



BERKS | COUNTY INTERMEDIATE | UNIT

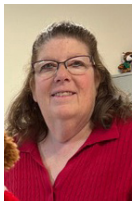




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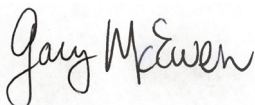
from the

BOARD PRESIDENT

As a member of the BCIU Board of Directors since 2004 and Board President since 2020, I have learned how well the BCIU Board works together in the best interests of the children in Berks County. It has been an honor to work with such dedicated and caring individuals, along with the outstanding leadership team and staff of the BCIU and the Pennsylvania Key. I am proud of the progress the organization has made in advancing its mission to provide exceptional educational services and support across Berks County and the Commonwealth. Together, we have made a difference in our community, in our schools, and in the lives of our students and families.

I look forward to the continued success of the organization and am confident that the BCIU will continue to respond successfully to the needs of its constituents and exceed expectations in the years ahead.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



Gary McEwen
Board President
Berks County Intermediate Unit



from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

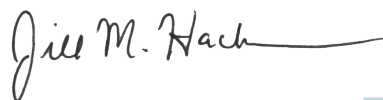
Reflecting on the past school year, I am pleased to present the 2022-2023 Annual Report, which provides a summary of organizational information and the many accomplishments and activities performed by our 1,200+ dedicated employees over the past year. Our 2022-2023 theme, "The Future is Now," guided our work and planning as we continued to serve children, families, educators, and communities across Berks County and the Commonwealth. Our priorities, goals, and actions were strategically built around this theme to create a better future and opportunities for tomorrow.

The BCIU is able to successfully serve and engage in our mission due to the leadership and guidance of our BCIU Board of Directors, the commitment of our staff, and the support and collaboration of our constituent school districts and career and technology centers, educators, community members, business partners, legislative officials, and other stakeholders. With these vital relationships, we are uniquely positioned to respond to the growing needs of the schools of Berks County. This past year, we continued to develop, expand, and modify programs and services to best meet the needs of our students, schools, and communities. By staying ahead of the curve, we can ensure that the individuals we serve are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to thrive.



Looking ahead, we remain committed to building on our successes and continuing to provide exceptional educational services and support to the students, families, educators, and communities of Berks County and others across the Commonwealth, with every decision being centered on what is best for our students. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead as we continue to embrace the future and all the possibilities it holds.

It is an honor to serve as the Executive Director of the BCIU. I welcome your thoughts and look forward to collaborative work with you for our continued contributions that benefit the students and families we serve.



Dr. Jill M. Hackman
Executive Director
Berks County Intermediate Unit

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2022-2023

BCIU VISION

Serve as the premier education services provider in Berks County and across the Commonwealth.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Jill Hackman
Executive Director

OFFICE OF BUSINESS SERVICES

Lucille Gallis
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Angel Green
Assistant Director

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Mary Franciscus
Director

Alexis Luckhart
Assistant Director

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND STUDENT SERVICES

Dr. Michelle Reichard-Huff
Director

Dr. Sara George
Assistant Director

Dr. Christi Weitzel
Assistant Director

OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Scott Major
Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Cherie Zimmerman
Assistant Director

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

Rob Rosenberry
Chief Operating Officer (COO)

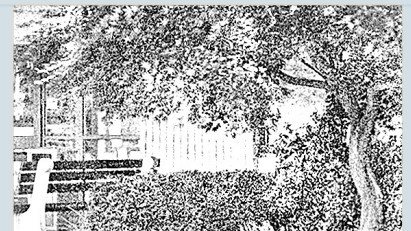
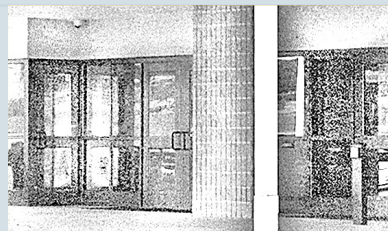
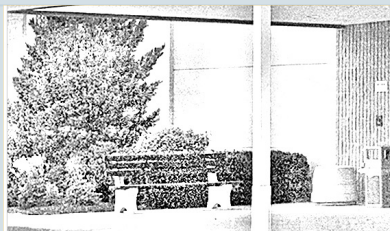
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Dr. Dan Richards
Director

Dr. Christina Foehl
Assistant Director

THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY

Dr. Marnie Aylesworth
Executive Director



BCIU MISSION

Providing high-quality resources, innovative services and programs, and responsible leadership to enrich the educational and social services needs of our children, families, schools, and greater community.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- Lead with ETHICS and INTEGRITY
- Deliver HIGH QUALITY Services
- Ensure FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
- Foster RESPECTFUL and COLLABORATIVE Practices
- Make COMMUNITY-CENTERED Decisions
- FORECAST for the Future

BCIU PRIORITIES

- Innovation and Expansion of Services
- Employee Investment & Engagement
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Operational Effectiveness
- Client Relations
- Strategic Partnerships



