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**New director of Schuylkill IU 29 vows to help local students, districts**



Anthony Serafini took over as the new executive director at the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 starting in Sept. 2025, pictured, Thursday, Jan 22, 2026. (MATTHEW PERSCHALL/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR)

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**MAR LIN** — The new director of the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 wants to take innovative approaches to serving students and school systems in Schuylkill County.

Anthony Serafini, of Elysburg, was hired last year to be the IU's new executive director, a position that was vacant for over two years following the resignation of Gregory S. Koons.

Serafini, 41, spent 16 years at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit 16 as a special education teacher, an educational consultant and a special education

programs supervisor, overseeing classroom programming for students with complex support needs.

He was also a director of professional development, training and consultation, overseeing school improvement initiatives.

“I’ve pretty much been involved in almost everything you can possibly imagine that comes up in terms of supporting school districts and intermediate units,” he said, “so I have a pretty well-rounded, diverse set of experiences and am always involved in something new.”

Serafini — who officially began his new role on Sept. 15, 2025 — said he had previously worked with the Schuylkill IU to support professional development opportunities for school superintendents in the region. He said he always felt “very much at home” with local administrators.



Executive Director Anthony Serafini speaks about his education experience and the ideas he’s bringing to the job while Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29 in Mar Lin, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026. (MATTHEW PERSCHALL/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR)

“It just seemed to be a good fit for us over time,” he said. “I always felt that if there was ever a place that I would give up what I had at CSIU to take on a new role, Schuylkill County would be one of the areas.”

Serafini holds a bachelor's degree in speech pathology and audiology and a master's degree in exceptionalities/special education from Bloomsburg University; and a doctorate in education administration from Immaculata University.

### **Innovative ideas**

Serafini prides himself on being a big-picture thinker, never afraid to try new methods to reach desired educational goals.

“I tend to think about things a little bit differently than your typical school administrator,” Serafini said. “The one thing that I try to instill upon anyone that I work with is essentially that just because something’s been done a certain way doesn’t mean that’s the way it’ll always be done.

“And just because we haven’t had something in this region or in this organization doesn’t mean that we can’t have it. It just means that maybe we haven’t looked at it in a way that has allowed us to do so.”

At CSIU, Serafini said, he helped develop new, innovative ideas and approaches for students and educators, and always felt that they could also benefit a region like Schuylkill County.

Serafini said he takes a cost-efficient, collaborative approach to addressing challenges facing local school systems. While he knows that different communities naturally have different resources available to them, he wants to ensure that students across the region have access to similar opportunities.

“We work with our local school districts to try to ensure that if they’re pursuing a specific curriculum product or supplemental material or professional development opportunity, that those opportunities are available to any of the districts in our region,” he said. “By bringing these shared opportunities to the region, we can better train our teachers, better equip our classrooms and schools, so that students from each particular district have similar experiences regardless of where it is that they’re coming from.”

Serafini encourages school districts to pursue purchases of products and services collectively, not independently, as they can drive down costs as part of a larger group. He takes the same approach for professional development opportunities,

bringing in repeat providers and reusing venues for training events and programs.

Serafini wants to continue the IU's commitment to providing high-level special education services and support, while balancing the sometimes limited number of resources available to individual districts.

"It's my intent to continue to offer those programs, but to expand those programs to continue to meet the needs of our educational community," he said. "Many of our districts don't necessarily have space to expand, and when they're faced with limitations as to what they can provide in their district, if they can't do it, that's where we come in.

"Listening to the needs of our districts is something that's very important to me. It's something that I talk to with our superintendents frequently."

Serafini praised the way local school leaders collaborate and help one another. He said one of his biggest goals over his tenure is to continue to build relationships with administrators and be a better support to the community.

"The group of superintendents that I currently work with seems to be a tight-knit group," he said. "... As educational leaders, we can't go about things thinking that we know the answer to everything, and it's important to be able to rely on other people who have been down that road before or who have a different set of experiences or a different level of expertise in a different area."

Serafini acknowledged that the nationwide shortage of teachers will present a challenge for years to come. He said it's important to come up with a plan to sufficiently staff schools and programs, especially with the growing number of educators retiring or leaving for other professions.

"Whether it be general education teachers, special education teachers, school administrators or education support staff like paraeducators, there's definitely a decrease in the number of people who are entering the field," he said.

Serafini believes his "unique set of experiences" will help the IU rebuild the teacher pipeline. In his previous role at CSIU, he was heavily involved in recruiting high school students to the teaching profession.

He praised the work of administrators, staff and faculty members at the Schuylkill IU, including Assistant Executive Director Shannon Brennan, who led

the IU during the two-year period before Serafini's hire. The two had worked together as part of a regional superintendents' group while Serafini was still at CSIU.

He described the people at IU 29 as very welcoming and passionate about their work.

“It takes a very special kind of person to work in this world,” he said, “and the people in this organization are genuinely passionate about the work that they do and supporting students — not only students with disabilities, but students in general.”