

House Education Committee

Testimony on Intermediate Units

Thursday, March 3, 2011



Dr. Michael Thew, Executive Director, Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12

Dr. Barry Galasso, Executive Director, Bucks County Schools Intermediate Unit #22

Dr. Cynthia Burkhart, Executive Director, Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit #13

Chairman Clymer, Chairman Roebuck and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Dr. Michael Thew. I am the Executive Director of Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12, serving Adams, Franklin and York counties. I am here this morning in my capacity as President of the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU). PAIU is a non-profit organization comprised of the executive directors of Pennsylvania's 29 intermediate units. The executive directors use PAIU as a mechanism for educational and operational collaboration across IU boundaries; for leveraging partnerships and resources to expand high quality services to students, schools and communities; to facilitate communication to school and community leaders on matters of educational practice and public policy; and as a liaison with policymakers in the General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and other state agencies.

On behalf of the commonwealth's intermediate units, I want to thank you for inviting us to participate in this morning's hearing. As regional education service agencies, we are committed first and foremost to students and their success. As you will hear this morning, IUs deliver a wide range of services and supports to students, families and schools - all with the goal of raising student achievement everywhere in our state. As executive directors, in partnership with our local IU boards of directors, we run our organizations with a strong and proud commitment to being accountable for results and transparent in our operations. I commend you for holding this hearing today.

My role this morning is to introduce to you two of my colleagues who will provide testimony on behalf of PAIU. With me this morning is Dr. Barry Galasso, Executive Director of Bucks County Intermediate Unit 22. Dr. Galasso has over 40 years of experience in the field of education. His experience includes leadership and teaching at all levels of the education spectrum including teacher, principal and superintendent. He also served as the Executive Director of The New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA). Dr. Galasso joined IU #22 in 2007. He received his Doctorate in Education from Rutgers University.

Also with us this morning is Dr. Cynthia Burkhart, Executive Director of the Lancaster Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13. Dr. Burkhart has nearly 30 years of experience in education. She has served as a teacher, department chairperson, building principal, district assistant superintendent, and adjunct professor. Dr. Burkhart joined IU 13 in 2004 as the Assistant Executive Director and Instructional Services Director, and was appointed as the Executive Director in 2008. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Allegheny College, and her doctoral degree from Penn State.

Mr. Chairman, I will be happy to stay and help respond to questions following the testimony. Thank you again for having us here this morning. Dr. Galasso will speak first.

Chairman Clymer, Chairman Roebuck and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Dr. Barry Galasso, Executive Director of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, and secretary of the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units. As Dr. Thew has already mentioned, I will be sharing our testimony today with Dr. Cynthia Burkhart, Executive Director of the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit. I want to add my thanks to the committee for inviting PAIU to testify on the work of intermediate units and the important issues of transparency and accountability.

In our testimony this morning, we will provide you with a brief overview of the work of intermediate units, explain how intermediate units are governed and funded, list for you the ways in which the funding and work of intermediate units are public, accountable and transparent, and offer our ideas on additional ways to improve that transparency and further assure the public that their tax dollars are being well spent.

When intermediate units were created by the General Assembly in 1971 they were designed as regional educational service agencies to achieve economies of scale in the provision of services to school districts and other educational entities. In 1996, the legislature cut the IU state subsidy in half resulting in an increased need for IUs to generate revenues by delivering quality services to their member districts. Across the state, IUs developed varying services which were based on the specific needs of their member districts.

The message from the state to intermediate units was clear: while IUs have an important role to play as regional education service agencies, IUs need to prove their value to their customers and rely less on the state for their operational funding. Intermediate units have responded to that challenge – often in ways that can vary significantly from one IU to another – and re-engineered their organizations and role in the educational system in Pennsylvania.

In 2011, intermediate units are entrepreneurial, highly skilled, technology-rich and agile providers of cost-effective instructional and operational services to school districts, charter schools and over 2,400 non-public and private schools. Additionally, intermediate units are direct providers of quality instruction to over 50,000 Pennsylvania students.

Twenty-seven (27) of Pennsylvania's 29 intermediate units are regional service agencies. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school districts serve as their own intermediate unit. Intermediate units are staffed by 8,500 certified educators and professionals who know and serve our schools in every corner of the commonwealth.

Intermediate units have taken our traditional role of achieving regional economies of scale to far more sophisticated, widespread and successful leveraging of savings and efficiencies for schools. This helps more taxpayer dollars reach classrooms and delivers quality services that raise student achievement. Today, intermediate unit leadership includes:

- Operating health insurance, energy, transportation and other purchasing consortia that deliver rates well below what districts and schools can secure on their own;
- Providing “back office” administrative services alleviating schools of costs for such things as payroll and business office operations, and administrator salaries;
- Delivering affordable high quality instructional supports including teacher and principal training in the use of data and technology to improve student learning;
- Harnessing the power of our new statewide high speed broadband network – PAIUnet – to deliver a wealth of affordable services, resources and online instruction to schools and students.

Intermediate units believe that all students should have great schools and educational opportunities that support their achievement. Intermediate units use their expertise in designing instructional programs and utilizing new technologies to meet the unique needs of students and their families and to create and expand educational options and opportunities. IUs today deliver online instructional opportunities for students that range from a supplement to a school’s curriculum to a full course of study. We operate specialized programs and schools for students with unique learning needs and for students who are disruptive and need an alternative educational setting. And IUs are a major provider of high-quality early childhood education programs.

As established in the Pennsylvania School Code, each intermediate unit is governed by a board of directors comprised of elected school board members from the school districts within the intermediate unit boundaries. Like school boards, IU boards are the decision making body for IU policies, personnel matters and budgets. At Bucks County IU, we have a board of directors comprised of 13 elected school board members from each of our 13 member school districts. At Dr. Burkhart’s IU in Lancaster-Lebanon, she has a 22 member board from each of her 22 member districts.

In addition to its board of directors, each IU has additional layers of accountability if not governance. The School Code requires each IU to convene regularly with the superintendents of the districts within the IU as formal advisory boards. After IU boards approve IU general operating budgets, those budgets then must be approved by a majority of elected school boards of IU member districts before the approved budget can be sent to PDE.

While the governance structure is the same across intermediate units, our 29 IUs have many differences. Again, as established in the School Code, some IUs are single county IUs, some are comprised of parts of several counties across a large geographic territory. IUs also differ in the number of schools and students within their boundaries, the size of their operating budgets and the variety of revenue sources. IUs can also vary in their capacity to deliver services and supports to schools. To help close this capacity gap, IU Executive Directors are working to ensure that IUs everywhere can support schools and students everywhere by collaborating in the delivery of services via PAIUnet and across IU boundaries.