BOARD OFFICERS

2022-2023

Mr. McEwen



Mrs. Huhn



Mrs. Lash



Mr. Ulrich



board of DIRECTORS

Gary McEwen
Twin Valley | President

Elizabeth Huhn
Brandywine Heights Area |
Vice President

Linda Lash
Schuylkill Valley | Treasurer

James Ulrich
Governor Mifflin | Secretary

2022-2023

SUPERINTENDENTS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Heidi Rochlin | Antietam

Marybeth Torchia | Boyertown Area

Andrew Potteiger | Brandywine Heights Area

Dr. Ryan Giffing | Conrad Weiser Area

Dr. Brett Cooper | Daniel Boone Area

Dr. Christy Haller | Exeter Township

Dr. Greg Miller | Fleetwood Area

William McKay | Governor Mifflin

Dr. Richard Mextorf | Hamburg Area

Christian Temchatin | Kutztown Area

Dr. Joseph Macharola | Muhlenberg

Dr. Tracy Shank | Oley Valley

Dr. Jennifer Murray | Reading

Dr. Cathy Taschner | Schuylkill Valley

Dr. Andrew Netznik | Tulpehocken Area

Dr. Patrick Winters | Twin Valley

Dr. Christopher Trickett | Wilson

Robert Scoboria | Wyomissing Area

Michael Gierula | Antietam

Lisa Hogan | Boyertown Area

Bret Sabold | Conrad Weiser Area

Russell Jirik | Daniel Boone Area

Dr. David Hemberger | Exeter Township

Kevin Manmiller | Fleetwood Area

Todd Hummel | Hamburg Area

Rev. Dr. Dennis Ritter | Kutztown Area

Miguel Vasquez | Muhlenberg

Nancy Jackson | Oley Valley

Mark Detterline | Reading

Christopher Heck | Tulpehocken Area

Dr. Amy Kennedy | Wilson

Terrie Taylor, LSW | Wyomissing Area

Executive Director

Dr. Jill Hackman

Solicitors | John Stott, Esq.

James Mancuso, Esq.

Recording Secretary

Jan Krotee

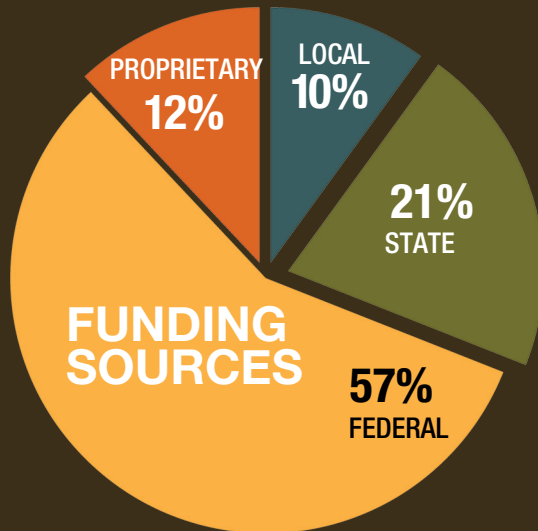
BERKS COUNTY CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTERS ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Michael Stauffer |
Executive Director
Berks Career & Technology Center

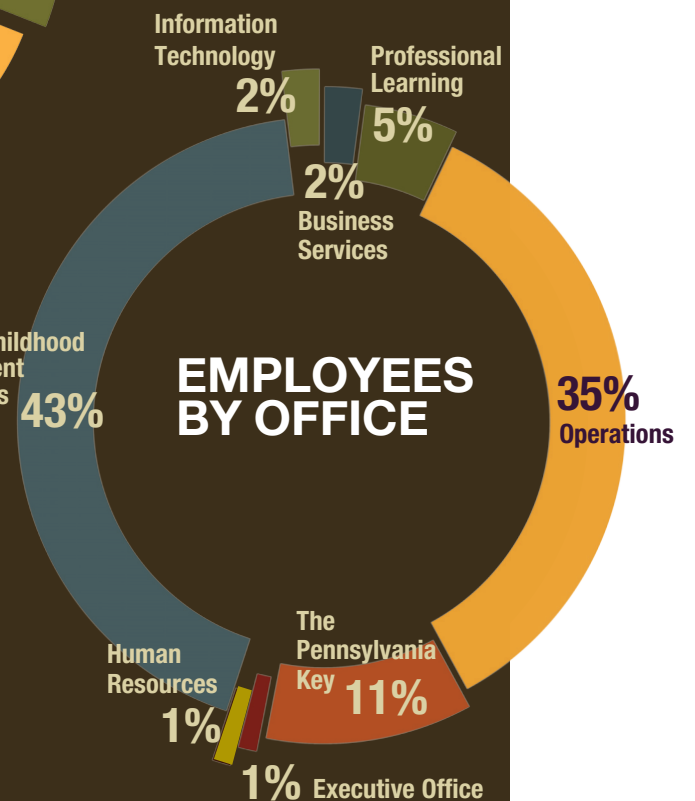
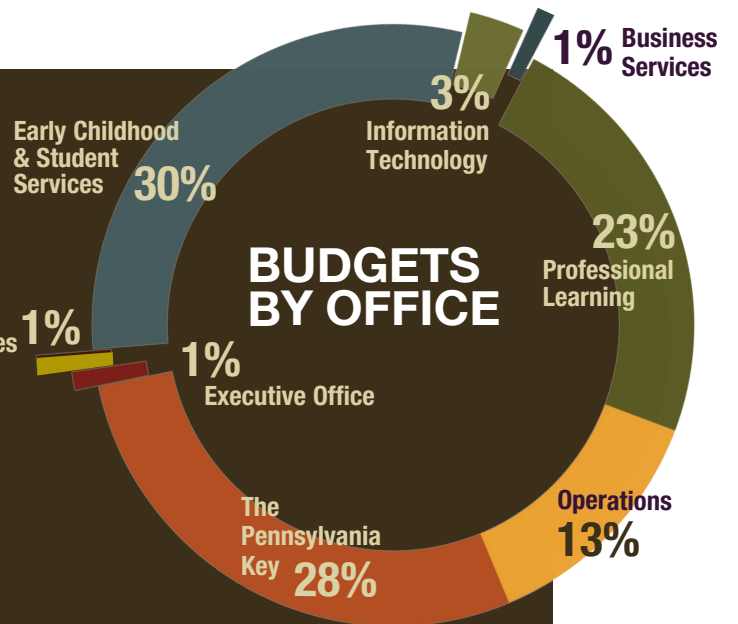
Eric Kahler |
Administrative Director
Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center

