task in a **top-notch fashion**. They should each be commended for their efforts. As a district we are **very thankful to have developed this partnership** with the Intermediate Unit and once again offer our **extreme gratitude**.

- Gregory Milbrand,  
*Assistant Superintendent,  
Cumberland Valley School District*



practices, innovative teaching strategies, and a deep understanding of the nuances of effective classroom management.

As educators navigate the complexities of their roles, mentors offer insights into teaching strategies, student engagement strategies, and personalized approaches to address diverse learning needs. The result is a cadre of educators who are not only well-equipped to navigate the challenges of the modern educational landscape but are also committed to continuous improvement.

Comprehensive mentoring programs are particularly effective in facilitating the smooth onboarding and integration of new staff members. The transition into a new educational environment can be overwhelming and having a mentor provides newcomers with a dedicated guide who can help them acclimate to the organizational culture, policies, and procedures. This not only reduces the learning curve for new staff but also fosters a sense of belonging and commitment from the outset.

The CAIU has had a mentor program specifically for new teachers who need induction. This year, we have added the CAPT program to our repertoire, and those engaged in this program are also afforded a mentor. The CAPT program mentors are helping their mentees as they are working in our schools and programs, navigating new learning, working toward gaining their teaching certification. The development of the mentor/mentee relationship is key in a participant's success within this particular program. We are also in the process of developing a comprehensive mentor program for all new employees to couple with new employee orientation. Each prong of this program will serve a different population of new employees or those working with our CAPT program.

People need people, and educators are in the people business. Having a comprehensive mentor program is essential to ensure that new employees are equip with connection, communication, and the ability to collaborate so that they can learn and grow within their role and be the best they can be for the students and families in our region. 🍏



### First Pathway: Associate's Degree (AA)

Designed for those who have not yet earned a post-secondary degree The AA will take practicing paraprofessionals with some or no college credits and provide them with the pathway to a 62-credit degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. This program is delivered in a mix of competency-based courses and virtual synchronous/asynchronous classes. We have partnered with HACC to make this first step towards a degree and teaching certification a possibility. This program can be completed in two years or less and is funded by the employer.

### Second Pathway: Bachelor's Degree (TAP)

Also known as the Teacher Apprenticeship Program, this pathway provides practicing paraprofessionals (with an Associate's degree) the opportunity to earn college credit, which can lead to a fully-accredited Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education or Special Education and ultimately teacher licensure in Pennsylvania. Participants will complete 20 skills-based courses (60 credit hours) while working in a classroom. This learn-by-doing program is designed for current paraprofessionals with regular access to students. Participants will be required to create artifacts from their classroom practice and upload them to the platform for assessment. This program can be completed in two years or less and is funded by the employer.

### Third Pathway: Initial Teaching Certification and/or Master's Degree

Designed for educators currently teaching with a Bachelor's degree in a field other than education, this program provides the opportunity for them to earn an initial teaching certification and/or a Master's degree in an education related field, all while working in a classroom. Participants must have regular access to students and will be required to create artifacts from their classroom practice and upload them to the platform for assessment. This program can be completed in 12-18 months and is funded by the employer.





# ThoughtExchange



Share



Star



Discover

The CAIU is interested in hearing your feedback! As a reminder, ThoughtExchange is a unique tool that gathers feedback in three distinct phases: **Share**, **Star**, and **Discover**. Please take some time to complete the survey and, once you have answered the question, be sure to rate each other's thoughts on a scale of 1-5 stars (1 star = little agreement; 5 stars = total agreement). You will also be able to review trends that are apparent from the feedback after completing the previous two phases.

Thank you for completing the survey and for taking the time to provide us with meaningful feedback!

What is one change that could be made to make the CAIU an even better place to work, learn, or partner?

[Submit an Answer](#)

## Situational Awareness

### Points2Ponder

- ▶ Where is the Safety & Security page on the CAIU Connect site?
- ▶ What resources are available there?

*Hint: It's Under the Administrative Services tab on the Connect site.*

Learn more about Safety & Security at the CAIU on the [CAIU Connect site](#).

**caiu**  
**CONNECT**



REFER FAMILY  
OR A FRIEND



AND WE'LL  
PAY YOU **\$250**\*

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Capital Area Intermediate Unit

[CLICK HERE  
FOR DETAILS](#)

FOR AVAILABLE POSITIONS VISIT  
[WWW.CAIU.ORG/EMPLOYMENT](http://WWW.CAIU.ORG/EMPLOYMENT)

\* YOU WILL RECEIVE A **\$250.00 AMAZON GIFT CARD** AFTER  
THE NEW EMPLOYEE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY ONBOARDED.