We have provided each member of the committee a copy of a document that we have just completed entitled “Pennsylvania Intermediate Units: Delivering 21st Century Education Solutions for Students, Schools, Communities and the Commonwealth.” This document presents the work intermediate units are doing today to support teaching and learning in our school districts, charter schools and non-public schools. Each section in the attached document includes a “PAIU Action Agenda” that details the future work to which intermediate units are committed.

I will now turn our testimony over to Dr. Cynthia Burkhart, Executive Director of the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit.

Thank you Barry, and thank you to the members of the committee for the privilege of testifying this morning.

I will use my time to explain to you how intermediate units are funded, and to describe the existing reporting, accountability and transparency requirements for that funding.

Overall, IU revenue sources can be placed in to three categories: entrepreneurial activity, major state and federal funding streams, and Pennsylvania Department of Education special projects funding. IU funding is one area where there is variation from one IU to another – so I will do my best to give you as clear a picture as I can, recognizing the differences within these three categories that can exist across IUs.

Entrepreneurial Activities

Entrepreneurial activities put more simply are certain educational services that many IUs offer their customers – school districts, charter schools, non-public schools and occasionally other community agencies and local governments – on a fee for service basis. These are typically unique or custom-designed services requested by a school for such things as teacher professional development, information technology support, or administrative services. The level of entrepreneurial activity does vary significantly across IUs.

Major Funding Streams

There are five major state and federal funding streams that generate significant sources of revenue for all IUs.

Intermediate Unit General Operating Subsidy

The state budget includes a line item for Intermediate Units that provides a relatively small subsidy for general intermediate unit operations. In the current fiscal year, that appropriation is \$4.7 million. The current funding level is 24% less than in 2002 and 57% less than in 1995. These general IU operating funds come to IUs as an allocation based on a formula in the school code, and are to be used by IUs in the delivery of core services to schools as prescribed by the school code. The expenditure of these funds is included in IU Annual Financial Reports which are filed with PDE, and are audited annually by local auditing firms and bi-annually by the Auditor General. IU budgets, annual financial reports, local audits and Auditor General audits are all public documents.

Special Education Core Services

The special education line item in the state budget includes approximately \$50 million for what is known as Core Services funding. These dollars (which range from approximately \$880,000 to \$2.9 million per IU) flow to IUs for the delivery of educational services to students with special needs. Annual PDE fiscal guidelines along with an IU application approved by PDE serve as the terms and conditions of IUs receiving Core services funding. IUs report annually to PDE on the use of these dollars, and expenditures are audited annually by local auditors, bi-annually by the Auditor General and reviewed periodically by PDE's Bureau of Special Education. All applications, reports and audits associated with Core services are public documents.

IDEA

Pennsylvania receives approximately \$350 million of federal IDEA funds. PDE allocates these funds by sending them to intermediate units, who then pass through most of these funds to school districts. IUs serve as PDE's oversight and monitoring apparatus for these federal funds. A portion of federal IDEA funds stay with intermediate units. These are known as Training and Consultation funds and are used by IUs to support schools in the delivery of their special education programs. PDE and IUs enter into contracts for federal IDEA funds the use of which are governed by federal law, regulations and guidelines. IUs provide PDE with quarterly cash reconciliations, and a final expenditure report. IDEA funds are subject to annual local and annual single audits by local auditors, and periodic reviews by PDE's Bureau of Special Education. All contracts, reports, and audits are public documents.

Early Intervention

Many intermediate units are the lead Early Intervention agencies in their region delivering services to pre-schoolers with disabilities. The lead Early Intervention agencies are known as MAWA holders (Mutually Agreed Upon Written Agreement). Approximately \$219 million in state and federal early intervention funds flow to MAWA holders to provide services to pre-schoolers with disabilities. MAWA holders enter in to contract with PDE for these funds, the use of which are governed by state and federal law and guidelines issued by PDE. MAWA holders are required to submit to PDE annual budgets, quarterly reconciliation reports, quarterly data reports, and a final expenditure report. MAWA holders are subject to annual local audits, bi-annual Auditor General Audits and annual verification by PDE's Office of Child Development and Early Learning. All contracts, reports and audits are public documents.

Act 89 Non-public School Services

All IUs receive Act 89 funding to deliver services to students enrolled in non-public schools. The current state budget provides \$88 million in Act 89 funding. PDE allocates these funds (less an amount withheld by PDE for administrative use in Harrisburg) to IUs based on an annual child count of students attending the non-public schools in each IU. IU expenditures of these funds are reported in IU Annual Financial Reports which are submitted to PDE. Act 89 funds are subject to annual local audits and bi-annual Auditor General audits. All annual financial reports and audits are public documents.

Special Projects Funding

The third category of revenue is PDE special projects funding. Across multiple state Administrations, PDE has often turned to intermediate units to assist in the rollout and implementation of programs funded in the annual state budget passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor. An example of PDE special projects funding at the Lancaster Lebanon IU is the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) project. PVAAS is a statistical analysis of the PSSA assessment data. PSSA data provides achievement results; PVAAS data provides student growth data- two very different, but important data points that must be used together to determine a schools' impact on student learning. This project was originally supported in 2002 by then Secretary of Education Charles Zogby, and continues to be supported by PDE today.

At the request of PDE, IU 13 submitted a project proposal to the Department which included the scope of work, resources required, timelines and deliverables. As a result, IU 13 receives funding for five full time employees (one support/four professional) who are charged with developing the skills of IU staff across the commonwealth; the design and coordination of professional development for districts, charter

schools and CTCs; and technical assistance, support materials, and web resources on the use and implementation of PVAAS data at the district, school, grade and student levels. This team works with every IU in the state to assist them to work with their schools in the appropriate use of this powerful data. Over 16,000 teachers, district and building administrators, board members, higher education, and statewide organizations have been trained in the use of PVAAS data. As of last week, PVAAS student growth data is available to the public via a new user-friendly web site.

I believe there are at least two reasons PDE turns to intermediate units for these special projects. Funds appropriated in annual state budget are often intended to support school based activity in the school year that starts just two months after the state budget passes. By entering into Intergovernmental Agreements with IUs, PDE is able to get the funding and program up in schools very quickly. Additionally, by taking advantage of intermediate unit administrative capacity and educational expertise that PDE might not have, PDE is able to keep its compliment and operational costs down.

Special projects funding flows to IUs under contracts with PDE or executed grant agreements, and carries with it the same reporting, accountability and transparency as the other funding streams that flow to and through IUs.

Dr. Galasso will now provide some closing remarks.

