



educational excellence through leadership, partnership, and innovation

Executive Director's Report

February 25, 2016

Spotlight

Technology Services

The technology services team works collaboratively with the member school districts and other Intermediate Units to support the teaching, learning and research of staff and students. As schools expand their use of technology, the CAIU has been able to establish a comprehensive range of services and offerings. The team provides cost effective solutions through a consortium model and enables districts to have quick access to staff specialized in the areas of instructional technology, network infrastructure, technology planning, as well as specific computerized systems such as Learning Management systems, student information systems, online testing and webinar software.

The CAIU technology team strives to cultivate innovation and researches new ideas and practices that can be used effectively in education. Currently, technology and curriculum staff members are working with robots as a remote communication tool. Specifically, they are researching and examining the use of robots for homebound instruction.

In an effort to contain costs and increase opportunities for the growth of technology in schools that will have a positive impact on student achievement, school districts in the CAIU footprint have established a fiber connection from their district back to the CAIU to form a Regional Wide Area Network (RWAN). This high speed telecommunication connection enables the consortium to be able to offer a wide variety of modern technology solutions. Some of the solutions that utilize this connection are Internet access, Internet Content filtering, backup services, server hosting, phone systems, wireless management, firewall, SPAM filtering, message archiving, and video streaming solutions. As technology continues to grow and districts embrace hybrid learning to best meet the needs of their students, we have seen an increase in use of the CAIU services to create a regional support structure as schools focus on the staff and students in the classroom.

NEWS

Variety-the Children's Charity – "My Bike" Program



receive their bike in the near future. More information about the "My Bike" program can be found at <http://www.varietypittsburgh.org/>.

Variety-the Children's Charity provides children with disabilities unique programs, experiences, and equipment, so they may live life to the fullest. Specifically, Variety's "My Bike" Program provides adaptive bikes individually customized to eligible children with disabilities. The CAIU hosted Charlie LaVallee, CEO of Variety Pittsburgh, and his team on February 11th as seven children from the south central Pennsylvania area were presented with their bikes. As you can imagine, there was lots of excitement from both the children and their families. After the presentation, eight additional children came to the CAIU for a bike fitting. They will



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Student Services

Preschool/Early Intervention

- The Andrew's Gift Foundation and the CAIU Early Intervention Program are partnering in an effort to develop a literacy-focused preschool program for children with autism. The challenges that accompany autism put this group of children at risk for poor literacy outcomes. The literacy project will bring evidence-based practices to support the development of early literacy to this population of children. We will incorporate technology in an intentional manner, embedding both low-tech and high-tech supports to address the learning goals established for individual children. The use of developmentally appropriate software helps provide differentiation, allows children to work at their own pace and guides them to success. Andrew's Gift awarded the EI Program an \$18,170.16 grant to provide hardware, software and staff training for the Willow Mill Preschool site.
- Across the state, Intermediate Units are reaching out to Legislators to educate them about the work we do and the need for an increase in early intervention funding. The CAIU Preschool Program has invited local Legislators to the Delbrook Preschool on March 4 and March 11 for a short presentation and discussion about early intervention. They will also have the opportunity to visit three specialized preschool classrooms.

Pupil Services/Hospital/Diakon

- The Four Diamond Psychosocial Focus Group invited our teachers at Hershey Medical Center to be a part of their evening discussion groups. There were three designated groups including; families who are in active treatment with their child, families who have children who are off-treatment/survivors and the final group, families who are in the bereaved group, having lost a child.
- Children's Miracle Network has again extended their invitation and funds to have our teachers work with students in Hershey Medical Center and the Rehabilitation Center over the summer.
- The Chesapeake Watershed Foundation has extended their grant for our students at the Diakon Wilderness Center. Our teachers, along with the Diakon staff, will be taking these students on an expedition in April.

Hill Top Academy

- Enrollment: 123 with 4 referrals
- February 2nd was the 100th day of school this year. To acknowledge this milestone and make it even more significant, Hill Top Academy staff and students organized a canned food drive. Our goal was to collect 100 cans of food to donate to New Hope Ministries. We are proud to say we exceeded this goal and collected 189 cans of food!
- Hill Top Academy continues to partner with Messiah College to host interns from their Special Education Teacher Prep program. For the spring semester we have welcomed six new interns to Hill Top Academy.
- Our students at Hill Top Academy as well as those students in the CAIU district classrooms have just completed their second round of diagnostic assessments with the iREADY, remediation program in reading and math. Data is being collected to be incorporated in present levels in each student's IEP.

Transition Services

- Two of our interns at Project SEARCH have been offered jobs, one at Hershey Medical Center and one at Central Penn College. Two other interns have interviews this coming week as well. The Project SEARCH Assessment/Interview Day has been scheduled for February 29 at which time the interview team will make recommendations for the 2016-17



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Project SEARCH internships. One of our MDS students has completed an application and will be interviewing for an internship.

