DCIU

Empowering Partnerships For Education





DELAWARE COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

ANNUAL REPORT



WE ARE THE DCIU

2024-2025

DCIU
Empowering Partnerships For Education

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Dear DCIU Community,

On behalf of the Delaware County Intermediate Unit, we are proud to present our 2024-2025 Annual Report, a celebration of who we are, what we do, and why it matters. *We Are the DCIU*, reflects the shared identity, purpose, and values that unite our programs, services, and people across Delaware County.

DCIU is more than a service agency. It is a community of educators, specialists, and leaders working in partnership with schools, agencies, families, and organizations to expand what is possible for every learner. Across early childhood education, special education, career and technical training, adult education, and beyond, this report highlights the extraordinary breadth and depth of our collective efforts. Whether through innovative instructional programs, targeted professional learning, or responsive student support services, DCIU continues to adapt and lead in meeting the evolving needs of our stakeholders and communities.

We are especially grateful for the strong partnerships that drive our work forward among school districts, state and county agencies, community organizations, and families. Our progress is the result of shared commitment and collective impact. Together, *We Are the DCIU*: a united force for learning, growth, and opportunity in Delaware County.

With gratitude,

Dr. Maria Edelberg
Executive Director

Tracey Karwoski
Board President

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Delaware County Intermediate Unit is governed by a committed Board of Directors who provide strategic oversight, uphold our mission, and ensure that our programs and services meet the evolving needs of students, families, and schools across Delaware County.



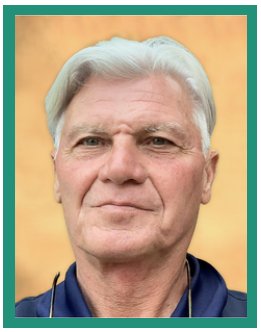
Tracy A. Karwoski
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Chichester SD



LaTonia Lee
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Ridley SD



Ken Dinitz
Rose Tree Media SD



Sheree Monroe Whitsett
Southeast Delco SD



Bob Hornberger
Springfield SD



Debra Williams
Upper Darby SD



Kevin Henry
Wallingford Swarthmore SD



Wadiya Ivery
William Penn SD

IN APPRECIATION OF OUR PAST BOARD MEMBERS

Recognizing the Service of Those Who Contributed to the 2024–2025 School Year

Thank you to the dedicated individuals who served on the Delaware County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors during the 2024–2025 school year. Your leadership, time, and commitment to public education helped shape the direction and success of our programs. Though your term has ended, your impact remains. We are grateful for your service.



Dr. Kristin Larsen
School District of Haverford Township



Hillary Fletcher
Rose Tree Media SD



Rachel Holbert
Wallingford Swarthmore SD



Joana (Joi) Hopkins
William Penn SD





MISSION

The mission of the Delaware County Intermediate Unit, a regional service agency, is to provide leadership in the development and delivery of quality, cost-effective programs and services to school communities.

VISION

DCIU empowers partnerships that drive, create, inspire, and understand excellence in education. DCIU:

- **Drives** strategic forward movement
- **Creates** dynamic, innovative solutions
- **Inspires** limitless possibilities
- **Understands** challenges and aspirations

BELIEFS

We believe in our commitment to provide diverse and flexible educational programs and services within a safe environment by fostering the development of learning communities of integrity and excellence.

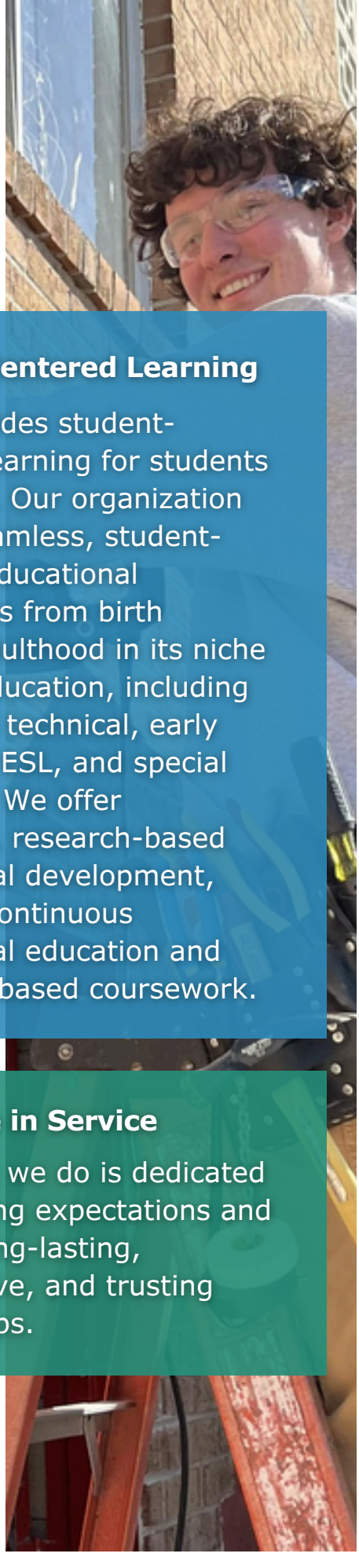
We believe in promoting forward thinking, creativity, partnerships, and in encouraging positive change.

We believe in maintaining an entrepreneurial spirit while developing meaningful goals and actions that indicate the success of the students we serve.



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STRATEGIC GOALS



Financial Stewardship

DCIU delivers exceptional bottom-line values to its districts to address the financial pressures they face. Our budgeting and financial practices are based on program and service needs, accounting integrity, and transparency within and outside of DCIU.

Market-Based Business Model

DCIU is attuned to the current and future needs of districts and other customers. We operate using an enterprise, market-driven business model to achieve purposeful social and educational outcomes. Through the creation of an Innovation Fund, DCIU creatively functions as an educational engine for Delaware County. We provide excellence in service at competitive pricing.

Student-Centered Learning

DCIU provides student-centered learning for students of all ages. Our organization models seamless, student-centered educational experiences from birth through adulthood in its niche areas of education, including career and technical, early childhood, ESL, and special education. We offer innovative, research-based professional development, including continuous professional education and university-based coursework.

Excellence in Service

Everything we do is dedicated to exceeding expectations and building long-lasting, collaborative, and trusting relationships.

WE ARE THE DCIU

DCIU celebrates the collective impact of our programs, from early childhood through adult education, and from specialized student services to professional development for educators. Whether in classrooms, community spaces, or virtual settings, we strive to be a collaborative and consistent presence, driven by purpose and dedicated to the success of every learner across Delaware County.



Early Childhood Programs

Family Center and Project ELECT | Early Intervention | Early Head Start | Head Start | Pre-K Counts | Early Childhood Related Services (OT, PT, & SLP)

4,074 children served

Student Services

Autistic Support | Emotional Support | Hearing and Language | Life Skills Support | Multi-Disabilities Support | Occupational and Physical Therapy | Speech and Language | Vision Support | Nonpublic Services | Learning Support

4,198 students served

Career Readiness

Career and Technical Education | Practical Nursing Program | OPTIONS | Project WIN | Special Education Certification Pathways

1,725 students and adults served

Professional Services

Professional Learning and Continuing Education | Special Assignments | Cybersecurity | Educational Services and Leadership | Business Support Services

6,000 + people served

WE ARE FOUNDATION BUILDERS FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Our Early Childhood Education programs provide a strong and inclusive foundation for our youngest learners. Through high-quality, evidence-based programming and family-centered services, our early childhood teams support children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, ensuring they enter kindergarten ready to thrive.

Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts

Program Quality Recognition

Both the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) and Pre-K Counts programs received perfect scores in their 2024–2025 program year reviews, meeting all state-defined criteria for excellence. The Pre-K Counts program earned a 435/435, including high-quality implementation at our partner sites at Delco Early Learning Center and Rocky Run YMCA. HSSAP was similarly recognized with a score of 390/390, affirming DCIU's commitment to exceptional early learning environments.



Enrollment & Attendance

DCIU Enrolled over 800 students across Pre-K Counts and Head Start programs, averaging 97% or higher enrollment each month. These programs also consistently met or exceeded the federal expectation of 85% daily attendance, reflecting the trust families place in DCIU and the strength of our outreach and engagement practices.

Dental Screenings Partnership

DCIU deepened its commitment to whole-child wellness by partnering with Kid Smiles, a pediatric dental provider that visited Head Start and Pre-K Counts centers to conduct screenings. As a result of this collaboration, dental screenings for our young students increased by 10% compared to the previous year, ensuring more children received early preventative care and referrals when needed.