As you have heard, the funds that flow from PDE to IUs come under executed contracts that are publicly available and that include specific performance expectations and measures and include reporting requirements, are audited annually, and are included in IU budgets that are approved by IU board of directors comprised of elected school board members from IU member districts.

The Committee has been kind enough to share with us draft language for legislation requiring reporting on subsidies and funds IUs receive from the commonwealth. We have several comments about the draft:

- 1) As we have described in our testimony, most of the information that is proposed to be in this new report is already publicly available information. We support accountability, public disclosure and transparency and we will gladly work with the Committee and PDE to ensure that transparency is complete. We hope, however, that in the name of those shared objectives we are not subject to redundant and overly burdensome reporting requirements. IUs are working hard to keep our own costs down and have proven to be a mechanism for helping districts keep their costs down. Redundant and overly burdensome reporting would work counter to these efforts.
- 2) To the extent to which the proposed legislation provides for reporting of information currently not publicly available – to a certain extent that is the case with reporting employees and contractors

covered under state contracts – we would be happy to work with PDE and the Committee to find an efficient way to ensure that information is available;

- 3) PDE is, or can be, the source of many of the information elements referenced in the draft legislation since they are party to the contracts with IUs. Ensuring transparency in contracting with IUs should be a shared responsibility between PDE and IUs.
- 4) The requirement for reporting on the selection process used for entering in to an agreement with an IU would need to come from PDE, not IUs. PDE makes those decisions.
- 5) We support posting IU Annual Financial Reports on the PDE web site, and frankly are not quite sure why that does not happen now.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you this morning. Dr. Thew, Dr. Burkhardt and I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Intermediate Unit Major Subsidies and Allocations Received

The administration of the Programs listed includes assurance of compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including compliance with program-specific programmatic and fiscal guidelines, Five Year Master Agreement/Program Specific terms and conditions, as well as applicable EDGAR regulations, GEPA regulations, and OMB circulars.

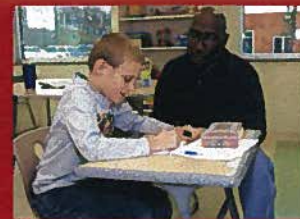
Program Name		IU General Operating and Capital Subsidy	Special Education CORE	IDEA-B, Section 611	Early Intervention MAWA	Act 89 Nonpublic Auxiliary Services	Special Projects
Funding Source		State	State	Federal Pass-thru	State & Federal	State	State/Federal
Authorization		Subsidy	Allocation	Grant Agreement	Grant Agreement	Allocation	Contract or Purchase Order
Purpose		Provide IUs with a small subsidy to support operations	Provide for the administration of special education services within the intermediate unit	Provide special education services for students with IEPs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass-thru funds • Direct Services • Training & Consulting 	Provide supports and services to preschoolers with disabilities three to five years of age	Provide remedial services and other services to eligible pupils enrolled in qualified nonpublic schools	Carry out various initiatives of PDE
Performance Expectations		Provide a program of services as outlined in Sec. 914-A of school code	Provide services under the fiscal guidelines set forth by PDE	Perform subrecipient monitoring of member district compliance with IDEA regulations	Responsibility to carry out services under OCDEL guidelines and IDEA regulations	To coordinate and provide staff serving students in compliance with Act 89 guidelines	Project Specific
Reporting	Application	X		X	X		X
	Budget	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Quarterly Fiscal			X	X		X
	Annual Fiscal	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monitoring	Local Audit	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Single Audit			X	X-Federal Funds		X-Federal Funds
	AG Audit	X	X		X-State Funds	X	X-State Funds

Pennsylvania Intermediate Units:



**Delivering 21st Century Education Solutions for
Students, Schools, Communities and the
Commonwealth**

February 2011



Intermediate Unit FAST FACTS

- ▶ **Twenty-seven (27) of Pennsylvania's 29 intermediate units are regional education service agencies. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school districts serve as their own intermediate unit.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units provide cost-effective instructional and operational services to school districts, charter schools and over 2,400 non-public schools.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units provide direct instruction to over 50,000 students.**
- ▶ **All 27 regional IUs are generating operational savings for their member districts by leading joint purchasing efforts for high cost items like health insurance and energy, or providing consolidated back office administrative supports schools.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units are reducing school district costs for a wide range of instructional support services. In the last three years alone, districts have turned to nearly every IU to deliver consolidated services that districts previously provided on their own.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units are staffed by 8,500 certified educators and professionals who know and serve our schools in every corner of the commonwealth.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units use their expertise in designing instructional programs and utilizing new technologies to meet the unique needs of students and their families, and to create and expand educational options and opportunities.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units are harnessing the power of their new statewide high speed broadband network – PAIUnet – to deliver a wealth of affordable services, resources and online instruction to schools and students.**
- ▶ **Intermediate units rely on the customers of their services – not the state – for most of their revenues. The state appropriation for intermediate units in FY 10-11 is \$4.7 million, 24% less than it was in 2002, and 57% less than in 1996.**

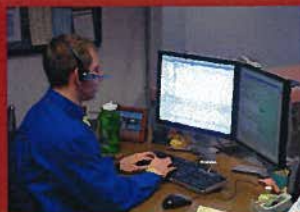
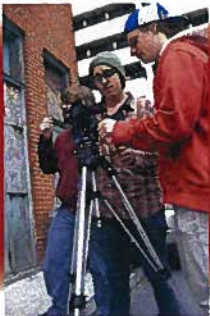


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**Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units
c/o CAIU
55 Miller Street
Enola, PA 17025
(717) 732-8464**