SERVICES TO

Children
\$128,547,000
Professionals
\$57,829,000
Community
\$22,927,000



TOTAL BUDGETS:
\$209,303,000
BCIU | 2022-2023



OFFICE overview

The Office of Executive Director, with the guidance and support of the BCIU Board of Directors, remains committed to fulfilling the mission of the BCIU and providing Berks County and the Commonwealth with highly effective and efficient programs and services, while keeping the safety and well-being of students and staff as a top priority.

In partnership with Berks County superintendents and career and technology center directors, the Office of the Executive Director team coordinated several successful events to strengthen relationships with local legislators and enhance advocacy efforts on behalf of the 70,000+ students in Berks County and across the Commonwealth. Events at the BCIU Main Office included quarterly Committee on Legislative Action (COLA) meetings and coordinating “Collaborative Conversations for Education” with state legislators. In addition, education leaders traveled to Harrisburg to meet with local legislators and Senate and House representatives in leadership roles. Finally, the ongoing review of the State Mandates and State Mandates Checklists documents offered a summary of federal and state mandates for school leaders as well as added to the understanding of the impact of mandates with our elected officials.

In collaboration with the BCIU Leadership Team, staff, and Berks County school leaders, the Executive Office team planned and facilitated opportunities for the sharing of information regarding keeping students and staff safe, as well as other countywide initiatives, including the



Annual Board Presidents’ and Superintendents’ workshop; and the School Safety Presentation | Swatting Debrief.

The Creative Team increased its external client-base, providing professional and consultative services and marketing and graphic design support. The team also coordinated and hosted job-alike meetings with Berks County school marketing and communications colleagues to network and share best practices. Submissions of the Creative Team’s outstanding work were recognized on a statewide level by the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association (PenSPRA) and nationally by GDUSA: *Graphic Design USA* magazine.

The Executive Office team looks forward to serving and engaging in our mission in 2023-2024 and the continued collaboration with our constituent school districts, career and technology centers, non-public schools, educators, business and community partners, elected officials, and other stakeholders for our combined contributions for education.

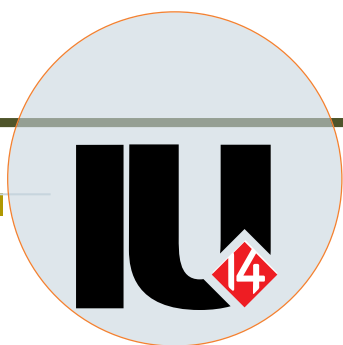


2022 BCIU OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNER – KEVIN MURPHY

Kevin Murphy, President of the Berks County Community Foundation since its founding in 1994, was named the 2022 BCIU Outstanding Community Partner.

Mr. Murphy embraces the mission of the Berks County Community Foundation by promoting philanthropy to improve the quality of life for the residents within our community. As a respected leader and champion for others, he continues to play a key role in improving the economy, health, and future of Berks County by assisting in efforts to support individuals in need; strengthen schools, increase access to food and medicine, promote the arts; and more.

In addition, the Berks County Community Foundation, under Kevin Murphy’s leadership, has partnered with stakeholders to administer scholarships and award funds to support local students pursuing post-secondary education and has supported impactful priorities important to the education community including the Closing of the Digital Divide Project and Berks Best.



DIRECT RECIPIENTS of services

864
EVENTS SERVING
13,087
BERKS COUNTY
EDUCATORS +
ADMINISTRATORS

67
**EARLY
CHILDHOOD**
87
CLASSROOMS
20
SCHOOL-AGE
35
**ECSS
SITES**
9 School-Age
26 Early
Childhood

SERVING **SCHOOL
DISTRICTS**
7,412 STUDENTS

Transported for Antietam, Muhlenberg,
and Reading school districts and the
BCTC, including students with special
needs and in the Early Intervention, Head
Start, and PA ECEH programs.