Kindergarten Readiness: Social and Emotional Development

Benchmark assessments showed children transitioning to kindergarten demonstrated strong emotional regulation and social responsiveness. Most children met expectations for following classroom norms with minimal adult support and demonstrated empathy when peers were in distress, often offering reassurance or seeking adult help. These outcomes reflect the nurturing, developmentally appropriate environments cultivated by DCIU educators.

Language, Communication, and Cognitive Growth

In the domain of language and communication, students exceeded end-of-year expectations. Children consistently engaged in multi-turn conversations, responded appropriately to complex instructions and narratives, and demonstrated comprehension of ideas expressed through speech or sign. These indicators affirm the programs' effectiveness in building early literacy and expressive language foundations.

Early Mathematics Readiness

Students who were preparing to enter kindergarten also surpassed expectations in foundational math. Many children demonstrated one-to-one correspondence and the ability to instantly recognize the quantity of a small group of objects. These competencies indicate strong early numeracy development, a key predictor of later academic success.



Expanded Access to Specialized Services

17% of children enrolled in Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts received specialized services, an increase of 2% from the previous year.

Early Intervention

Specialized Therapies

DCIU delivers occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and speech-language therapy to support young children in building fine and gross motor skills, communication abilities, and sensory regulation. In 2024-25, DCIU provided:

- 22,745 hours of OT to 1,184 children
- 8,753 hours of PT to 399 children
- 53,184 hours of speech and language therapy to 1,864 children.

Preschool Behavior Consultation

DCIU partnered with Ridley and Lansdowne YMCAs to provide behavior consultation services in preschool settings. As a result, no students with IEPs at those sites were suspended or expelled, demonstrating the efficacy of proactive, inclusive behavioral support strategies.

Collaborative Community Engagement

DCIU held its third annual Early Intervention Community Day on April 26, 2025, fostering stronger partnerships with families, caregivers, and community-based organizations. The team also hosted its annual Transition to Preschool webinar in November 2024 to guide families through the next phase of their child's educational journey.

Higher Education Partnerships

Early Intervention continued its strong student teaching partnership with Widener University and a new collaboration for student teaching is being developed in collaboration with West Chester University to expand the student teaching pipeline into early childhood special education.

The Early Intervention Related Services hosted three occupational therapy fieldwork students in 2024-2025 from Drexel University and the University of Pittsburgh, supporting workforce development in pediatric therapy. These future clinicians gained hands-on experience supporting children in inclusive environments, helping to grow the next generation of early childhood specialists.

Serving Nearly 3,000 Children

DCIU's Early Intervention program served 2,994 children during 2024-25, offering critical preschool special education services in cognitive, motor, language, and social-emotional development.



Family Center

Parenting Support Through the Family Center

The Family Center hosted 20 Teeter Totter Play Groups and 16 Positive Parenting Workshop sessions throughout the year, providing hands-on learning and parenting skill development for families of young children. Through structured, relationship-based sessions, caregivers gained deeper understanding of child development, behavior management, and emotional support. Feedback from families highlighted increased confidence in parenting and appreciation for individualized support from Family Center staff.

Trauma Informed Caregiver Education

In collaboration with Systems of Care, the Family Center launched its first Trauma 105 group workshop: *Intro to Trauma for Parents & Caregivers*. Designed to increase awareness of childhood trauma's impact, this workshop equipped parents with knowledge and relationship-based strategies to help children heal from trauma. Two sessions were held, marking a significant step in expanding trauma-informed practices for parents of young children.





WE ARE EXPANDING STUDENT PATHWAYS

DCIU provides transformative school-age services that span a wide spectrum of needs and aspirations, from intenstive special education and related services supports to technical training and future workforce development. Programs such as Low Incidence Special Education, the Aston Education Center, TCA, and Delaware County Technical High Schools (DCTS) are grounded in our commitment to educational opportunities that meet the individual needs and goals of each student. Our initiatives aim not only to support academic successes, but to build confidence, agency, and readiness for their next step.

Low Incidence

Community-Based Instruction

Students in high school and transition-age classrooms practice real-world life skills including budgeting, shopping, ordering food, and using public spaces safely and independently. Through structured outings, like going to the store to make purchases, learning to go to the mall and order lunch with a specific dollar amount, and walking to a local park, students developed confidence in life skills for adulthood.



Expanding Student Opportunities at Marple Education Center

DCIU's Low Incidence programs at Marple Education Center provided students with individualized academic, functional, and social-emotional learning experiences. This year's highlights include field trips to Elmwood Park Zoo, Springbrook Farm, and Junior Playland; participation in a student bowling league; and a joyful celebration at the Sneaker Ball Prom.

Service Learning Projects

Students in the Multi-Disabilities Support (MDS) program completed a collaborative service project for a local dog shelter by making dog treats and blankets. The project integrated functional activities like creating a shopping list and purchasing ingredients, pre-vocational skills like following a recipe, and assistive technology, including adaptive switches to operate sewing machines.



Adaptive Games and Sports

Occupational therapists organized adaptive golf, baseball, and volleyball activities for inclusive physical engagement and motor development for all students to participate in.



Supportive Therapies for School-Age Students

More than 650 school-age students benefited from OT, PT, and speech-language services. Therapists collaborated with classroom teachers to increase student access, independence, and engagement in school environments.



Curriculum Highlights

96% of service providers administered benchmarks every 90 days and 84% have active roadmaps. Student engagement increased by 10% over the prior year.

Aston Education Center Emotional Support

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

A focus this year on PBIS structures included a monthly activity series to reinforce pro-social behaviors, ranging from “Painting with a Twist” to root beer float socials and a robust school store where students could receive PBIS points for items.

Holcomb Positive Action Program

In May 2025, elementary students participated in a six-unit character education series facilitated by Holcomb Behavioral Health. This program reinforced the core belief that positive choices and actions build positive feelings about themselves, and there is a positive way to do everything.

Student Engagement Events

From holiday celebrations to a student vs. staff volleyball game to boxing gym visits that promoted discipline and stress management, students participated in a variety of experiences designed to build identity, connection, and healthy habits and strategies.





The County Alternative (TCA) High School

Behavior and Mental Health Supports

In partnership with Child and Family Focus, TCA completed the second year of a diagnostic program for students requiring intensive behavioral interventions. Additionally, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was revamped this year with support from DCIU's Teaching & Learning department.

Workforce and Post-secondary Pathways

TCA partnered with Project WIN to refer 10 graduates to this new DCIU program. Additionally, one student worked directly with the OPTIONS team this year through a grant. Another student was awarded the same grant for the upcoming year.

Experiential Learning

Students explored real-world learning opportunities through educational field trips to Eastern State Penitentiary and the National Constitution Center. Visits to a boxing gym helped students learn self-control and personal fitness and presentations by trade schools and the Delaware County Community College deepened real-world career awareness.





Graduation

TCA graduated 10 students from six districts in 2024-2025.

Delaware County Technical High Schools

Career and Technical School Climate

Across both Aston and Folcroft campuses, programs saw meaningful gains in school climate and student engagement. Referrals and discipline incidents declined, while restorative practices and targeted staff professional development contributed to improved instructional quality. Students also took on leadership roles, participated in schoolwide events, and helped foster a more positive and inclusive learning environment.

Program Expansions

Both campuses expanded programs in high-demand fields. Aston expanded programs in electrical, cosmetology, and health occupations, while Folcroft added engineering and construction programs. A pre-apprenticeship model is in development to further bridge students into postsecondary and workforce opportunities.

Student Leadership and Culture

Students at both campuses participated in spirit weeks, schoolwide fundraisers, and celebratory events including pep rallies and holiday contests. Aston also elevated student leadership through a student government system with program-area representation, empowering students to shape initiatives and provide feedback to administration.





Career Pathways for 1200+ Students

Serving a combined 1,220 students, the Aston and Folcroft campuses of DCTS expanded programming, increased student engagement, and improved career readiness outcomes.

Nonpublic Schools

DCIU supported more than 50 nonpublic schools across Delaware County. More than 2,800 students received individualized and group services including speech and language therapy, psychological services, counseling, and academic remediation in reading and math. These supports help improve learning outcomes for thousands of students enrolled in private education settings in Delaware County.

English Learners

DCIU's English Language Development team delivered direct instruction to over 200 English Learners across seven districts.