OFFICERS

President.....	Dr. Michael Thew, Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12
Vice-President.....	Dr. Joseph O'Brien, Chester County Intermediate Unit #24
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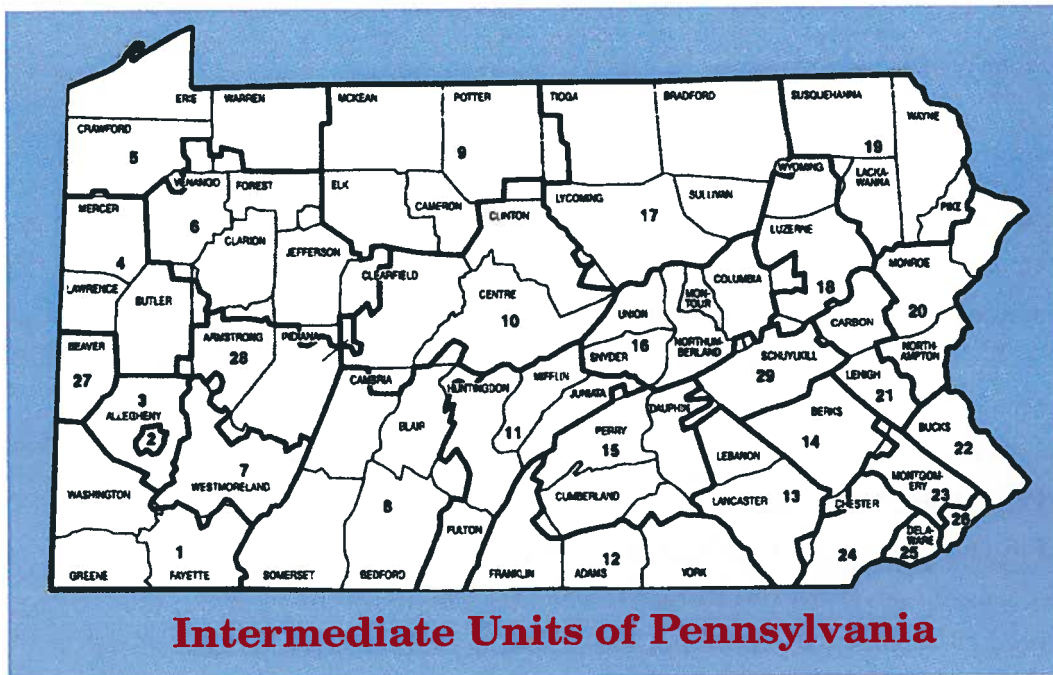
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Pennsylvania Intermediate Units in 2011

When intermediate units were created by the General Assembly in 1971 they were designed as regional educational service agencies to achieve economies of scale in the provision of services to school districts and other educational entities. **In 2011, intermediate units are entrepreneurial, highly skilled, technology-rich and agile providers of cost-effective instructional and operational services to school districts, charter schools and over 2,400 non-public and private schools.** Additionally, intermediate units are direct providers of quality instruction to over 50,000 Pennsylvania students.

Twenty-seven (27) of Pennsylvania’s 29 intermediate units are regional service agencies. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh school districts serve as their own intermediate unit. Intermediate units are staffed by 8,500 certified educators and professionals who know and serve our schools in every corner of the commonwealth.



At a time when we must accelerate student achievement progress while responding to unprecedented state and local fiscal challenges, Pennsylvania’s intermediate units are uniquely positioned to provide educational solutions for students, schools, communities and the commonwealth.

Intermediate Units Create Savings for Schools and the State

Intermediate units have taken their traditional role of achieving regional economies of scale to far more sophisticated, widespread and successful leveraging of savings and efficiencies for schools. This helps more taxpayer dollars reach classrooms and delivers quality services that raise student achievement.

Pennsylvania Intermediate Units in 2011

Today that work includes:

- ▶ Operating health insurance, energy, transportation and other purchasing consortia that deliver rates well below what districts and schools can do on their own;
- ▶ Providing back office administrative services to alleviate schools of costs for such things as payroll and business office operations, and administrator salaries;
- ▶ Delivering affordable high quality instructional supports including teacher and principal training in the use of data and technology to improve student learning; and
- ▶ Harnessing the power of their new statewide high speed broadband network – PAIUnet – to deliver a wealth of affordable services, resources and online instruction to schools and students.

Intermediate Units Are Expanding Educational Options and Opportunities

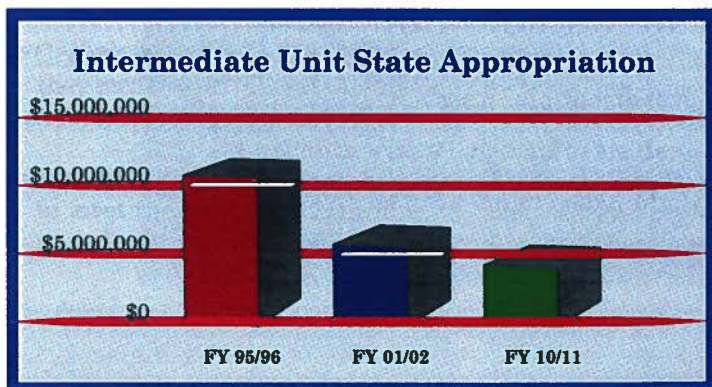
Intermediate units believe that all students should have great school and educational opportunities that support their achievement. **Intermediate units use their expertise in designing instructional programs and utilizing new technologies to meet the unique needs of students and their families** and to create and expand educational options and opportunities.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ Delivering online instructional opportunities ranging from a full course of study for students who desire that option to enrichment of school curricula;
- ▶ Operating specialized schools and programs for disruptive students and students with unique learning needs; and
- ▶ Providing high-quality early childhood education programs.

Intermediate Units Have Embraced Entrepreneurship

Intermediate units are effectively leveraging the state's investment in them and providing a tremendous return in terms of educational services and cost savings.



The FY 10-11 state appropriation for intermediate units is \$4.7 million. While that funding level is 24% less than in 2002 and 57% less than in 1996, it is still a critical source of operating revenue for IUs.

While technically “Local Education Agencies” (LEAs) under the school code, **intermediate units rely on the customers of their services – not the state – for most of their revenues.** In delivering services to the commonwealth, districts, charter schools and non-public schools, IUs know that quality and cost are key.



Funding Schools and Communities

Pennsylvania students and taxpayers deserve to know that public dollars for education are reaching classrooms and funding programs and instruction that make a difference in student achievement. As regional education service agencies, intermediate units have expanded their role of consolidating operational and instructional services schools require and would otherwise provide on their own. Intermediate units have proven that by consolidating services and increasing the buying power of the schools they serve, costs to schools are lower, allowing more of the available dollars to reach students in their classrooms.

All 27 regional IUs are generating operational savings for their member districts through joint purchasing efforts for high cost items like health insurance and energy, or providing consolidated back office administrative supports for schools.

JOINT PURCHASING PROGRAMS		
ACTIVITY	# OF IUs	# OF DISTRICTS
▶ Health Insurance	21	282
▶ Energy	20	276
▶ Other Products	22	448
▶ Back Office Administrative Services -IT Support -Grant Writing -Act 48 Credit Tracking -Superintendent of Record	21	369

In the last three years alone, districts have turned to nearly every IU to deliver consolidated services that districts previously provided on their own.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ Every IU provides support in the use of technology to improve instruction;
- ▶ Every IU delivers quality staff professional development based on the specific needs of districts;
- ▶ Every IU facilitates district and school improvement planning;
- ▶ Every IU trains educators in student data analysis to improve instruction; and
- ▶ Every IU supports school and district curriculum development to ensure alignment with state academic standards.