EARLY **CHILDHOOD**

- Early Head Start (birth to 3) 32
- Early Intervention 2,440
- Head Start 466
- Pre-K Counts 194

EARLY LEARNERS SERVED 3,132**

K-12 **SCHOOL** AGE STUDENTS

- Act 89 / Title 1 545
- Alternative Education* 695
- Berks Online Learning 143
- Extended School Year (ESY) Program 92
- Project ELECT (Pregnant and Parenting
Teen / Fatherhood Initiative) 91
- School-Age Special Education 1,125
- Student Enrichment 16,469
- Transportation Services 7,412

STUDENTS SERVED 26,572**

16,469
STUDENTS BENEFITED
FROM ENRICHMENT
SERVICES INCLUDING:

Academic Challenge | Governor's
PA STEM Competition | Music in the
Schools | PA Invention Convention |
PA Media and Design Competition |
Secondary Art Exhibit, Reading
Olympics | Sea, Air, and Land
Challenge | STEM Design Challenge

545
students
RECEIVED ACT 89 /
TITLE 1 SERVICES
IN BERKS COUNTY

** Student numbers are from
the 2021-2022 school year.

SOCIAL SERVICES

PA Education for Children and Youth
Experiencing Homelessness

8,625

ECYEH PA EDUCATION FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS
Every child deserves school stability.

* In 2021-2022, Alternative Education
locations included Tower Behavioral
Health, Berks County Jail
System, and Thomas Ford (AEDY).

PARENTS, EDUCATORS + STAFF SERVED

• Application Software & Technology Training	255
• Common Inservice	252
• Continuing Professional Education & Development	13,087
• Discovery Education	6,000
• FBI Fingerprinting	128
• First Aid, Health, Transportation, CDL, OSHA Asbestos & Fire Safety Trainings	757
• Guest Teacher Training	282
• Infinite Campus Training	215
• PA Inspired Leadership	287
• Professional Networks	4,542
• Summer Workshops	348

ADULTS SERVED 26,153

THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY

STATEWIDE SERVICES:
151,250



EARLY CHILDHOOD

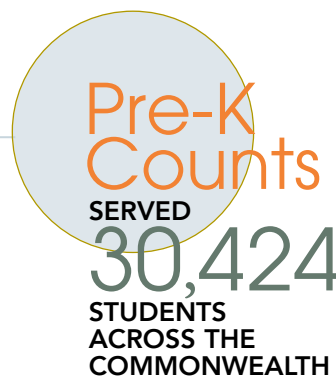
• Head Start Supplemental Assistance	6,574
• Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (birth to 6)	8,100
• OCDEL Early Head Start (birth to 3)	452
• Pre-K Counts	30,424

EARLY LEARNERS SERVED 45,550

EDUCATORS+STAFF SERVED

- The Pennsylvania Key Professional Development profiles in the Registry

105,700



BCIU OPERATES THREE CLASSROOMS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF AND/OR HEARING IMPAIRED. THIS INCLUDES CLASSROOMS AT NORTHWEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND READING HIGH SCHOOL



NEW LEADERSHIP IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Mary Franciscus joined BCIU as the new Director of Human Resources in February 2023. Ms. Franciscus' arrival brought a wealth of comprehensive human resources experiences, effectively providing leadership and guidance to the BCIU and the Pennsylvania Key, in addition to supporting the constituent school districts.

Ms. Franciscus previously worked in human resources for the Chester County Intermediate Unit and the YMCA of Greater Brandywine. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Millersville University and a master's in human resources from Penn State University. She is an active member of professional associations including the Society for Human Resource Management and the Pennsylvania Association of School Personnel Administrators. Her leadership and dedication to her new role, in collaboration with **Alexis Luckhart**, Assistant Director of the Office of Human Resources, will ensure a smooth transition and continued success of the Office of Human Resources and the BCIU as a whole.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

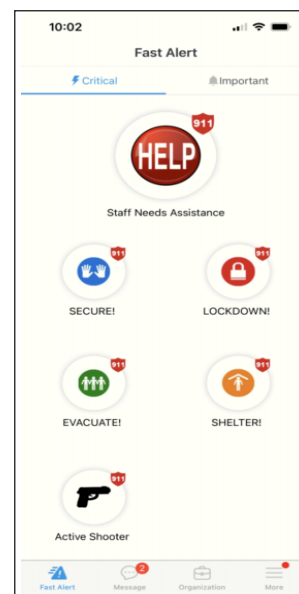


EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING AT THE BCIU

Fulfilling the mission of the BCIU and successfully supporting Berks County and the Commonwealth significantly depends on the wellness and culture across the organization. Two of this year's organizational priorities included emphasizing Wellness and Safety and a Culture of Belonging across the BCIU and The Pennsylvania Key. Throughout the school year, many internal resources were made available to support these priorities including a comprehensive health and well-being portal within the organization's intranet and the opportunity to subscribe to the Healthy Minds @Work Program app at no cost; an app that includes podcasts and seated and active guided medications.