English Learner Summer Camp

In Summer 2024, the English Learner (EL) Summer Camp served 113 students, led by nine certified teachers and one ESL certification candidate. Enrollment for the 2025 summer camp also exceeds 100 students, reflecting sustained interest in this enriching, language-building experience designed to support multilingual learners.

Hearing, Language, Vision and Orientation & Mobility

This specialized department supported students with hearing and visual impairments in all 15 public school districts, charter schools, Early Intervention, and DCIU school-age programming.

Highlights from this year include:

- Participation in the statewide Deaf Blind Resource Team through a $20,000 grant to increase programming.
- Joint professional learning around Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) through a partnership with MCIU.
- Public events such as the Walk for Hearing and Recognition Night for students with hearing loss helped foster visibility and community.



Recognition Night for Students with Hearing Loss

Students with hearing loss were celebrated during a dedicated recognition night that highlighted their achievements and resilience.

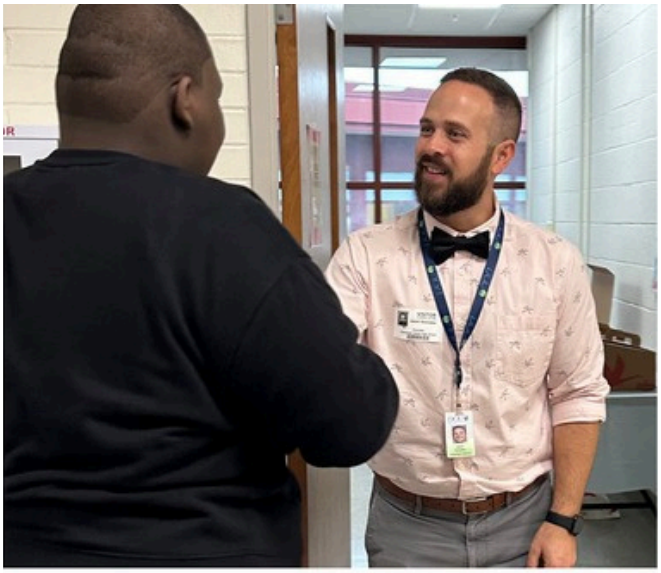
WE ARE ENRICHING STUDENT LIFE

In alignment with DCIU's practice of supporting the academic and social development of every learner, the 2024-2025 school year featured dynamic student programming that fostered student innovation, creativity, and voice. From regional competitions to career exploration events and student-led forums, these activities enriched educational experiences and elevated student agency across Delaware County.

Student Events

Youth Career Conference

Held virtually in 2025, this annual event connected students with disabilities to professionals across diverse fields including gaming, cosmetology, and entrepreneurship. Through engaging presentations, this conference emphasized self-advocacy and future planning to empower students with practical resources, peer perspectives, and aspirational pathways.



Mock Interviews

Between November 2024 and January 2025, over 200 students from 12 school districts, DCIU programs, and two private schools participated in mock interviews. This initiative supports students in post-secondary transition planning by offering constructive feedback, accessibility awareness, and real-world interviewing experience in a supportive environment.



Over 3,000 Delaware County students participate in DCIU student events and competitions.

Career Night

DCIU Nonpublic facilitated a career night at Monsignor Bonner and Archbishop Prendergast High School. Alumni returned to share insights across various career clusters. The event offered students real-world perspectives and inspiration, fostering informed post-secondary planning.

Adapted Art Showcase

Over 500 student-created artworks were displayed during this year's Adapted Art Showcase, accompanied by live performances through a partnership with Robato School of Music. The event celebrated artistic expression and inclusion for students with disabilities.

Making a Difference Awards

In May 2025, DCIU and the Delaware County Right to Education Local Task Force co-hosted the 13th annual Making a Difference Awards. More than 100 students and education professionals were honored for advancing inclusion for students with disabilities in schools across the county.





Delco Coalition for Student Voice and Agency

This year, over 100 high school students participated in three student groups comprising the Delco Coalition for Student Voice and Agency: Dignity & Belonging, Future Educators, and Artificial Intelligence. Monthly meetings of each group culminated in student-led presentations, showcasing student voice as a catalyst for systems change in education.



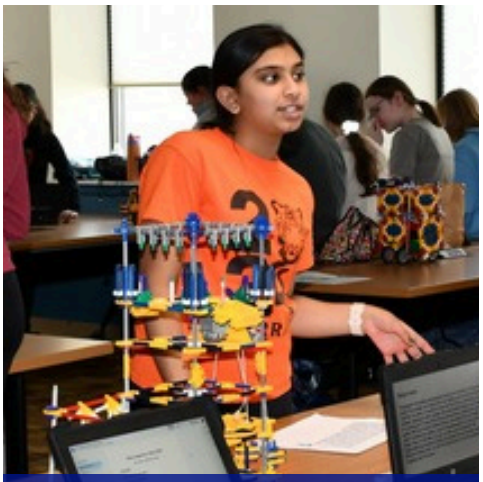
Career-Focused Special Projects and Fundraisers

Students participating in the OPTIONS program demonstrated entrepreneurship and leadership through activities such as creating Philadelphia Eagles buttons, weekly pretzel sales, a gift wrapping service during the holiday season, and creating fundraising baskets for events like the DCIU golf outing.





Student Competitions



STEM Design Challenge

98 teams competed in the 2025 K'Nex Challenge. Students showcased creativity, problem-solving, and collaborative design, reinforcing STEM skill development.



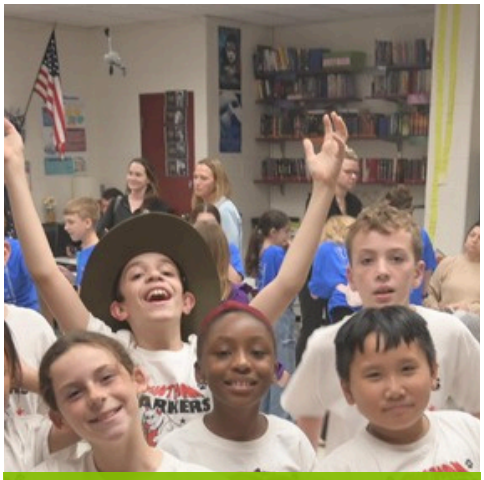
24 Math Challenge

Over 150 students in grades 4-8 competed in this math competition. Using operations to reach the number 24, students built fluency in computation, number sense, and mathematical reasoning.



Regional Spelling Bee

DCIU hosted the Regional Spelling Bee for students in grades K-8 to demonstrate their spelling proficiency. The winner advanced to represent Delaware County at the 100th Scripps National Spelling Bee.



Reading Olympics

Over 115 teams participated in Reading Olympics over four nights, representing elementary, middle, and high schools. More than 1,500 students attended, celebrating the joy of reading and the power of teamwork.



Veterans Day Essay Contest

The Veterans Day Essay Contest encouraged students to develop writing skills while expressing appreciation for veterans. The winning students read their essays at the Media Veterans Day Parade.



High-Q

DCIU continued to host HighQ in partnership with Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union. The competition is a regional academic challenge that fosters quick thinking, collaboration, and subject matter expertise among student teams.

WE ARE PREPARING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

DCIU continued to expand its leadership in workforce development by delivering high-impact training, employment readiness, and career exploration opportunities across several innovative programs. Through the Practical Nursing Program (PNP), OPTIONS, Project WIN, and strategic Human Resources initiatives, we advanced career readiness and strengthened Delaware County's talent pipeline in critical industries.

Practical Nursing Program (PNP)

Wellness and Peer-Led Initiatives

Holistic development was a central focus this year. Students launched wellness activities such as a yoga club and walking group, inspired by faculty-led self-care sessions. These student-driven initiatives promoted mental health, stress relief, and a strong sense of community among cohorts.



PNP Program Growth and Student Achievement

The Practical Nursing Program experienced growth in both enrollment and NCLEX pass rates in 2024-2025, affirming the program's reputation for excellence and strong student supports. These outcomes reflect a strategic focus on rigorous instruction, faculty mentorship, and responsive program design.

Student Testimonial

Graduate feedback underscores PNP's transformative impact: ***"Graduating from the program was the greatest feeling ever. Sometimes I still have to pinch myself because I can't believe I really did that,"*** shared K.S., a proud alumna.



Cultural Celebration

To celebrate the diverse identities within the program, PNP hosted a cultural celebration day. Students and faculty shared traditions, foods, and stories that highlighted the multicultural richness of the nursing profession and the communities they serve.