Funding Schools and Communities

Intermediate Units At Work

ARIN IU 28 – serving Armstrong and Indiana counties – operates a self-insured consortium for health insurance and offers group transportation services. In 2009-10, districts participating in these programs paid \$2,058,000 less for health insurance than if they had purchased it on their own, and saved \$1,017,000 in transportation costs.



Bucks County IU 22 has formed a purchasing consortium for electricity, natural gas and fuel that is available for 13 school districts, 3 technical high schools and the community college. IU 22 has hired an independent contractor to assist in energy procurements, including a three-year contract for natural gas under which consortium members paid 13.6% less than they would have on their own. This effort also assists regional local governments, health care and higher education institutions, and commercial and industrial clients to create even greater aggregate buying power.



Colonial IU 20 – serving Northampton, Monroe and Pike counties – offered a Reading Apprenticeship “Train the Trainer” program for teachers in the Summer of 2009. The cost of this nationally respected training is normally \$4,000 per person. By participating in this training locally through IU 20’s consortium, schools could send teachers at a cost of \$1,600, a savings of \$2,400 per person plus the cost of travel to California where the training is normally held.



Midwestern IU 4 – serving Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties – provides a variety of back office administrative services to its 27 school districts, charter school and 8 non-public schools. In 2009-10, IU 4 saved these entities over \$4,000,000 in operating costs by consolidating these services.

PAIU Action Agenda: Funding Schools and Communities

- ▶ **Use PAIUnet as the pipeline for PIMS reporting and delivering classroom resources.** High speed and secure transmission of PIMS data will save administrative time and costs for schools and PDE. The speed and reach of PAIUnet will help ensure that the instructional resources on PDE’s SAS portal and other valuable digital video resources reach classroom teachers and students in districts, charter schools and non-public schools.
- ▶ **Create incentives for districts to reduce operating costs.** Districts can save significant operating costs when they participate in joint purchasing programs and consolidated services. PAIU recommends that the state consider a program that returns to districts for classroom use a portion of new operating savings districts achieve.
- ▶ **Build IU capacity everywhere in the state.** Intermediate units will expand their collaboration with each other to meet the needs of schools and students. When IUs do not have the expertise or capacity to meet a need within their boundaries, they will look to partner with another IU to ensure the delivery of needed supports and services.

Enhancing Educational Opportunities

If we are to educate all students to high levels, then we must be prepared to meet the unique needs of each child, and to embrace and harness new ideas and new technologies that allow students to reach their full potential. Every Pennsylvania intermediate unit has a long history and deep expertise in developing and operating educational programs and services to meet the unique needs of students.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ **24 regional IUs operate early childhood programs – such as pre-kindergarten and early intervention – serving more than 33,000 students;**
- ▶ **24 regional IUs support students in career and technology centers through administrative and instructional support services;**
- ▶ **22 regional IUs operate specialized educational programs for over 12,500 students (part of a continuum of services) who, because of the nature of their disabilities, are unable to be served in traditional classroom settings;**
- ▶ **20 regional IUs operate programs that place and serve 5,000 highly disruptive students in alternative education settings so that learning in regular classrooms can stay on track; and**
- ▶ **19 regional IUs deliver adult education services such as GED, English as a Second Language, and adult and family literacy instruction.**

Intermediate units are committed to supporting learning in whatever settings families choose for their children. Every intermediate unit has long delivered services to students in non-public school settings, and increasingly IUs and charter schools are partnering to support student achievement. Throughout Pennsylvania, IU expertise is at work in non-public and charter schools.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ **70% of IUs are providing support to non-public schools in the use of technology to support instruction;**
- ▶ **63% of IUs are providing supports to non-public schools for teacher and principal professional development; and**
- ▶ **44% of IUs are providing supports to charter schools for school improvement planning and educator professional development.**

In 2011 intermediate units are leading the way in deploying a broad range of online instructional opportunities for students. The statewide high speed broadband network PAIUnet creates opportunities for instructional consolidation and cost savings, for expanding access to courses and subject matter, and to make possible a variety of settings at which students can receive instruction.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ **19 regional Intermediate Units now provide online instructional opportunities for students, including 15 IUs that offer students a complete course of study online;**
- ▶ **IUs today offer 6,700 online courses and enroll more than 6,500 students; and**
- ▶ **250 districts now take advantage of the online instructional opportunities IUs provide to enhance curricula and offer more options to students.**

- ▶ Use intermediate units to implement programs and reforms. Intermediate units have long used their administrative infrastructure and agility to assist PDE in implementing programs that support learning in whatever settings families choose for their children. IUs stand ready to use their strong relationships with both public and non-public schools to continue this partnership with Governor Corbett's administration.
- ▶ Expand intermediate unit services to charter schools. IUs will expand their outreach to charter schools to offer IU expertise in areas such as curriculum development and teacher professional development. IUs can also serve as a clearinghouse of charter school best practices, sharing those with underperforming charters and districts.
- ▶ Use PAUNet to expand online course offerings. The power of PAUNet has already made it possible for IUs to offer thousands of online courses for students and schools, and to provide high-quality access to sophisticated content that is not possible over the regular internet. IUs will continue to expand their online course offerings, and will work with PDE, district, charter schools and cyber charter schools to explore new ways PAUNet can create additional learning options for Pennsylvanians.

PAU Action Agenda: Enhancing Educational Opportunities

Intermediate Units At Work

Berks County IU 14 has successfully blended four state and federal funding streams to develop an integrated early childhood program that serves children between the ages of 3-5, regardless of disability or economic status. The blended program maximizes scarce resources to deliver high quality programming to more than 2,300 children.

Chester County IU 24, in cooperation with the 21st Century Cyber Charter School, created the Brandywine Virtual Academy (BVA) to offer a wide range of online courses. Students have the option of completing their courses from a school-based classroom, computer lab, home or other locations with internet access. During the 2009-10 school year, BVA served 176 students from 18 school districts who took 674 courses.

Allegheny IU 8 operates Watertown Learning which delivers online educational experiences to schools and students at an affordable cost. In 2009-10, 948 students took 1316 online courses ranging from credit recovery to Advanced Placement. Watertown Learning also provides schools with the technology support, professional development and program design they need to deliver high quality online instruction.

Northwest Tri-County IU 5 – serving Crawford, Erie, and Warren counties – has partnered with Gannon, Penn State, Edinboro, and Clarion Universities, and Mercyhurst College to expand dual enrollment opportunities for student through its Regional Choice Initiative (RCI). Fifteen school districts participate and more than 450 students in the region are earning college AND high school credit in the Spring 2011 semester. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the college credits earned since 2007 have transferred to students' colleges and universities, saving families 70% on the cost of these credits.

