



educational excellence through leadership, partnership, and innovation

Executive Director's Report October 26, 2017

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Diagnostic Class

Located at the Hill Top Academy, this K-12, short-term (45 day), comprehensive program is designed to assess students' needs in a wide range of areas in order to determine the most appropriate longer-term placement that best suits each student. During this placement, students receive academic, psychological, physical and social assessments to best determine future placement. Upon completion of this intensive program, an extensive evaluation/reevaluation report, including recommendations for IEP development and an appropriate school placement, are provided to the district and family.

NEWS

Curriculum Services

Tinker Expo

Over 100 individuals gathered at the CAIU on October 17, 2017 to learn about the latest in maker movement inspired products and projects supporting the 4 C's in education: creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

The 2017 Tinker Expo offered attendees ten breakout sessions to include the following:

- Bicycle-Electric Generator Demo by Reach Charter School
- Digital Manipulatives with STMath
- STEM on Wheels
- Mobile STEM Labs for All Ages – and All Teachers
- Invention land & IU 1's Fab Lab
- Building a Backup Shuttle Climate Control Unit with Lunar Dynamics
- Create Digital Media and Art with Canva
- Making a MakeBox with Katapult Labs
- How Sweet It Is! Flying Drones by Coding
- Raspberry Pi and Electronics – Internet of Things thru making
- Google Cardboards with an introduction to Virtual Reality
- BreakoutEDU



Along with the breakout sessions, an exploration area featured eleven stations where participants could learn more about tools to support effective instruction. In addition to the indoor events of the day, four food truck vendors were available outside for both CAIU employees and attendees of the Tinker Expo.



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Student Services

Hill Top Academy

- Hill Top Academy (HTA) hosted their first ever Back-to-School Night on October 5th. Over 90 family members enjoyed the evening by touring the building and meeting with classroom staff.
- Through the efforts of HTA Physical Education teacher, Cheryl Park, HTA students logged enough miles to become a “Billion Mile Grant” winner. Grant money will go to support walking and running physical education activities at HTA.
- On October 11th, HTA hosted the Student Services Director and Principal from Westmoreland IU #7. Discussion topics included PBIS best practices, effective use of CAOLA online courses and the continuum of Emotional Support (ES) classrooms at HTA.
- Hill Top Academy applied and won the highly competitive Department of Education’s Bureau of Special Education Performance Grant. The 2017-2018 grant award of \$7,500 will go toward the establishment of parent and community partnerships.
- The addition of the delayed egress doors has had a positive impact on the school environment and safety, greatly reducing student elopement and providing staff with an extra few seconds to be able to implement interventions with students.
- All Hill Top Academy staff participated in teambuilding activities, as part of School-wide Positive Behavior Support, at Pinchot Park for the first Act 80 ½-day event this year.
- During the first month of school, HTA students collectively earned over 16,000 LABS loot bucks. LABS loot is Hill Top’s PBIS currency, earned for showing **L** (Learn First), **A** (Act responsibly), **B** (Be your best self), **S** (Show safe actions) behaviors. LABS loot earns students classroom incentives, school-wide assemblies and random Friday prize drawings.

Loysville Youth Development Center

- The current population is 105 residents, which includes 24 new residents admitted in September and 10 who were released. Nineteen of the 105 students, 18% of the population, already have their GED or High School Diploma when they arrived but will attend school. Two more students passed the GED in September.
- Jim Towse, PDE advisor, was at Loysville to visit and see the program on September 22nd.
- Teachers have been trained and are using the Collins Writing model to encourage writing and help students with recall. They were invited to participate in the new and improved version of Collins Writing that is focused on Vocational schools. John Collins along with his team of trainers conducted a two-day training for staff. Staff will receive ongoing support and data collection on student growth throughout the school year. Two trainers will return in January to work with teachers individually.
- NetSupport software was added to the network system at Loysville. This will help keep track of student activity on the network and provide staff with specific oversight tools to ensure safety and restrict internet access.

Capital Area Mental health Program (CAMhP)

- CAMhP is looking to extend its classroom capacity for elementary school level students. Currently, we have grades 3-5 at Iron Forge Elementary but want to continue those services K-5 with the students who need additional services at Hill Top Academy.