Community Engagement & Clinical Readiness

PNP students participated in many public health events, including the Temple Women's Health Community Baby Shower, Men's Health and Wellness Run, and the Fair Acres Winter Celebration, building clinical competencies and a commitment to community service.



High School Mentorship & Career Exploration

In collaboration with DCTS, PNP launched a mentorship initiative connecting current students with high school health science learners. This program provided aspiring nurses with insight into the academic and personal journeys of PNP students.

OPTIONS

New Worksites

Three new vocational sites were added in 2024-2025: Capozzoli's Café at the Media Courthouse, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) locations across the county, and a third Goodwill site in Aston. Through partner job sites, students are able to be matched with sites that allow them to build real-life workplace skills in inclusive, supportive environments.

Program Recognition

DCIU was recognized as Goodwill of Delaware's 2025 Community Partner of the Year. This recognition was a reflection of the OPTION's program's ongoing commitment and collaboration with Goodwill for workforce inclusion. Through the DCIU's OPTIONS Employability Skills Training Program students participate in vocational assessments and tailored training, acquiring hands-on experience in Goodwill retail stores in Aston, Upper Darby, and Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

Independent Living and Transition Services

Enrollment in the Community Living and Learning Program (CLL) apartment-based program continued to grow, supporting young adults in developing independent living skills. Participants engaged in daily routines such as cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and navigating public transportation, all within a supportive, real-world environment. This hands-on model fosters increased confidence, independence, and readiness for life beyond school-based services.





Record Breaking Student Employability

OPTIONS reached its highest school-age employability numbers in over six years, reflecting program growth, targeted skill development, and meaningful job placements.

Project WIN

Program Launch and Capacity Building

Project WIN completed its inaugural year as a new addition to DCIU's continuum of transition programming. The program began accepting referrals from across the county, offering a structured pathway for workforce development. The goal of the program is to empower young adults who are out of school or have not completed high school. The program offers employment/vocational support services to Out of School (OSY) individuals, ages 16-24, with or without their HS diploma.

Outreach and Partnership Development

Project WIN staff conducted extensive outreach to school districts, community agencies, and transition teams, laying the groundwork for future partnerships and program awareness. This engagement model ensures a coordinated effort in preparing students for post-secondary success.

Expanding Access to Transition Services

By offering individualized support focused on job readiness, life skills, and self-advocacy, Project WIN helps students navigate the transition from high school to adulthood. The program fills a vital service gap and strengthens Delaware County's infrastructure for workforce development.





Human Resources

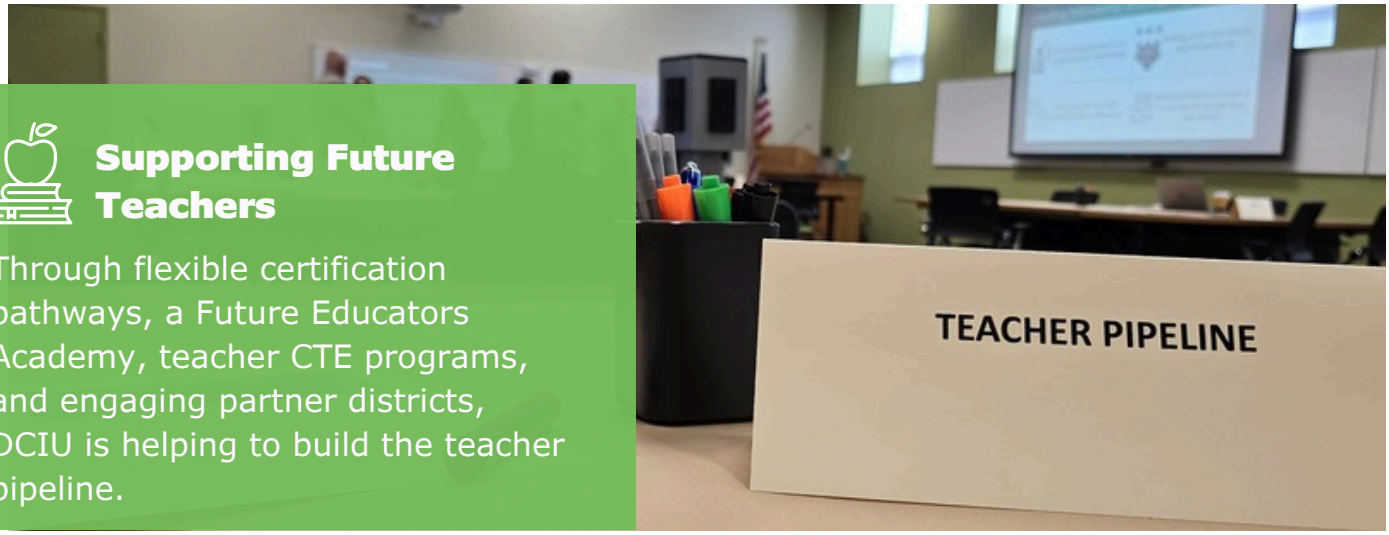


Countywide Education Career Fair

In Spring 2025, DCIU hosted a countywide Education Career Fair, attracting 148 attendees and generating 223 expressions of interest in education roles. This event strengthened school hiring pipelines and built awareness of careers in teaching, paraprofessional support, and educational leadership.

Flexible Pathways to Teacher Certification

DCIU launched a partnership with Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 (LIU18) to offer flexible credentialing programs for paraprofessionals, career changers, and current educators who would like to earn their teacher certification in special education. These programs provide affordable, high-impact pathways to earn a Pennsylvania Instructional I Certificate in PreK-12 Special Education, including bachelor's completion and Master of Education options designed for working adults. By reducing barriers to certification, this initiative strengthens the talent pool for serving students with diverse learning needs.



Supporting Future Teachers

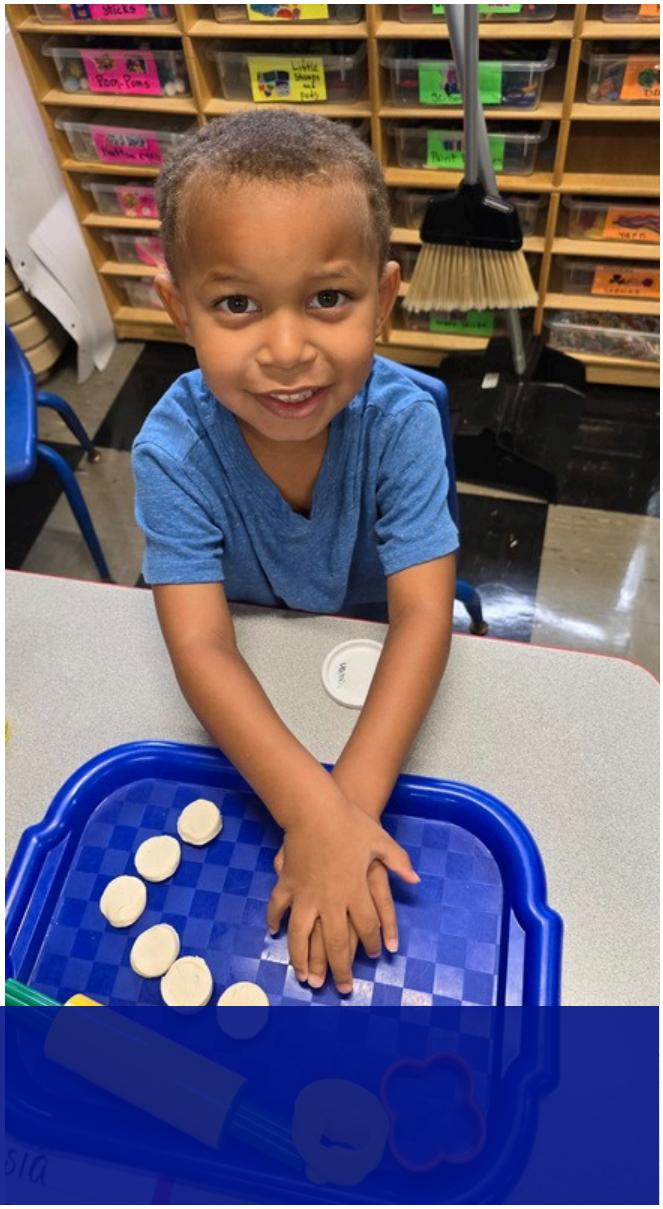
Through flexible certification pathways, a Future Educators Academy, teacher CTE programs, and engaging partner districts, DCIU is helping to build the teacher pipeline.