# Mission Moments



Several CAIU Staff recently participated in a service project for Ryan's Case for Smiles, an organization that helps kids feel and heal from various events by making and delivering pillow cases to local hospitals.



The ANPS department, along with the Nativity School of Harrisburg and Joshua Group of Harrisburg, partnered once again with Homes with Julie Hess to provide families with Thanksgiving baskets. This year, they surpassed their goal and collected over 75 baskets for families!



The CAIU is excited to announce the expansion of the Think BIG! program in the Harrisburg area. In partnership with Phoenix Contact, the CAIU is embarking on a year-long collaboration to formalize and expand the curriculum for schools within the IU footprint.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

# Welcome New Hires!

ibelong  
@caiu



**Logan Adams** is an EPP at Hill Top Academy. He has a motorcycle.



**Molly Atkinson** is a Teacher at PPI. She is a big Philadelphia sports fan.



**Micah Bias** is a Systems Administrator at the Enola office. He teaches capoeira.



**Genesis Bonner** is a PCA at Hill Top Academy. She enjoys writing poetry.



**Richard Davis** is a Job Coach at Project SEARCH. He loves cats.



**Dayna Fessler** is a PCA at Hill Top Academy. She is friendly and likes to meet new people.



**Hylise Flemister** is a EPP at PA Steam. Her birthday is all 2s.



**Jenny Hartman** is a SBAP Assistant at the Enola office. She was born and grew up in Jos, Nigeria.



**Deanna Kimmel** is an EPP at Yellow Breeches. She enjoys taking pictures.



**Rocco Matriccino** is a PCA at Hill Top Academy. He took an individual into his home 30 years ago who has disabilities and still has that individual living with him.



**Jennifer McPoyle-Callahan** is an Educational Coach at various locations. She is a recreational runner, but didn't start until her 40s.



**Aiyana Smith** is an EPP at various locations. She has a tiny 4lb. dog named Blueberry.



**Rachel Snyder** is an Inclusion Consultant at various locations. She is a wedding photographer.



**Tracy Veres** is an EPP at PPI. She has 3 kids and 3 grandchildren.



**Ashley Wagner** is a Program Assistant at the Enola office. She loves the beach and PSU.

YOU'RE *one of* US NOW

## Compliment Corner!

#ChangingLives

Here at CAIU we like to brighten someone's day with a compliment. CAIU Compliments is a Capital Area Intermediate Unit initiative that allows CAIU staff the opportunity to share words of thanks, tout successes, or tell a story about what makes us great as an organization, our people.

## #Dedication

### El Assessment Team

The El Assessment Team is dedicated to analyzing and refining how we process, evaluate, and turn around referrals to get eligible children services as soon as possible. Their input, collaboration, and flexibility has been critical as we continue to build capacity within our system of assessment. Thanks team! #Begreat

- Keith Watson, Assistant Director of Student Services







# Compliment Corner!

## #Service

### **Alison Ruello, Early Intervention EPP**

Evan Gabler and I needed assistance in the hoteling area. I needed toner replaced in the copier. Evan needed laminate. Allison stopped what she was doing to help us! She was truly supportive of her peers. She helped make our day a little easier.

- Jean Foley and Evan Gabler, *EI Educational Consultant & EI Service Coordinator*

## #Dedication

### **Marina Woodall, Help Desk Team Lead**

Marina consistently responds to and provides assistance with the myriad and multitude of questions and requests I send her way. From Apple pencils to creating email groups, she always comes through. Marina makes work life easier with her dedication to helping our organization. Cheers, Marina!

- Jennifer Lyden, *CAIU Program Supervisor*

## #Dedication

### **Lisa Smiley, Educational Consultant**

So much gratitude goes to Lisa Smiley for being a bright light for the CASTL board. She has been the CASTL treasurer for several years and has established the financial viability of our non-profit organization. Without her, we would not be able to collect funds for so many great projects including I'm Fine, Mr. Music, CAIU Innovation Grants and the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Sincere thanks to a true leader and a dedicated CAIU employee.

- Geri Schaffer, *CASTL Vice-President*

## #Partnership

### **Emily Swanic, Clerical and Filing Clerk**

I am new to my position here at Harrisburg and have reached out to Emily many times to locate records for students. Emily is always courteous and prompt to respond to my requests. I usually have what I need within minutes of sending her an email. The IU is fortunate to have an employee such as Emily who understands the importance of student records and the collaboration required with districts to meet student needs.