Educational Coaches

- The coaches are in the planning process to offer continued professional development in the following areas:
 - Transition assessments for students beyond graduation
 - Communication approaches with districts, families, and agencies



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- Use of data (academic and behavior) to impact better instruction and behavioral approaches
- Functional curriculum to support our standards-based curriculum

Preschool Early Intervention

- Karen Wronski, Preschool SLP, is conducting a Hanen fall parent class, “More than Words”. Families participate in eight evening classes in addition to some home visits. More Than Words provides parent training for parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Four families are participating in the Parent Fluency Training group with Sharon Kello, Preschool SLP. This group provides training for parents in the nature of stuttering, risk factors, and strategies that can be used to promote more fluent speech at home. Four evening parent sessions are offered in this training. These programs provides parents with the teaching tools and strategies they need to help their children reach their full communication potential.
- Earlier this month, Preschool staff began their Professional Learning Communities. Approximately 50 preschool staff participated in seven different PLCs ranging from social-emotional development, community outreach and training, increasing parental involvement, participation, competent learner model, feeding and self-regulation. Staff developed action plans and goals to focus on throughout the year. Staff will share their work with all preschool staff on May 24th as part of their professional development.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

- The OT/PT department hosted a daylong seminar on Interoception, the eighth sensory system. Interoception is an important sensory system that helps us to “feel” body signals like tense muscles, speeding heart, hot cheeks, and growling stomachs. Many individuals with autism have difficulty accurately identifying these cues and therefore have difficulty controlling how they feel, but we can support their skill development through our educational programming. This seminar is open to all educational staff and parents in our area.
- Sue West MS, OTR/L collaborated with Elizabethtown College professors and occupational therapy students on a research project at Hill Top Academy last spring. The goal of the research study was to collect information on strategies that can successfully help students to understand their internal senses called interoception. Because of the project, Ms. West has expanded her repertoire of strategies to teach students at Hill Top self-regulation skills. Ms. West also co-presented about the study with the researchers from Elizabethtown College at the recent POTA conference in State College. The presentation was called: “Interoception, the Eighth Sense: Pilot Intervention Efficacy Study for School-Aged Children with Autism.”

Speech

The speech clinicians in the school age department have experienced a very busy beginning of the year. The department received a number of late requests to cover longer term leaves for district speech clinicians, so the IU team pulled together to rearrange schedules and provide the additional support to the districts. This effort was challenging, but we believe that the districts were very grateful for the effort.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- The classrooms at Susquehanna Township high school, middle school, and the elementary class at Conewago are teaming up to have their students collaborate on various activities. The idea helps students of varying ages with hearing impairments to meet and work together on team building activities and mentorship. The idea was developed by classroom teachers Ashley Adams, Deb Genet, and Jennifer McLaughlin. In addition, the classes are planning a



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number of educational trip experiences that will focus on both curricular connections at the elementary and transition opportunities for our secondary students.

Equitable Participation

- Meg Makuch is planning to meet with the principals of the non-public schools that we serve through equitable participation on November 2nd to discuss the services that we provide. One major change that they will learn about is that recently the Diocese agreed to give professional development credit to private school teachers for participating in the training opportunities that we provide to them through workshops, learning networks, and training sessions that are frequently presented in the schools. We hope that this helps us reach more teachers with presentations about the best practices in teaching.

Technology Services

The Technology Advisory Council (TAC) has embarked on a training and collaboration initiative this year so that districts are successful. On Thursday, October 12th, the Technology Advisory Council hosted a JAMF training at the CAIU. JAMF is a management system for supporting Apple devices. Districts have environments with multiple types of technology devices and the proper management system is critical to ensure the devices are successful in the classroom. Cumberland Valley and Greenwood School District led the training and discussed different configurations and best practices. Districts were very collaborative and learned a lot from the presenters as well as from each other.

NOTIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES

- Attended the PAIU Central Region Executive Directors' meeting
- Attended the monthly PAIU Executive Directors' meeting
- Attended the Back to School Night at Hill Top Academy
- Attended Harrisburg SD Chief Recovery Officer Meeting and Academic, Instruction, and Student Services Board Committee Meeting
- Attended United Way Core Solutions Partners Meeting
- Attended the Regional Federal Programs Meeting conducted by the PDE Division of Federal Programs
- Visited staff and students at Hill Top Academy

SAVE THE DATE:

- On November 8th, the Preschool Program will be hosting its first **Social Emotional Literacy Night** at the CAIU from **4:30 – 7:00 p.m.** Children will have opportunities to engage in hands-on activities related to social-emotional development and families will be provided with additional extension activities to take home. A Scholastic Book Fair with a focus on social-emotional books will also be provided. Community partners such as Capital Area Head Start and Pinnacle Health's Infant Development Program will also participate in this event. All CAIU preschool children, staff, and their families as well as children receiving early intervention services in the Infant/Toddler program and at Capital Area Head Start are invited.