WE ARE PROOF OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE

DCIU celebrates remarkable student journeys at every stage of learning from birth through adulthood. These stories reflect the core of our work to believe in each learner's potential and to meet them with support, services, and opportunity. Whether through Early Intervention that sparks developmental breakthroughs, technical training that builds careers, or transition programs that open doors, these journeys are a testament to why we do what we do.

From Challenges to Confidence

According to one mother, when her son began Early Intervention services, he struggled with social boundaries and was often excluded by his peers. Trips to the park were overwhelming and ended in frustration. Today, he not only initiates play with other children, but recently made a new friend at the park. This was a powerful milestone for both her son and the whole family. In a thank you letter, his mother said: "*Thanks to the tireless support of his therapists and educators, [my son] has grown into a more confident, independent learner."* His story is a moving example of how early, intentional supports can transform a child's trajectory.



Parent Testimonials



A Successful Head Start

For a family navigating both early childhood and English language learning, Head Start was transformative. During a routine attendance call, DCIU's Family Services team learned that a child had recently completed kindergarten readiness testing and had impressed the school district evaluators. The child's parents credited Head Start's nurturing, language-rich environment for laying the foundation for their child's success and preparing them for this important academic milestone.

Building Bridges for Fathers

Through a new car seat safety initiative with CHOP and the Delaware County Transportation Management Agency, a local father received essential safety equipment for his children.
In the process, he shared heartfelt gratitude for the teachers and staff at Early Head Start and Head Start, reflecting on his children's remarkable growth: once nonverbal and in diapers, now steadily progressing. "I was at a very low point," he said. "But the progress in just a few months has been amazing."

WE ARE PARTNERS IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

DCIU empowered more than 5,000 educators across Delaware County in 2024-2025, delivering high-impact professional learning, personalized coaching, and curriculum development services that directly influenced instructional quality and student outcomes. DCIU's comprehensive educator training and coaching efforts supported schools in achieving measurable academic growth, promoting inclusive practices, and preparing students for an evolving world.

Teaching & Learning

Structured Literacy

DCIU led a county-wide initiative to elevate reading outcomes through structured literacy practices. Teaching & Learning Specialists facilitated requested structured literacy workshops and coaching engagements across 15 schools and districts. These sessions emphasized explicit instruction in the five pillars of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), ensuring educators are equipped with proven strategies to meet the needs of all learners.



Over 120 County-wide Workshops

This year, our Teaching and Learning Department provided extensive professional development offerings, including over 120 workshops and training sessions available county-wide to educators. These county-wide workshops were attended by 1,950 participants.

Math Curriculum Design and Implementation

Teaching & Learning Specialists specializing in math developed and implemented comprehensive Kindergarten-Algebra math curricula in partnership with two school districts. Through professional learning communities (PLCs), one-on-one coaching, and administrator workshops, the curriculum was successfully embedded in daily instruction. Notably, the first district to adopt the curriculum achieved the fourth-highest math growth among all schools in Pennsylvania, as measured by PVAAS.

STEELS Standards Implementation

To support the rollout of Pennsylvania's new STEELS Standards, DCIU designed and facilitated workshops aligned to the Science, Technology & Engineering, and Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (STEELS) framework. Science & STEM Teaching & Learning Specialists developed a grades 5-8 curriculum using Understanding by Design and storyboarding strategies, empowering teachers with ready-to-use, three-dimensional science instruction.

Assistive Technology Innovation in Access and Inclusion

The Assistive Technology (AT) team significantly expanded services and visibility this year through hands-on educator training, family engagement, inclusive events, and strategic district partnerships. The "AT on the Road" initiative brought tools and training directly to educators and students in eight districts and charters, while the AT Lending Library supported widespread trials for adoption of adaptive equipment.

Autism and Complex Learner Support

Through individualized coaching, classroom observation, and structured feedback cycles, DCIU's Autism Initiative supported educators in

November 5th County-wide In-Service

Over 325 teachers across Delaware County participated in DCIU's November 5th in-service. Trainings spanned EL, STEM, health, special education, counseling, and paraprofessional roles.



developing high-quality autistic support classrooms. Using tools like the Autism Checklist, the team delivered targeted assistance to new teachers and veteran staff adapting to new student populations. These efforts ensured a more stable and supportive educational experience for students with autism across the county.

PBIS Coaching

DCIU delivered Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) coaching to 81 schools across all tiers. This included Tier 1 coaching for 52 schools, Tier 2 for 26 schools, and Tier 3 for 3 schools. In addition, the team facilitated three PBIS Networks serving 82 professionals, creating ongoing communities of practice. These efforts supported schoolwide culture transformation, promoted proactive student engagement, and strengthened systems-level consistency in behavioral supports.

Restorative Practices

Through both drop-in and district-embedded formats, DCIU trained educators across the county in Restorative Practices. As part of the STOP Grant, nearly 100 educators attended training sessions hosted at DCIU. Additionally, the Teaching & Learning team also delivered full-staff training to middle schools in Garnet Valley, Marple Newtown, Penn-Delco, and Rose Tree Media School Districts. Sessions focused on affective statements, restorative circles, and building relational trust, contributing to more inclusive, emotionally safe, and responsive school climates.





Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Courses

286 educators participated in online, asynchronous graduate level courses through DCIU in 2024-2025.

Coaching Models for Engineering Learning Environments Act 45 Course

In collaboration with Garnet Valley School District, DCIU launched a blended Act 45 course for over 50 administrators and instructional coaches focused on building effective coaching models. During the course, DCIU hosted a full-day session with national expert Joellen Killion focused on aligning coaching strategies to measurable student achievement goals. This course helps foster stronger school- and district-wide systems of continuous instructional improvement.



School Improvement Services

DCIU supported four CSI and four A-TSI schools in developing comprehensive improvement plans through root cause analysis and evidence-based strategies. With this team's support, one school met the criteria for exiting the A-TSI designation this year. The team also onboarded nine TSI schools and will support seven CSI schools in 2025-2026.

Support for English Learners

The English Language Development team provided professional learning to more than 300 educators in public, nonpublic, and Head Start settings. Through sustained networks and professional learning, educators remained connected to the latest compliance updates and research-based strategies.



Nonpublic Department



Wilson Language Accreditation

In July 2024, DCIU became a Wilson Accredited Partner. DCIU's Wilson Credentialed Trainer facilitated multiple one- and three-day workshops and provided training for 20 educators in yearlong Level I and Level II practicums to help educators become Wilson Certified. These practices promote foundational reading success for students through multi-sensory, structured language instruction.

Expanding School-based Mental Health Readiness

All psychologists and counselors at DCIU received training in QPR, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and NASP PREPaRE crisis response model, enhancing school-based mental health readiness.



WE ARE INNOVATING WITH PURPOSEFUL TECHNOLOGY

DCIU is leading the way in integrating technology to empower learners, enhance instruction, and build future-ready systems. From immersive virtual reality tools and accessible design labs to artificial intelligence (AI) literacy and cybersecurity infrastructure, our teams are pioneering practical and strategic innovations that reshape the educational experience. These efforts expand what's possible in the classroom and ensure that our schools and systems are equipped to meet the demands of tomorrow's world.

Information Technology (IT)

Modernized Ways to Access Information Online

The IT team successfully launched a redesigned DCIU website in 2024 and an internal employee portal, improving both public communication and staff resource access. These tools simplify navigation, streamline updates, and create consistent access to critical systems for students, educators, and families alike.

Infrastructure for Cybersecurity

The IT team implemented robust cybersecurity measures, including network penetration testing services. These proactive security upgrades demonstrate DCIU's commitment to protecting sensitive student and staff data while strengthening digital resilience across all operational systems.



Virtual Reality and Design Tools

Through an $84,000 grant from the Delaware County Health Department, DCIU expanded existing and introduced new technology tools, including virtual reality (VR) equipment, 3D printers, and laser cutters, into secondary special education programs. These tools support transition-aged students by offering immersive, real-world learning experiences in career exploration, community access, and independent living. VR recordings of workplaces and college campuses enable students to safely explore new environments at their own pace, while the design lab equipment fosters critical skills such as collaboration, digital literacy, project management, and entrepreneurship.



Strategic Leadership for AI in Education

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to transform the educational landscape, DCIU has emerged as a statewide leader in guiding responsible and innovative integration of AI tools and practices. Through student engagement, professional learning, and policy-focused initiatives, DCIU is shaping the future of AI in education in ways that are centered on student agency, instructional quality, and ethical implementation.