- Sheri Moyer, *Coordinator of Special Education Student Services*

## #Expertise

### **Deb Harro, Accounting Program Assistant**

We would like to thank Deb Harro for being a major contributor in keeping things running for our team over the past few months with the many changes our office has endured. Deb has stepped up in numerous ways to support the staff within our organization and has been a key player in helping our new team members. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and expertise to help the business office #begreat!

- Dawn Scott, *Assistant Business Manager*

## #Service

### **Larkin Layne, Help Desk/Technology Support**

Larkin has been absolutely fabulous in helping us with technology set up for our trainings! He is so responsive and is always there when we start to make sure everything is working properly! We are very thankful for his expertise and time!

- CAIU TaC Team

## #Service

### **Mary Fair, Teacher**

Mary demonstrates the CAIU value of service everyday. She serves staff by making a multitude of supplies for their classroom, and her willingness to help in any capacity. She creates beautiful art for our building that makes both family and students feel welcomed. She is dedicated to serving both staff and students with a smile!

- Sheridan Nelson, *Paraprofessional*

## #Dedication

### **Jennifer Yingling, Educational Consultant**

Jen demonstrates the value of Dedication daily. She goes above and beyond to support not only our team but also the families and children we serve. She demonstrates flexibility, passion, knowledge, and empathy. I am grateful to work with her each and every day!

- Jennifer Benshoof, *EI School Psychologist*

# Training and events



The Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) hosts numerous innovative events and conferences throughout the year. Our team of consultants, staff, and specialists values and supports lifelong learning.

All events and conference offerings are available in the [Frontline Registration System](#) or in Eventsforce.

Check out our [Events & Conference](#) page often to see what opportunities are available to you!

## Here are some of our upcoming trainings:

### 1/9/2024-1/10/2024 - [Structured Literacy-Trainer of Trainers](#)

*Audience: Reading Specialists, Interventionists, Classroom Teachers, ELL Teachers, Special Education Teachers*

*This training is designed to support districts in implementing Structured Literacy training as set forth in the new Chapter 49 Guidelines. The two-day program will provide an opportunity for districts to send selected personnel to become trainers of Structured Literacy for their district.*

### 1/11/2024 - [High Impact Strategies \(Virtual\)](#)

*Audience: Students who are preparing to student teach*

### 1/11/2024 - [Refugees In Our Schools](#)

*Audience: Educators and Non-Core Educators (Elementary and Secondary Educators)*

*Participants will (1) Better understand this culturally diverse group of students (2) Hear the voices of our students and families: What are their needs? (3) Become familiarized with resources to equip both educators and refugee families.*

### 1/19/2024 - [Engaging Everyone: Strategies and Tips for the Inclusive Teacher](#)

*Audience: Instructional Coaches, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Administrators, and anyone who designs instruction for students*

### Multiple Dates Available - [CAPT New Leader Training](#)

*Audience: District and building leaders*

*Participants will receive an overview of the CAPT program as well as their role in supporting employees who are working toward earning their teaching degree while on the job.*



# Opportunities to *do good*

## CAIU Service Projects! (July 2023 – January 2024)

CAIU staff are encouraged to give back to the community by participating in a CAIU Service Project. These projects must be completed after July 1 and on or before our CAIU All Staff Day in January. In exchange for your participation, you get the afternoon of All Staff Day off!

Service projects are not just about doing good things, they are also about building relationships and community.



### ALL STAFF DAY **Kid's Shop at Fort Hunter**

*Multiple dates/times available in December!*

**Audience:** CAIU Staff

Helpers will serve as "elves" to assist children in shopping for gifts for family members. Other "elves" will help with wrapping gifts in gift bags. Seasonal attire is welcome! [SIGN UP HERE](#)



### ALL STAFF DAY **Live Nativity Participation**

*Multiple dates/times available in December!*

**Audience:** CAIU Staff

Help with the production of a Live Nativity display. Your participation will include set-up/clean-up, assisting with costumes, greeting and directing spectators, serving hot chocolate and cookies, and assisting with the live animals during the event. [SIGN UP HERE](#)



### ALL STAFF DAY **Wreaths Across America**

*December 16, 2023*

**Audience:** CAIU Staff

Volunteers will lay wreaths on the graves of US service men and women who are interred there. A small ceremony precedes the laying of wreaths. [SIGN UP HERE](#)

[Click HERE for CAIU Service Project Process and Forms](#)