CRISISGO / SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

To fulfill Act 55 mandates, requiring all staff members to complete three hours of training annually, **Russell Del Rosario**, BCIU Safety and Security Program Administrator, led CrisisGo and Situational Awareness trainings for BCIU staff. The trainings focused on providing comprehensive information about the CrisisGo app and its effective utilization during emergency situations. The Situational Awareness trainings emphasized the importance of staff members being observant of their surroundings and included recommended practices for handling crisis scenarios.





CAMP CONNECT

During the summer of 2022, Camp Connect helped 14 children experiencing grief to develop new skills to cope with loss, foster resilience, and form lifelong bonds. Dedicated counselors, nurses, and interns met with each student, sharing strength in a supportive community.

Camp Connect is offered every June and August through Berks County Intermediate Unit and is supported by a collaborative

partnership from the Berks County Mental Health / Developmental Disabilities Program, Kutztown University, Jan's Circle of Friends, local hospice bereavement programs, social agencies, and therapy dogs. Also assisted by student interns from Kutztown University, Alvernia University, and Penn State Berks, the camp has served 148 students since its inception in 2014.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

BRIAN | Becker

TRANSPORTATION LOG DISPATCHER OFFICE OF OPERATIONS, TRANSPORTATION

Brian Becker shares that the best part of his job is his coworkers and making sure that every student gets to school and back home safely.

You might not know: Mr. Becker is a huge Penn State football and wrestling fan. He loves sitting around the firepit listening to all kinds of music, the beach, and a casino trip every now and then.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Lucille Gallis, Chief Financial Officer



Angel Green, CPA, Assistant Director

NEW INITIATIVES & **major** accomplishments

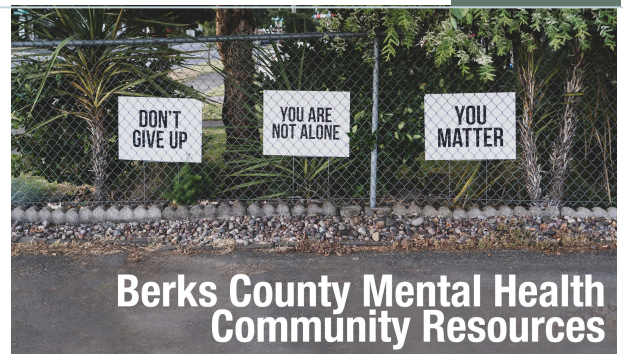
LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN BUSINESS SERVICES

The Office of Business Services welcomed new leadership at the beginning of 2023 when

Lucille Gallis assumed the role of Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Mrs. Gallis has been a highly regarded and well-respected member of the BCIU leadership team since January 2020. Her extensive business experience affords the organization financial stability and a continued commitment to delivering high-quality customer service both within the BCIU and for its external customers.

Angel Green joined the organization as Assistant Director of Finance, having previously served as the Assistant Director of Business Administration and Treasurer for the Parkland School District. Mrs. Green brings more than 21 years of financial experience to the BCIU; 14 of which were in Pennsylvania school district business operations, with an extensive background in financial management budgeting, reporting, and audit preparation.

Both Mrs. Gallis and Mrs. Green round out a team of high-caliber experienced leaders who work to promote the mission and vision of the organization while ensuring we are effectively executing goals and priorities as the organization moves forward.



MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY RESOURCES WEBPAGE

The Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) launched a mental health resources website for the Berks County community on May 11, 2023. The website is an extension of berksiu.org and provides key resources and information for administrators, school mental health workers, parents, and students to support well-being and mental health. The website was created to spread awareness about local mental health resources and can be viewed at:

www.berksiu.org/bcmentalhealth.

YEARLY RECAP | BUSINESS SERVICES

The BCIU's Office of Business Services successfully managed all fiscal operations for 89 budgets totaling \$209,303,000 as well as accounting services for the Berks County School Districts Health Trust in 2022-2023.

Throughout the 2021-2022 fiscal year (the most recent complete fiscal year), within the Office of Business Services, Purchasing Services processed 4,000 purchase orders; Accounts Payable processed 8,200 payment transactions; Accounts Receivable issued 3,650 customer invoices and processed 4,950 revenue receipts; and Payroll processed 22,899 paychecks. In addition, 14,700 incoming calls were fielded by the front desk; 2,630 shipments were received at the loading dock, logged, and distributed; 1,450 internal warehouse orders were processed and delivered to BCIU programs; and 1,870 delivery / pickups were facilitated via Interdistrict Delivery Service.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

A NEW OFFICE, FAMILIAR LEADERSHIP



The Office of Operations was formed in early 2023, when the Office of Business Services and Operations separated due to a strategic realignment for the organization. Leading the new

office as Chief Operating Officer (COO) is **Rob Rosenberry**. While this is a new role for Mr. Rosenberry, he is not new to the BCIU.

Mr. Rosenberry has been a trusted and respected leader within the organization since July 2010. His long tenure and institutional knowledge, coupled with his human resources and business background, provide a strong foundation for leading the operations, safety and security, and transportation programs overseen by the Office of Operations.

CAREGIVER EVENTS

In Spring of 2023, the Office of Early Childhood and Student Services offered learning opportunities for parents and caregivers of children in the BCIU Early Childhood programs as well as the local community.