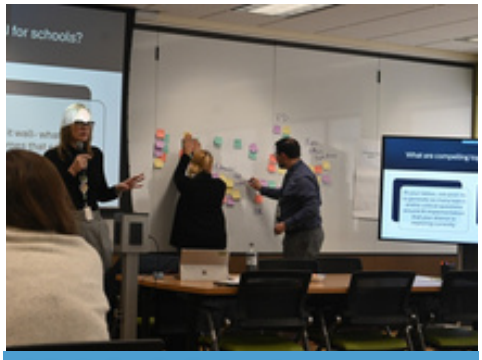
Statewide Conference

In August 2024, DCIU hosted a statewide virtual conference, bringing together national experts and local educators to explore AI's potential in classrooms and schools.



AI Student Forum

DCIU expanded its Student Coalition for Voice and Agency to include an Artificial Intelligence Forum, where high school students explored AI in education through peer-led discussions and action research.



AI Administrator Network

DCIU brought together district leaders to explore AI policy, innovation, and implementation, while promoting responsible use aligned with privacy and academic standards.



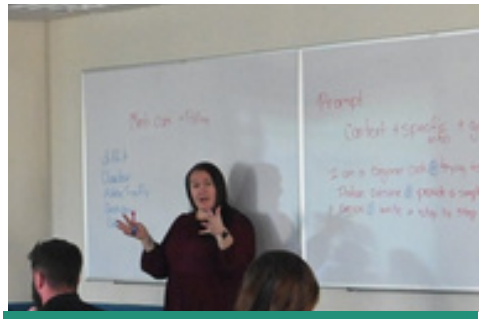
AI Professional Learning

DCIU offered hands-on professional learning workshops that equipped educators with practical tools and strategies for responsibly integrating AI to support accessibility, differentiation, and formative assessment.



AI Board Member Training

DCIU provided school board directors with targeted training on AI governance, equipping them to oversee responsible implementation through a focus on data ethics, legal considerations, and policy development.



AI Parent Workshop

DCIU held its inaugural AI parent workshop to introduce families to generative AI, address concerns around safety and privacy, and share strategies for responsible use at home.

WE ARE STRONGER THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

We believe in the power of partnerships to elevate learning, expand opportunity, and meet the evolving needs of students, families, and schools across Delaware County. Whether collaborating with hospitals to improve child safety, aligning with school districts for systemic change, or co-designing learning experiences with community-based organizations, our partnerships are a cornerstone of who we are and how DCIU leverages cross sector collaboration to strengthen educational outcomes.

Special Assignments

Establishing the Department of Special Assignments

DCIU launched the Department of Special Assignments to provide districts with rapid access to highly qualified leaders during times of transition.

This new department offers school districts and LEAs access to experienced administrative professionals who can step into critical leadership roles on a short-term or transitional basis. These services are flexible and tailored to meet each district's unique needs, ranging from individual placements such as Supervisors of Special Education or Business Managers to full operational management of entire departments. This approach ensures continuity of operations, compliance, and student support while districts complete their recruitment processes or strengthen long-term capacity.



Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts

No Wrong Door and Community Agency Outreach

Through the Delaware County No Wrong Door initiative, DCIU was able to provide families with real-time access to social services, housing resources, and public benefits, ensuring that students and their caregivers receive coordinated, holistic support. In tandem, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts expanded recruitment partnerships with 23 community agencies and businesses and conducted 12 public events and six professional presentations. These outreach efforts significantly increased applications and helped maintain monthly enrollment at or above 97%.

Teaching & Learning

Inclusive Gaming through Assistive Technology

DCIU collaborated with Garnet Valley School District to host an inclusive adaptive gaming competition, integrating general and special education students though the use of technology from the DCIU Assistive Technology Lending Library. This event highlights how partnerships create joyful, accessible learning experiences that build connection and independence for learners.





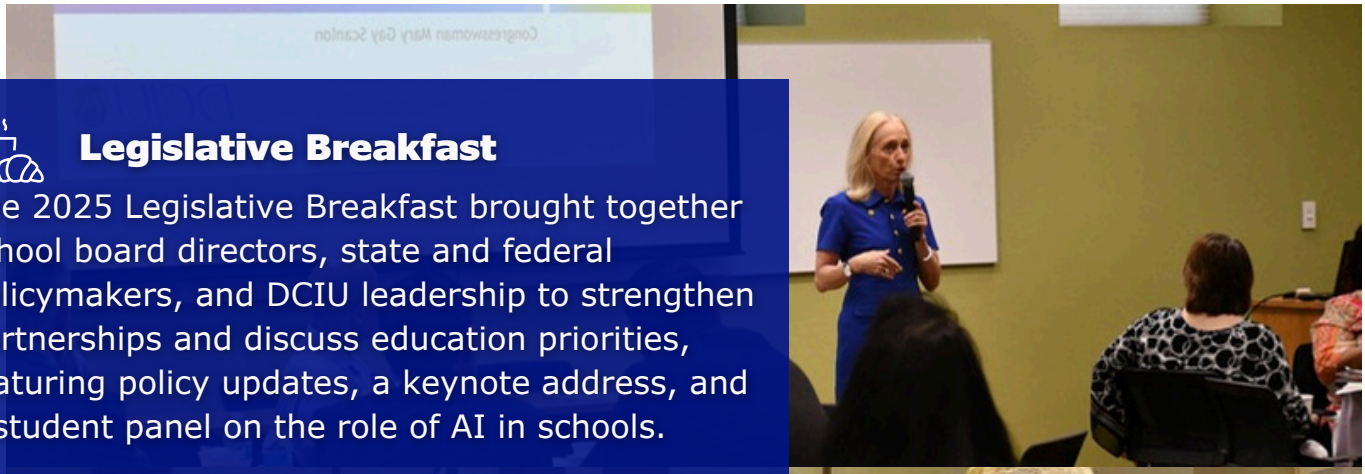
Community Partnerships

The 320 Market Café selected the Delaware County Education Foundation as a beneficiary of its Community Day of Giving, donating 10% of proceeds from both their Swarthmore and Media stores.

Marketing & Communications

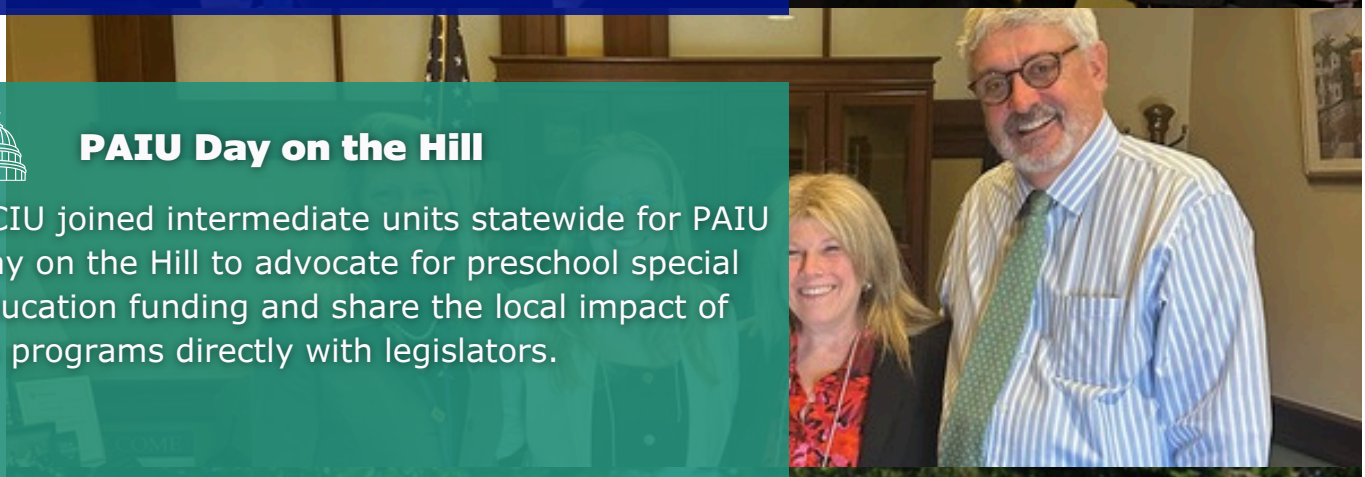
Marketing and Communications for Strategic Visibility

DCIU established a dedicated Marketing and Communications team and launched the "We Are the DCIU" campaign to unify messaging, increase program visibility, and strengthen connections with families, educators, and policymakers.



