



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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BCIU's Asian Studies Collaborative Honored by Pennsylvania Council for International Education

READING, PA – The Berks County Intermediate Unit's Asian Studies Collaborative (ASC) has won the Pennsylvania Council for International Education's (PaCIE) "Bringing the World to Pennsylvania: K-16 Collaboration Award" for 2009.

This is the first time the PaCIE has given the award to an educational entity other than a college or university.

The PaCIE gives the award to agencies and teams that demonstrate leadership to state officials in building partnerships with other educational institutions (both K-12 and higher education) in order to advance international and multi-cultural education.

The BCIU's Asian Studies Collaborative works to strengthen East Asian language and culture in grades K-12 and assists Pennsylvania school districts that offer, or are thinking of offering, Chinese studies. The goal is that the ASC will become a model for the creation of Chinese language and cultural studies programs and resources at school districts throughout the state.

The ASC has forged partnerships with the Freeman Foundation, the Chinese Flagship Program at Ohio State University, and the Confucius Institute at the University of Pittsburgh, the National Consortium for Teaching About Asia (NCTAsia), the Berks County Community Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Eastern Region Pennsylvania Association for Supervisors and Curriculum Development, and others.

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“This honor is truly a reflection of the phenomenal support we’ve received from so many entities,” said Dr. Bonita Troxell, director of the BCIU’s Office of Professional Development and Curriculum. “The collaborative mindset that’s rallied around the ASC has been little short of incredible. I don’t know of any educational collaboration like it in Pennsylvania.”

The PaCIE will present the award to BCIU/ASC administrators October 2 at the PaCIE’s 2009 Annual Conference in Harrisburg.

Created in fall 2008, the ASC already has:

- Hosted a 10-week seminar, “East Asia: A Seminar for Teachers,” that provided an introduction to Asian culture and society and allowed participants to discuss various ideas about how to integrate the study of East Asia into the secondary school curriculum.
- Coordinated the Spring Asian Studies Conference for educators and school administrators where they learned how to add the study of Asian languages and culture to their school’s curricula.

In the works for the remainder of 2009:

- Dr. Troxell will travel to China June 22-30 with the College Board’s Chinese Bridge Delegation to explore sister school agreements with Chinese schools.
- The BCIU will hold a one-day Chinese culture workshop for Berks County middle school students and their parents July 15. Participants will travel to the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for presentations, workshops, and hands-on activities.
- Two teachers from China are coming to Berks County in late July to serve as Chinese teachers at Wilson and Twin Valley high schools. Their arrival will enhance the Chinese language programs already offered at the schools.

For more information on the Asian Studies Collaborative, contact Dr. Troxell at 610-987-8422 or via e-mail at bontro@berksiu.org.

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