Enhancing Educational Opportunities

Ensuring Effective Teachers and Leaders

There is little debate remaining about the importance of teacher and leader effectiveness in raising student achievement. There is, however, much work to be done to ensure that our educators have the right kind of training, tools and supports they need to be effective. Intermediate units are working in our schools and classrooms to deploy 21st century teaching systems and strategies to impact student learning.

Today that work includes:

► Analyzing Data To Inform School Improvement And Personalize Instruction

Intermediate units facilitate the development and then go on site to help in the implementation of school improvement plans using PDE's "Getting Results" and "Leading for Learning" planning models; train teachers and principals in the use of value added assessment tools (PVAAS), benchmark assessments (4Sight), and online resources for student achievement data (eMetric) and curriculum design (SAS portal).

► Using Technology In The Classroom To Enrich Learning Opportunities

Intermediate units deploy tech-savvy instructional coaches to help classroom teachers utilize technology to transform teaching and learning; are building a growing catalog of online course offerings for students; and are now harnessing the power of their new statewide high-speed broadband network – PAIUnet – to deliver high-quality professional development for educators throughout the state and provide teachers fingertip access to proven educational tools and resources – all at a fraction of the cost compared to traditional face-to-face training.

► Implementing Instructional Practices Proven To Raise Student Achievement

Intermediate units train teachers and principals in proven high-impact instructional practices to respond to the needs of struggling students (Response to Instruction and Intervention), implementing research-based strategies in the classroom (Learning Focused Schools), and designing instruction to meet the new Common Core standards in English and Language Arts (Literacy by Design); and IUs are partnering with the Annenberg Foundation to train and deploy instructional coaches at the district and school level to ensure that these best practices are well implemented.

► Training Principals To Be The Instructional Leaders In Their Buildings

Intermediate units provide the infrastructure across the state for delivering high-quality Act 45 training for new and veteran principals on how to lead school reform inside their school buildings. Every new school administrator must now meet much higher standards for educational leadership in order to be certified.



Ensuring Effective Teachers and Leaders

Intermediate Units At Work

Capital Area IU 15 – serving Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry and northern York counties – has integrated its curriculum and technology teams to develop greater expertise in the use of technology to improve teacher practice and raise student achievement. Twenty-four (24) school districts and 12 non-public schools have turned to CAIU for this high quality, cost effective training.



Luzerne IU 18 partnered with Allegheny Intermediate Unit (IU 3) to train Luzerne County science teachers in proven inquiry-based instructional strategies. In just one year, this effort grew from a small training session for 26 science teachers from 13 Luzerne County school districts, to a comprehensive model science curriculum – including detailed inquiry-based science lesson plans – that is available to every science teacher in public and non-public schools in the county.



Riverview IU 6 – serving 11 counties in western Pennsylvania - is a leader in delivering Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) services and training to educators on effective instructional strategies. The RIU 6 Autism Team provides training for teachers and paraprofessionals working in Autism Support classrooms. The team also offers consultation services and makes recommendations to districts on how to best support students diagnosed with ASD so that the students can be educated with their academic peers.

PAIU Action Agenda: Ensuring Effective Teachers and Leaders

- ▶ **Implement a new performance-based teacher and administrator evaluation system.** Training for administrators and teachers is critical if Pennsylvania is going to successfully transition to performance based evaluations for professional educators. IUs are prepared to work with PDE and partner with state and national foundations to generate the resources and quality programs needed to implement a new evaluation system statewide.
- ▶ **Create alternative teacher and principal certification programs.** If granted legislative authority, IUs will partner with organizations like Teach for America and The New Teacher Project to create new certification programs to help ensure a highly effective teacher in every classroom.
- ▶ **Expand access to quality principal leadership programs.** Intermediate units are prepared to expand principal professional development programs that meet the state's Act 45 standards. IUs are prepared to work with PDE to revise the Act 45 provider approval process to ensure sufficient quality programs for principals.
- ▶ **Improve the quality and success of new classroom teachers.** IUs are prepared to work with PDE and higher education institutions to ensure that teacher preparation programs remain up-to-date on classroom practice, improve student teacher experiences, and design quality induction and mentoring supports to help new teachers succeed.

Embracing Accountability

The simple but essential principle that drives our state and federal education accountability system is that results matter. When schools and students don't meet the targets that have been set, intermediate units play a central role in designing and implementing school improvement strategies to raise student achievement.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ Facilitating the development of district and school improvement plans using PDE's "Getting Results," "Leading for Learning" and eStrategic planning models;
- ▶ Providing on-site technical assistance in implementing school improvement plans;
- ▶ Training teachers and principals in the use of value added assessment tools (PVAAS), benchmark assessments (4Sight), and online resources for student achievement data (eMetric) and curriculum design (SAS portal); and
- ▶ Supporting the implementation of Pennsylvania's new graduation requirements and academic standards including the new national Common Core standards.

Intermediate units have embraced accountability as well. Since most intermediate unit revenues come from customers of their services, they must be accountable for quality and cost. In areas such as early intervention and special education, intermediate units have collaborated with the state and federal governments to provide extensive detailed data on services delivered and results achieved.

Intermediate Units At Work

Delaware County IU 25's school improvement team has provided leadership statewide in developing an online school improvement planning tool that will assist school leaders in generating solutions that lead to higher student achievement. In the county, DCIU has worked on-site with dozens of schools to generate improvement plans. That work includes responding to a request from the Chester Community Charter School (CCCS), a K-8 school for 2,500 students, for help to develop and implement an improvement plan. The result: CCCS has met its AYP goals for two consecutive years.



Lancaster-Lebanon IU 18, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, administers the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS), a web-based tool that measures a district's and school's impact on the academic progress of students. This information, which is now publicly available on PDE's website, is critical in assisting educators to make informed decisions about student learning and to improve the educational results for Pennsylvania's students.

PAIU Action Agenda: Embracing Accountability

- ▶ **Empower intermediate units in school improvement planning.** Pennsylvania should pass legislation giving intermediate units a stronger role in improving education in persistently failing schools.
- ▶ **Give IUs authority to support districts in charter school oversight.** Intermediate unit organizational capacity and expertise could support those districts that request help in fulfilling their legal responsibilities to hold charter schools accountable to the terms of their charters, and to provide supports to charters to do so.
- ▶ **Create intermediate unit performance measures.** Intermediate units will develop a system for publicly reporting IU fiscal and programmatic performance based on the highest national standards for education service agencies.

Creating Safe Learning Environments

Schools throughout Pennsylvania turn to intermediate units to support their efforts to create safe learning environments in every building and classroom. Those efforts must be comprehensive, ranging from facility security, to placing disruptive students in alternative settings, to creating cultures of respect and discipline in schools. Intermediate units offer regional and cost-effective services to meet these needs.