On March 8, 2023, guest speaker **Dr. Veidre Jackson** presented “Playing a R.O.L.E as a Resilient Caregiver.” In the presentation, she examined the impact of stress on caregivers, provided strategies to create healthy practices, and how to set priorities.



A second session by Dr. Veidre Jackson was presented on April 18, 2023, focusing on “Successful Strategies for Parents as Partners.” This session provided parents / caregivers with strategies for building relationships with educators to better support their child’s education and become their child’s lifelong advocate.

BETH | Weckel

HEAD START HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES SUPERVISOR OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND STUDENT SERVICES

Beth Weckel shares that the best part of her job is working with amazing people, both staff and families, as well as the greatest age group of children.

Mrs. Weckel’s supervisor shares that, “Mrs. Weckel is one of the most passionate, dedicated individuals I have ever had the privilege to work with. She is consistently reliable, flexible, and willing to serve in whatever capacity is needed.”



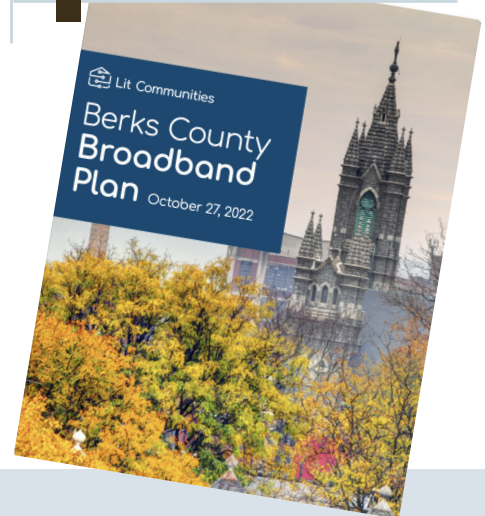
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

SCOTT MAJOR OFFERS TESTIMONY AT JOINT SENATE PUBLIC HEARING ON STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

A joint hearing of the Senate Education and Communications and Technology Committees was held on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, to gather information for developing a plan for protecting student data in Pennsylvania. **Scott Major**, BCIU Chief Information Officer, provided testimony on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) regarding this critical issue as it pertains to Pennsylvania's 29 intermediate units in their efforts to provide quality education and services to the 1.7 million children in

Pennsylvania. Mr. Major's testimony reinforced the need for a statewide framework which provides support, identifies measures, and sets protocols placing a structure around protecting sensitive data. In addition to stressing the value of the implementation of a statewide network, his testimony emphasized the need for appropriate state funding and resources to accompany the implementation of any new requirements for protecting student data.



The services and support provided by the **Office of Information Technology** are truly unmatched for both internal and external partners. They go above and beyond to ensure that the Berks County Intermediate Unit, the Pennsylvania Key, Berks County school districts, career and technology centers, and customers across the Commonwealth have access to information, applications, and all necessary technology resources.

OFFICE overview

Furthermore, the office is responsible for offering application support and Regional Wide Area Network services to member schools, ensuring that a wide range of systems and services are in place to support the daily operations of these organizations.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the office continued to focus on key initiatives, including strengthening cyber security

processes, procedures, and our security posture; expanding broadband access and addressing Digital Literacy needs across Berks County; and providing a reliable and efficient resource for print services and tax bill printing promoting "Two Signature Services" in "One Seamless Solution." They are committed to staying at the forefront of the industry and providing the best possible technology solutions for their partners and the broader community of technology users.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

BERKS COUNTY TRANSITION COORDINATING COUNCIL (BCTCC) HOSTS FREE TRANSITION EXPO FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Berks County Transition Coordinating Council (BCTCC) and the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) hosted the 2023 Transition Expo on Thursday, April 13, at the BCIU Main Office. This free event connected students with disabilities and their families to local agencies and organizations that can assist in planning for the transition from school to adult life. With more than 35 vendors, youth-focused activities, parent networking opportunities, and informative sessions, the Expo provided valuable resources for employment, education, independent living, and more.



Stacy Breiner and Colleen Rios, Educational Consultants; and **Heather Wamsher**, OPL Program Administrator at the Transition Expo for students.

OFFICE overview



The Pennsylvania Key had a productive and impactful year supporting the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) while focusing on and completing several critical initiatives. The Professional Development Registry team successfully integrated the state's quality rating system for child care into the Registry platform, allowing child care providers to easily apply for and document their quality rating status. Additionally, many of their early childhood service delivery programs (PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental, and Early Head Start) expanded or successfully renewed their grants.

The Creative Child Care Solutions Director has successfully partnered with several businesses across the Commonwealth in support of the Governor's efforts to solve the child care dilemma for business leaders. The communication team developed, managed, and facilitated the Equity in Early Childhood Champions Awards with OCDEL and hosted an event at the Capitol Rotunda where over thirty recipients attended along with OCDEL and Department of Human Services Acting Secretary, **Dr. Valerie Arkoosh**.



NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

ECYEH EAGLE SCOUT DONATIONS

Homelessness is a growing problem in Berks County, with more than 1,652 students experiencing homelessness. These students often face significant challenges, including limited access to necessities like hygiene supplies. However, one tenth grade Fleetwood Area High School student and Boy Scout, **Samuel Heebner**, of Troop 183, partnered with the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program to help combat this problem.

Samuel's Eagle Scout project involved collecting hygiene supplies to distribute to local

school districts to support students experiencing homelessness. The donated items included essential items like shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, and other personal hygiene products.

The BCIU was pleased to support and facilitate Samuel's project however needed. Donation boxes were set up from mid-April to May 6 at three BCIU locations: the BCIU Main Office; the BCIU Learning Center at Lower Alsace; and the BCIU Education Centre; and more than 2,300 hygiene supplies were collected!

ECYEH
Regional
Coordinator
Kristen Hoffa
and **Sam
Heebner** of
Troop 183.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



CONNIE | Fehr

SUPERVISOR OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND STUDENT SERVICES

Connie Fehr shares that the best part of her job is always learning new things and she enjoys working with an amazing team, including her niece.

You might not know: Mrs. Fehr once bowled a 290 game!

CREATIVE CHILDCARE SERVICES

The Pennsylvania Key's fee for service initiative, Creative Child Care Solutions (CCCS), saw significant expansion during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. CCCS' Early Childhood Education Advisor leveraged existing relationships with regional Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs) and made connections with local organizations to gain access to a wider group of businesses. These efforts resulted in contracts with three additional business clients to identify strategies for supporting the child care needs of their workforce.

Recognizing the need to build child care providers' capacity to engage with their local business community, CCCS also developed materials for coaching providers through the steps they need to identify potential business partners and the specific investment asks



they can present. These materials have been presented to providers at conferences, via webinars, and during virtual provider meetings offered by ELRCs and provider membership organizations.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments



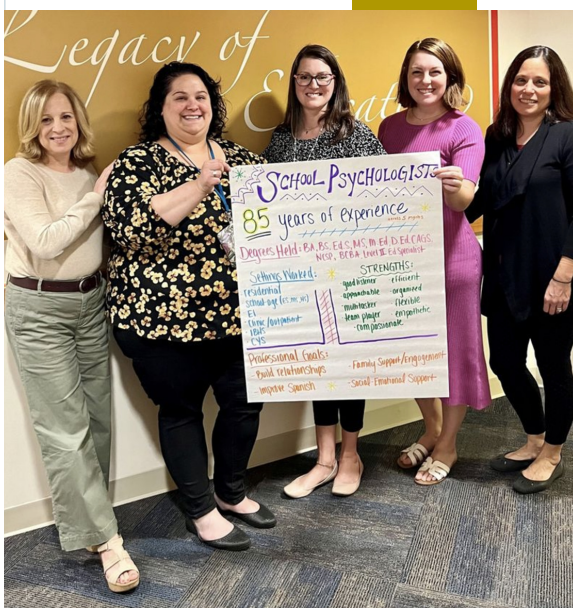
Berks County students participating in the BCIU's Pathways to Adult Living (PAL) Program develop the skills necessary for success at Giannotti's at the BCIU.



TOUCH-A-TRUCK

Kids of all ages explored their favorite trucks and vehicles at the Junior League of Reading's 16th annual Touch-a-Truck event, held at FirstEnergy Stadium, on Saturday, April 22. The BCIU Transportation Program provided a 72-passenger yellow school bus for the children to enjoy and shared information with families about transportation services. Proceeds from the event will support the Junior League's Youth Empowerment Initiatives, creating a brighter future for the community.

NEW INITIATIVES & **major** accomplishments



Dedicated BCIU early intervention school psychologists (left to right) **Cindy Silverman Chronister, Jessica Jennings, Dr. Joanna Cogan-Ferchalk, Jessica Clark, and Elisabeth Papich**

SITE ASSESSMENTS

Twenty-four site evaluations were conducted at schools in Berks County by **Russell Del Rosario**, BCIU Safety & Security Program Administrator. Interiors and exteriors of the buildings were inspected to provide recommendations to address identified concerns crucial to ensuring the safety and security of students and staff.

OFFICE. overview



The Office of Early Childhood and Student Services (ECSS) has spearheaded some incredible initiatives during the 2022-2023 school year. In January 2023, the BCIU opened the first Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab within Berks County. The lab provides a unique, hands-on learning environment that will not only assess current abilities and skills, but also provide insight into possible career paths. The office also relocated the PAL program to the BCIU Main Office and changed the design to create additional Pathways to Adult Living (PAL). PAL is the link between setting goals and realizing them. This program provides students with the skills necessary to successfully transition from school to adult life and incorporates elements from the PAES Lab and pre-transition curriculum aligned with our Project SEARCH program.

Additionally, the office has launched several Free Preschool initiatives, providing opportunities for students and families to have access to high-quality early education. Over the past year, the early childhood programs have conducted program reviews and community assessments to inform program design and services for the future.