- Our Transition Coordinator, Melissa Bialas, has begun the 'Discovery Process' with one of the students in our Autism support class at Hershey Middle School. 'Discovery' is the first step in the customized employment process. The focus is on the job seeker and learning about his/her strengths, interests, talents, goals, and conditions for success. In Discovery, information is gathered through a series of interviews, activities, and observations. Information is collected from the job seeker, family, friends, teachers, and neighbors. A CAIU certified Discovery coach helps the team determine student interests, talents, preferred environments, and activities. Current skills and levels of performance will be defined resulting in effective strategies and ideal working conditions and environments.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Classrooms

- Both students in our high school class have begun successful work experiences at Target doing inventory and stocking tasks.
- The Deaf/Hard of Hearing students in the classroom at Susquehanna Township Middle School have many reasons to celebrate cultural diversity this year! At the beginning of the school year, they studied success stories of many deaf role models from all walks of life (past and present). Within the first few months of school, they realized that they, too, had a lot to celebrate among themselves. Of the five students in the classroom, only two of them are native to this country! Students have taken time to learn, understand, and respect each other's unique personalities, which are deeply rooted in a variety of heritages. Learning and respecting each other has taught the students a lot about building good character traits, which directly supports the school district's positive behavior efforts that are being strongly advocated throughout the school.

Data Systems

Making Connections Training

- On Thursday, January 28th, CAIU hosted 19 district and building administrators for the first session of the *Making Connections 1, 2, 3* training series, *Data Collection & SPP*. Cindy Gavazzi, Student Services Data Systems Supervisor, led attendees through activities designed to highlight the importance of administrator involvement in data governance.
- On Thursday February 11th, Sarah Kelly and Sue Voigt from Curriculum Services hosted 26 teachers, coaches, and administrators for *Making Connections Session 2*. The session focused on how districts and buildings can create a data culture, how to run a data meeting, the types of assessments (benchmark, diagnostic, summative and formative), data reports that are provided by PDE (PVAAS, eMetric, and CDTs) and how to ask probing questions to determine the root cause of their issues or concerns.

Autism Support

- The Hershey MS Autism Support class team, through the Project Max initiative, has incorporated more evidence based teaching strategies. This month the focus was on using graphic organizers to support instruction and the students have responded well.
- One of the students in our middle school class was recently fitted for an adaptive bike as part of the My Bike program. He and his family were extremely proud and happy. He should be receiving his new bike in the next six weeks.
- A Competent Learner Model parent training was held on February 2. The attendees learned much about the CLM approach and asked questions about implementing the strategies at home.



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NOTIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES

- Attended the monthly PAIU Executive Directors' meeting.
- Met with CAEA Leadership along with Alicia McDonald and Theresa Kinsinger.
- Participated in the United Way Central Region's Education Task Force meeting.
- Met with Harrisburg SD Administration and CPAVTS Director to discuss options for Harrisburg students attending CPAVTS.
- Met with DCTS administration, superintendents and Dr. Lee Burket, PDE Bureau of Career & Technical Education, to review the process for school districts to join the current consortium.

Upcoming CAIU Events

CAIU Regional Computer Fair – Registration is now open for the 2016 Regional Computer Fair at the Capital Area Intermediate Unit. The event will be held on Monday, March 14, 2016 and will showcase both Middle and High School student products/projects created using technology. The Computer Fair is an annual event where students from our districts submit projects in the categories of: Animation, Computer Fair Logo, Digital Movie, Graphic Design, Programming, and Web Page Design. While judging of the projects is being completed, students have the opportunity to attend technology sessions on a variety of topics. The winners of the CAIU Regional Computer Fair will advance to the statewide competition on May 24th and 25th at Dickinson College in Carlisle and compete against students from across Pennsylvania. Please visit the site for details: <http://www.caiu.org/services/technology/computer-fair.aspx>.

The Top 5 Legal Issues related to Educational Technology in our Schools – Attorney Mark Walz from Sweet, Stevens, Katz, and Williams Law Firm will be presenting a session entitled, "The Top 5 Legal Issues related to Educational Technology in our Schools" on Tuesday, March 8 for interested school leaders in our region. The session will run between 8:30-11:00 a.m. at the Capital Area Intermediate Unit.

Other Events:

PDE Data Summit – May 22 – 25, 2016 at Hershey Lodge & Convention Center

A special registration rate of \$150 is being offered for superintendents and school administrators, which covers Sunday night dinner and all Monday sessions. This does not include overnight accommodations. Please visit <http://www.cvent.com/events/2016-pde-data-summit/event-summary-ba45c9f6f56547978bbe1108957c4066.aspx> to register.