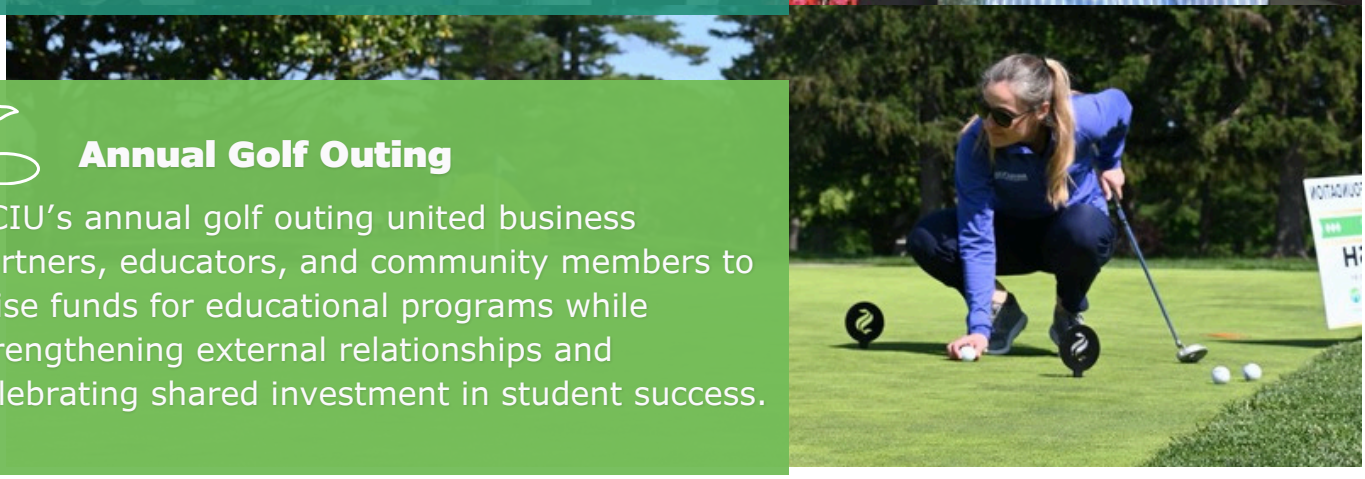
Legislative Breakfast

The 2025 Legislative Breakfast brought together school board directors, state and federal policymakers, and DCIU leadership to strengthen partnerships and discuss education priorities, featuring policy updates, a keynote address, and a student panel on the role of AI in schools.



PAIU Day on the Hill

DCIU joined intermediate units statewide for PAIU Day on the Hill to advocate for preschool special education funding and share the local impact of its programs directly with legislators.



Annual Golf Outing

DCIU's annual golf outing united business partners, educators, and community members to raise funds for educational programs while strengthening external relationships and celebrating shared investment in student success.

WE ARE POWERED BY PEOPLE

One of our greatest strengths lies in the professionals who bring our mission to life. As one of our Teaching and Learning Specialists reflected, *"The job is not to teach content; it is to teach students through content. Effective teaching is collaborative, reflective, and always evolving. That's where we come in."* DCIU staff play a critical role in the successes of thousands of learners across Delaware County, ensuring inclusive access, personalized instruction, and student-centered support.

DCIU Employee Recognition Dinner

At the 2025 Employee Recognition Dinner, DCIU honored service milestones and outstanding contributions, including:

- **Jason Gonzalez and Tonya Hargrove:** Commitment to Excellence in the Workplace
- **Ruth Zimmerman:** Commitment to Education
- **Eileen McBride:** Promoting a Positive Image of DCIU
- **Kelly Williams:** Service to the Community
- **Kathleen Mignone:** Team Player

Additionally, 31 individuals received STARS Awards for their daily demonstration of DCIU's core values. We recognized 30 employees for service anniversaries and celebrated the retirement of 17 staff members whose dedication shaped our programs and culture.



Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards

Nora Connell (Teaching & Learning) and **Shannon Murphy** (Marple Education Center) were selected from hundreds of nominations as recipients of the 2025 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Awards presented by the FMFCU Foundation. The award recognizes outstanding educators who have made a significant impact on students and their communities.

Leadership Through Learning

DCIU staff contributed significantly to regional, statewide, and national conversations in education by presenting at numerous events in 2024-2025:

***Assistive Technology Innovation*:** A Teaching & Learning staff member presented on integrating Artificial Intelligence in inclusive classrooms at PaTTAN's Assistive Technology Networking Days. This session showcased tools and strategies that expand access and engagement for students with complex learning needs.

***Supporting Emotional Support Educators*:** At the 2024 MTSS & PBIS Forum, a Teaching & Learning staff member shared the success of DCIU's Emotional Support Network in improving behavioral and mental health supports across classrooms.

***Gifted Education Equity & Wellness*:** A Teaching & Learning staff member delivered keynotes on culturally responsive gifted instruction and social-emotional wellness at the PA Association for Gifted Education Conference and regional Gifted Days.

***School Improvement Facilitation*:** Three Teaching & Learning staff led evidence-based planning sessions that helped one school exit A-TSI status and informed statewide models through PDE presentations.

***Early Intervention Advocacy*:** Seven Early Intervention staff members presented at the Annual Child Care Professionals Conference, sharing best practices for preschool transitions and inclusive early learning.

Hearing and Language Expertise: DCIU's Hearing and Language Supervisor was an invited speaker at the ASHA Schools Conference; she and a Hearing and Language staff member also moderated sessions at the national EHDI conference.

Workforce Readiness: Three OPTIONS and Project WIN staff presented at transition councils and OVR events, promoting employment pathways for students leaving secondary education.

Women in Leadership

At the PASA Women's Caucus Conference, two DCIU leaders shared the DCIU's AI Student Forum, elevating student voice in shaping ethical and effective AI uses in education.



WE ARE THE DCIU











WE ARE SUPPORTING FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

DCIU's commitment to education extends well beyond the traditional school day and classroom walls. Through deliberate outreach efforts, responsive family engagement strategies, and vibrant community events, we build relationships and amplify impact across Delaware County. These efforts strengthen the home-school connection and empower families as full partners in student learning.

Family Training Events

DCIU offered a variety of family training workshops and informational events tailored to specific needs, including assistive technology, surrogate parent trainings, and social emotional learning resources. Notably, Teaching & Learning partnered with the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) for a second annual "Gifted 101 for Parents" event, helping families better understand the unique needs of gifted learners. These sessions ensure families are equipped to support their students both academically and emotionally, and foster a shared commitment to educational success.



Community Day and Outreach Events in Early Intervention

Early Intervention hosted its third annual Community Day in April 2025, bringing together families, therapists, and local partners in a celebratory and educational event. This day also helped to connect families with essential county resources.

Family Center STEM Night

Held in May 2025, the second annual STEM Night invited families to engage directly with hands-on science, technology, engineering, and math activities alongside their children. This event, facilitated by Teaching & Learning staff, was designed to demystify STEM education and foster early enthusiasm for problem-solving and exploration. Strong family turnout and enthusiastic student participation affirmed the value of this interactive approach to learning.



Engaging Teen Parents Through Project ELECT

The Project ELECT program supported pregnant and parenting teens across Delaware County through a robust series of in-person and virtual workshops. Topics ranged from safety and budgeting to mental health to LinkedIn setup with professional headshots. The program culminated in a celebratory End-of-Year event, where students built community, exchanged resources, and honored their academic progress.

Seasonal Family Events

The Family Center hosted numerous family-centered events, including Operation Warm, Fall Fest, Spring Fling, and Summer Playdates. These events foster a sense of community among participants and offer valuable opportunities for young children to socialize and explore developmentally appropriate play with caregiver support.



WE ARE BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

DCIU's commitment to providing high-quality educational services is matched by our investment in the spaces that make that work possible. From state-of-the-art renovations to new construction projects, DCIU is building for the future by creating safe, modern, and functional environments that support our students, staff, and programs across the county. These upgrades to our physical spaces help enhance the experiences of every learner and educator we serve.

Facilities & Operations

Indoor Mapping for Smarter Facilities Use

The Facilities and Operations team initiated development of an Indoor Mapping software platform to improve operational efficiency. This innovative tool will integrate with existing systems to track and monitor space utilization across DCIU campuses. By creating a seamless interface, this initiative supports strategic planning and real-time decision-making in service delivery.