Today that work includes:

- ▶ **Operating and delivering educational services in alternative settings for highly disruptive students;**
- ▶ **Training teachers and administrators in research proven anti-bullying programs, cyber-safety strategies and school-wide discipline and classroom behavior systems;**
- ▶ **Operating classrooms for students with severe behavioral and mental health issues that combine Department of Public Welfare licensed mental health programming with academic instruction;**
- ▶ **Mobilizing “crisis flight” teams to offer counseling supports for student, staff and families in schools that experience tragedies; and**
- ▶ **Supporting school data reporting on school violence incidents and facilitating coordination with local law enforcement.**

Intermediate Units At Work

Montgomery County IU 23 has provided leadership with Bucks, Chester, and Delaware County IUs and the Philadelphia School District in developing and implementing a grant from the US Department of Homeland Security to partner with local first responders and state officials to develop a uniform and easy-to-update emergency preparedness program. One-hundred fifty (150) school safety assessments were conducted in the five-county region and recommendations for a common approach to school safety and corrective action procedures will be developed including an online self-assessment process for schools to conduct their own threat assessments in the future.



Lincoln IU 12 – serving Adams, Franklin and York counties – secured a federal Safe and Drug Free Schools grant to provide a series of four trainings on research proven strategies to create and maintain safe learning environments and to support students who are at-risk for dropping out. Nearly 100 leaders from local district, non-public and charter schools, as well as county service agencies participated. IU 12 then went on site to schools to work with teams of teachers and their principals to implement those strategies.

PAIU Action Agenda: Creating Safe Learning Environments

- ▶ **Expand anti-bullying and online safety services to schools and local agencies.** Intermediate unit staff are trained in research proven strategies for combating bullying, and in best practices to ensure student online safety. IUs will expand their training to more districts, charter schools, non-public schools and local community agencies.
- ▶ **Promote coordination of emergency planning and preparedness.** Intermediate units have developed model programs that ensure strong emergency planning and preparedness coordination between schools, local emergency management officials, and state and federal homeland security agencies. IUs will implement those models in more communities throughout the commonwealth.
- ▶ **Expand in-school mental health services;** Intermediate units are working with schools that have students who need mental health services, but who are able to remain in school. IUs will expand their outreach to more schools to offer a cost effective model that blends the delivery of needed mental health services with educational services and keeps children on track at school.

More Intermediate Units At Work

Intermediate Unit 1 – serving Fayette, Greene and Washington counties – has formed a partnership with Duquesne University to offer a principal certification program on the IU 1 campus, and with the University of Pittsburgh to provide high-quality state-approved continuing education for principals. In the fall of 2011, IU 1 will partner again with Duquesne University to offer a superintendent letter of eligibility program.



Pittsburgh-Mt. Oliver IU 2 – serving schools in Pittsburgh – provides educational supports to 25 non-public schools in the city of Pittsburgh. IU 2, in collaboration with Allegheny IU 3, secured an Act 183 E-fund grant that will provide resources and technical assistance to non-public schools to enhance their connectivity and classroom use of technology to improve instruction and raise student achievement.



Westmoreland IU 7 has launched the WIU eAcademy, a distance learning initiative designed to meet the needs of Westmoreland County schools as they incorporate online education into their curricula. WIU eAcademy provides flexible learning opportunities for more than 700 students, as well as leadership, training, and resources for over 350 teachers who are creating 21st century learning environments in their classrooms. Sixteen districts and the Diocese of Greensburg participate in WIU eAcademy.



Appalachia IU 8 – serving Bedford, Blair, Cambria and Somerset counties – secured a federal grant to create the PA Mountain Service Corps, a local initiative of the national AmeriCorps program, which supports a broad range of services that meet critical community needs. Last year, 135 corps members worked in 16 counties to support 72 organizations – schools, libraries, colleges, social service and health agencies. Thanks to the support from corps members, these agencies saved a combined \$750,000.



Seneca Highlands IU 9 – serving Cameron, Elk, McKean and Potter counties – operates cooperative purchasing programs for districts in the region. IU 9 districts are saving between 50% and 60% on list prices for paper, general art and janitorial supplies, and consumable computer and audio-visual supplies.



Central IU 10 – serving Centre, Clearfield and Clinton counties – has formed a partnership with Penn State University that offers teachers and administrators a 20% discount on tuition for courses taken to meet professional development or certification requirements. Last year alone, 160 educators saved a total of \$75,000 through this arrangement.



Tuscarora IU 11 – serving Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata and Mifflin counties – administers the Distance Learning Project (DLP) recognized by the University of Michigan's Project IDEAL as a national leader for innovative teaching practices. The DLP annually teaches over 300 adult learners in areas of GED test preparation, English language skills, basic skills for the workplace, and post-secondary education/training preparation. The project also provides professional development and technical assistance for 70 community based adult literacy agencies.

More Intermediate Units At Work

Central Susquehanna IU 16 – serving Union, Snyder, Northumberland, Montour and Columbia counties – has partnered with schools to help them apply ever-changing technologies to streamline management responsibilities. Today, more than 300 local education agencies utilize the CSIU's SIF-compliant administrative software, which includes a complete library of applications that can be used individually or as an integrated system. CSIU offers comprehensive financial, tax and student applications, such as payroll, fund accounting, tax billing and collection, grading and scheduling to help school administrators minimize data redundancy and maximize efficiency.



BLaST IU 17 – serving Bradford, Lycoming, Sullivan and Tioga counties - has created a software package for schools to use in managing their special education programs. In addition to tracking student progress, the product allows administrators to track teacher and staff time so that resources can be utilized most efficiently. The software also provides greater fiscal detail and makes it easier for districts to submit for federal ACCESS reimbursement of special education costs.



Northeastern Educational IU 19 – serving Lackawanna, Susquehanna, Wayne and Pike counties – operates an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional services consortium. The consortium provides direct instruction to students, and evaluation and grant coordination services for nine participating districts, saving those districts nearly \$120,000 per year. NEIU also leads an insurance purchasing consortium that saves 14 school districts \$780,000 per year.



Carbon-Lehigh IU 21 provides direct Internet service, support, maintenance and email service to over 35 school districts and non-public schools. IU 21's management information system department also provides PowerSchool student information systems development and support to over 30 school districts throughout the Commonwealth and conducts customized programming such as human resources systems and child accounting tracking systems.



Philadelphia IU 26 provides instructional support services and technical assistance to students and staff in public, private, parochial, and charter schools located within the City of Philadelphia. These services include Early Intervention; vision, hearing and speech therapy; remedial instruction in reading and mathematics; and counseling and other psychological services.