Ensuring Modern, Functional Facilities

Over the last several years, DCIU has invested in significant capital improvements at Aston, Morton, Marple, and Folcroft campuses to create innovative educational spaces.





Marple Education Center Project

Scheduled from December 2024 - Fall 2026, this extensive project at the Marple campus includes a new 35,000 square-foot addition for the Practical Nursing Program, upgraded HVAC systems, and an accessible Early Intervention parent waiting room. Additional improvements include expanded playground areas, enhanced stormwater management, reconfigured parking, and site traffic flow upgrades to support a healthier, safer, more welcoming environment for learning.





Morton Renovations and Expansion

In Fall 2024, DCIU unveiled its transformed main lobby at the Morton Campus, featuring new lighting, flooring, reception area, and digital signage. Exterior enhancements, including regraded sidewalks and accessibility upgrades, have made the entrance more inviting and inclusive. As of June 2025, the campus also includes a new 6,000 square foot-annex, now home to the IT Repair Shop, Facilities and Operations workspace, and centralized storage.

WE ARE OPENING DOORS THROUGH GRANT FUNDING

Through mission-aligned grant funding, DCIU secured and administered more than $25 million in grant funded programs and services during the 2024-2025 school year. These funds expanded instructional access, strengthened school mental health systems, and created learning opportunities across Delaware County.

Major Capital Grant Awards for Facilities

DCIU secured $10 million through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) to support the Folcroft campus additions and renovations project. An additional $1.5 million School Facilities Improvement Grant funded the new roof at the Morton building and capital needs at the TCA building. These investments ensure modern, safe, and adaptable facilities for students and staff.

Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools (EANS II)

DCIU administered more than $10 million in federal EANS II funding on behalf of eligible nonpublic schools across Delaware County, providing direct support for COVID-19 recovery and educational continuity. Through these funds, schools were able to procure instructional technology, implement academic interventions, and other supplies and allowable expenses that directly enhance student access and learning environments.



Early Childhood Education Grants

DCIU maintained full implementation of its early learning grants, which collectively totaled over $13 million. In Year 1 of the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Grant, $1,699,777 supported expanded access to comprehensive infant and toddler care in high-need communities. The Head Start and Early Head Start Grant (Year 4) provided $9,046,725 in federal funds to deliver high-quality preschool services to eligible families. The Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP) (Year 2) contributed an additional $1,274,132 in state support. The Pre-K Counts grant (Year 3) provided $1,260,000 to sustain high-quality, standards-aligned pre-kindergarten classrooms. These funds ensured program stability, full enrollment, and student gains across academic and social-emotional domains.

Practical Nursing Program Perkins Grant

The Practical Nursing Program received a $36,022 increase in ongoing Perkins grant funding.

OPTIONS Workforce Grants

DCIU renewed its participation in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding streams, enabling continued support for employability programming for students with disabilities. The expansion of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) now includes student wage subsidies for on-the-job training, supporting both skill development and financial empowerment.

JAVITS Grant for Equity in Gifted Education

DCIU was awarded a JAVITS Grant to address underrepresentation in gifted education. Natalie Bowen served as a Gifted Education Leader on the statewide team, contributing to the development and implementation of culturally responsive identification practices and increasing equitable access to gifted services in participating districts.



PCCD Mental Health Grant

DCIU was awarded $326,655 from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to expand Tier 1 school-based mental health supports. With these funds, DCIU launched professional development in suicide prevention, established a behavior support cohort with embedded coaching, and trained dozens of staff in evidence-based practices. This included QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), and SASP PREPaRE workshops. Multiple staff members are now certified to lead these trainings across the county, extending DCIU's capacity to support student wellness and safe school environments.



PaTTAN Grant with Marple Newtown School District

Through the Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education, DCIU supported Marple Newtown School District in designing a sustainable autistic support program at the elementary level. Using grant funding, DCIU specialists provided embedded coaching, professional development, and collaborative planning with district leaders, directly contributing to improved instruction and supports for students with autism.

Deaf-Blind Resource Team Grant

DCIU completed its first year participating in Pennsylvania's Deaf-Blind Resource Team (DBRT) project, receiving $20,000 in support. The grant funded collaborative work among departments to improve service coordination and instructional strategies for students with dual sensory impairments, promoting access and inclusion.

Entrepreneurial Skills

Through grant-funded equipment, students in the Low Incidence program were able to design, digitize, and screen print their own t-shirts.

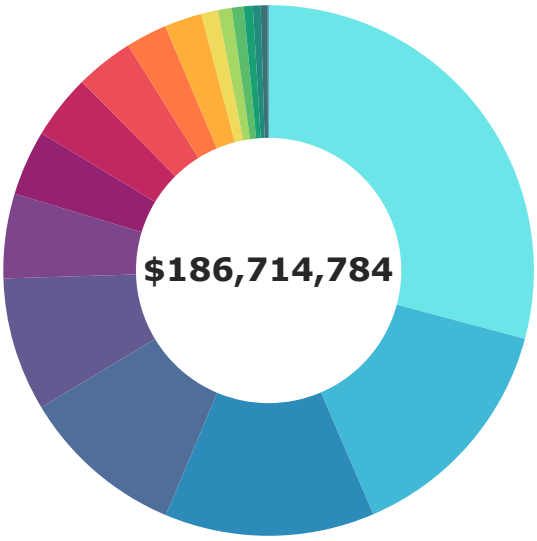


WE ARE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS

Fiscal responsibility is foundational to our mission. We take great care in managing public funds with integrity, transparency, and strategic foresight to ensure every dollar advances educational equity and opportunity across Delaware County.

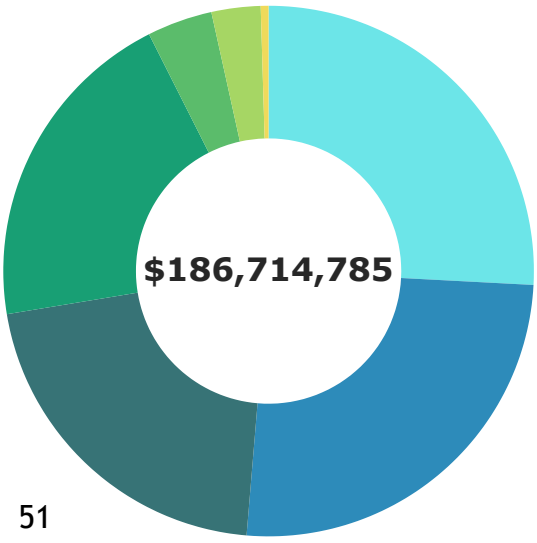
Financial Summary 2024-2025

Expenditures



Special Education Services	$54,419,334	29.15%
Preschool Services	$26,881,951	14.40%
Capital Projects	$23,875,034	12.79%
Vocational Technical Services	$18,750,434	10.04%
Head Start Services	$15,219,624	8.15%
Nonpublic Services	$9,618,389	5.15%
Technology Related Services	$7,429,119	3.98%
Building Services	$7,343,138	3.93%
Administrative Services	$6,601,975	3.54%
Covid-19 Services/Purchases	$4,686,462	2.51%
Professional Development Services	$4,260,847	2.28%
Adult Education Services	$1,898,913	1.02%
Alternative Education	$1,567,295	0.84%
Cafeteria Services	$1,369,838	0.73%
Other Services	$1,020,754	0.55%
Community-Based Services	$879,071	0.47%
Transportation Services	$759,222	0.41%
ELL Services	$133,384	0.07%

Revenues



Other Local	$48,237,417	25.83%
State	$47,591,633	25.49%
Services Purchased by Districts	$39,352,239	21.08%
Federal	$37,637,921	20.16%
Tuition for Programs	$7,425,857	3.98%
Covid-19 Funding	$5,584,022	2.99%
District Contribution	$885,695	0.47%

DCIU
Empowering Partnerships For Education



WE ARE THE DCIU

Across Delaware County, the Delaware County Intermediate Unit stands as a force for educational excellence, innovation, and service. Our collective efforts, from early childhood programs to adult workforce development, from inclusive education to pioneering AI student forums, demonstrate an unwavering commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our communities. Every service, every classroom, every initiative tells the story of people who believe in the potential of learners and the power of public education to transform lives.

We are more than a service agency. We are educators, innovators, advocates, and collaborators. We are the DCIU—and together, we are building a stronger, more connected, and more compassionate future for every learner in Delaware County.