Beaver Valley IU 27 – serving Beaver County – provides high-quality English as a Second Language instruction to students in 10 districts in the Western Pennsylvania region. By utilizing IU 27's ESL services, districts are able to avoid the cost of establishing their own programs. These services have saved one school district alone over \$300,000 over the past three years.



Schuylkill IU 29, with support from the Crown America Corporation, established the "Lifelong Learning Center" in Frackville. The 6,000 square foot Center annually serves over 325 community residents with programs such as adult basic education and literacy instruction, G.E.D. preparation and work-ready classes, basic and advanced computer classes, parenting workshops, and English as a Second Language and citizenship classes.

Pennsylvania's 29 Intermediate Units



1 Intermediate Unit 1

Charles Mahoney III, Exec. Director
One Intermediate Unit Drive
Coal Center, PA 15423-9642
724-938-3241 • FAX 724-938-8722
www.lu1.k12.pa.us (800-328-6481)

2 Pittsburgh-Mt. Oliver

Dr. Linda Lane, Superintendent
515 N. Highland Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-394-0851 • FAX 412-363-4072
<http://pmolu2.k12.pa.us>

3 Allegheny

Dr. Linda Hippert, Exec. Director
475 E. Waterfront Dr.
Homestead, PA 15120-1144
412-394-5700 • FAX 412-394-5706
www.iau3.net

4 Midwestern

Cecelia H. Yauger, Exec. Director
453 Maple Street
Grove City, PA 16127-2399
724-458-6700 • FAX 724-458-5083
www.miu4.k12.pa.us

5 Northwest Tri-County

Dr. Marjorie A. Wallace, Exec. Director
252 Waterford Street
Edinboro, PA 16412-2399
814-734-5610 • FAX 814-734-5806
www.lu5.org

6 Riverview

Dr. John Cornish II, Exec. Director
270 Mayfield Road
Clarion, PA 16214
814-226-7103 • FAX 814-227-2813
www.riu6.org (800-672-7123)

7 Westmoreland

Dr. Luanne Matta, Exec. Director
102 Equity Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601-7190
724-836-2460 • FAX 724-836-2561
www.wlu.k12.pa.us

8 Appalachia

Dr. Joseph Macharola, Exec. Director
Altoona Executive Office
4500 6th Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602
814-940-0223 • FAX 814-949-0984
www.lu08.org

9 Seneca Highlands

Mary Colf, Exec. Director
119 Mechanic St., Box 1566
Smethport, PA 16749-0566
814-887-5512 • FAX 814-887-2157
www.lu9.org

10 Central

Dr. J. Hugh Dwyer, Exec. Director
345 Link Road
West Decatur, PA 16878-9757
814-342-0884 • FAX 814-342-5137
www.clu10.org (800-982-3375)

11 Tuscarora

Richard Daubert, Exec. Director
2527 US Highway 522 South
McVeytown, PA 17051-9717
814-542-2501 • FAX 814-542-2569
www.tiu11.org

12 Lincoln

Dr. Michael Thew, Exec. Director
65 Billerbeck St., P.O. Box 70
New Oxford, PA 17350-0070
717-624-4616 • FAX 717-624-6519
www.lu12.org

13 Lancaster-Lebanon

Dr. Cynthia Burkhart, Exec. Director
1020 New Holland Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-606-1600 • FAX 606-1993
www.lu13.org

14 Berks County

Dr. John J. George, Exec. Director
1111 Commons Blvd.
P.O. Box 16050
Reading, PA 19612-6050
610-987-2248 • FAX 610-987-8400
www.berksiu.org

15 Capital Area

Cindy Mortzfeldt, Acting Exec. Director
55 Miller Street
Enola, PA 17025-1640
717-732-8400 • FAX 717-732-8421
www.calu.org

16 Central Susquehanna

Dr. Robert G. Witten, Exec. Director
P.O. Box 213
Lewisburg, PA 17837-0213
570-523-1155 • FAX 570-524-7104
www.cslu.org

17 BLaST

William Martens, Exec. Director
2400 Reach Rd., P.O. Box 3609
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-323-8561 • FAX 570-323-1738
www.lu17.org

18 Luzerne

Hal Bloss, Exec. Director
368 Tioga Avenue
Kingston, PA 18704
570-287-9681 • FAX 570-287-5721
www.liu18.org

19 Northeastern Educational

Clarence Lamanna, Acting Exec. Director
1200 Line Street
Archbald, PA 18403
570-876-9200 • FAX 570-876-8660
www.nelu.org (800-228-1750)

20 Colonial

Dr. Charlene Brennan, Exec. Director
6 Danforth Drive
Easton, PA 18045-7899
610-252-5550 • FAX 610-252-5740
www.clu20.org

21 Carbon-Lehigh

Dr. Elaine E. Eib, Exec. Director
4210 Independence Drive
Schnecksville, PA 18078-2597
610-769-4111 • FAX 610-769-1290
www.cliu.org (800-223-4821)

22 Bucks County

Dr. Barry J. Galasso, Exec. Director
705 N. Shady Retreat Rd.
Doylestown, PA 18901-2501
215-348-2940 • FAX 215-340-1964
www.bucksiu.org (800-770-4822)

23 Montgomery County

Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley, Exec. Director
1605 W. Main Street
Norristown, PA 19403-3290
610-539-8550 • FAX 610-539-5973
www.mciu.org

24 Chester County

Dr. Joseph J. O'Brien, Exec. Director
455 Boot Road
Downingtown, PA 19335
484-237-5000 • FAX 484-237-5154
www.cclu.org

25 Delaware County

Dr. Lawrence J. O'Shea, Exec. Director
200 Yale Avenue
Morton, PA 19070
610-938-9000 • FAX 610-938-9887
www.dclu.org

26 Philadelphia

Dr. Arlene Ackerman, Supt./CEO
440 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-4015
215-400-4100 • FAX 215-400-4251
www.phila.k12.pa.us

27 Beaver Valley

Tom Zelesnik, Exec. Director
147 Poplar Drive
Monaca, PA 15061
724-774-7800 • FAX 724-774-4751
www.bvlu.org

28 ARIN

Dr. Robert H. Coad, Jr., Exec. Director
2895 W. Pike
Indiana, PA 15701-9769
724-463-5300 • FAX 724-463-5315
www.lu28.org

29 Schuylkill

Dr. Diane M. Niederriter, Exec. Director
17 Maple Avenue
P.O. Box 130
Mar Lin, PA 17951-0130
570-544-9131 • FAX 570-544-6412
www.lu29.org