The office's work extends far beyond the classroom. Throughout the year, they have hosted several caregiver events, providing parents and caregivers with helpful resources and advice. They have also launched a Mental Health Resources Website, which offers the Berks County community access to a wide range of mental health resources and support. The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program expanded their support across the region through the addition of outreach specialists and mobilizing resources. ECSS has also enhanced offerings for school crisis prevention and response through implementation of the PREPaRE curriculum.

The office remains committed to ensuring student outcomes and successes are at the forefront of their work. Through sharing stories of the impact of the BCIU's efforts, it becomes clear just how vital this work is in the lives of the over 70,000 students served. With a focus on improving education, the office works tirelessly to ensure every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

BCIU PRINT SERVICES CENTER | eTaxTrax GROWTH

The Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) Print Services Center continued to provide invaluable services to schools, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations, fulfilling over 2,000 print orders and printing over 50,000 booklets during the year. In 2022-2023, the Print Center regularly served 12 Berks County school districts and the Pennsylvania Key; early learning resource centers; and intermediate units statewide, becoming an indispensable resource for supporting printing and production needs while promoting sustainability and cost savings.

The BCIU Print Services Center continues to offer a wide range of services to meet the diverse needs of its clients. From basic printing and copying to large-scale

production and specialized projects, the center's state-of-the-art facilities, advanced technology, and a skilled team of professionals with over 56 years of experience ensure that every job is completed to the highest standards.

The BCIU Print Services Center is also a reliable and efficient resource for tax bill printing for educational institutions statewide and provided this crucial business service to 33 municipalities and 40 school districts in 2022-2023. Bills are generated from the BCIU's eTaxTrax® software, printed in the Print Services Center on self-mailer paper, and prepared for bulk mail processing at discounted postage rates through CASS software. The Center is slated to produce nearly 700,000 tax bills in 2023!



BCIU Print Services Center team: **Linda Sneddon**, Graphic Specialist, and **Patty Little**, Tax Services and Digital Support Specialist



LAKIA 'KIA' Harris

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER AND CDL INSTRUCTOR OFFICE OF OPERATIONS, TRANSPORTATION

Kia Harris shares that the best part of her job is being the driver of the coolest kids! She affectionately calls them her 'squad' and adds that it is a privilege to play a special part in their growth and development to be a piece of their puzzle of life daily.

You might not know: Mrs. Harris' favorite place to be is with family and at the farmers' market. She says, "I am addicted to plants and consider myself a plant mom."

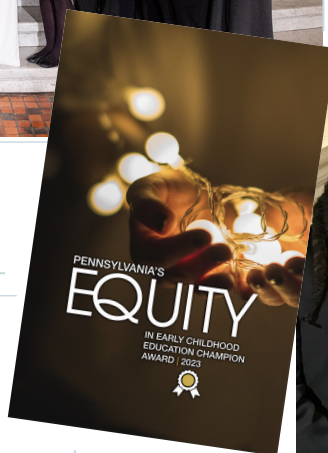


EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments



The Shapiro Administration celebrates the Second Annual Early Childhood Education Equity Champion Awards with recipients from across the Commonwealth, in Harrisburg, PA on April 18, 2023.



EQUITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CHAMPION AWARDS

On April 18, 2023, the Pennsylvania Key hosted an event at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg to honor the winners of the 2023 Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Award and to raise awareness of efforts to promote equity in Pennsylvania's early learning settings.

The 2023 award winners represent a diverse range of organizations and individuals which include teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to creating inclusive learning environments promoting equity in early childhood education classrooms and their communities.

ECE Equity Champion Awardee School District of Lancaster, PA Pre-K Counts joined by **Dr. Aylesworth**, Representative **Izzy Smith-Wade-El** and **Dr. Val Arkoosh**, Acting Secretary, Department of Human Services.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



PATTY | Little

TAX SERVICES AND DIGITAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Patty Little shares that the best part of her job is being a part of two problem-solving teams.

You might not know: Mrs. Little was held as a toddler by presidential candidate Richard Nixon.

OFFICE overview



The Office of Business Services

oversees the Berks County Intermediate Unit's financial management, payroll, purchasing, and warehouse services. In February of 2023, the Office welcomed new leaders with **Lucille Gallis** as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and **Angel Green** as the Assistant Director for Finance, and bid a fond retirement farewell to Donna DeLoretta after 18 years of service with BCIU, including over three years as CFO/COO.

Throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year, in addition to coordinating 89 program budgets for the BCIU and The Pennsylvania Key, as well as supporting school district business officials, the Office of Business Services participated in initiatives such as the Logowear project in partnership with the Creative Team, and advocacy efforts including the Berks County Committee on Legislative Action (COLA) and the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) Day on the Hill.



STUDENT success story

Nathan Creveling, 2022 Project SEARCH graduate, was born with autism, but his life, and what caused St. Joseph Medical Center and so many others to fall in love with him, is not defined by its limitations. Rather, its trajectory is focused by what he can do: His ability to recall names, facts and numbers is startling. His diligence in even the smallest, most ordinary tasks is unwavering.

Mr. Creveling was hired as the St. Joseph Cancer Center ambassador, a job created just for him, upon completion of his Project SEARCH internship. In his role, Mr. Creveling guides patients in from the waiting room, remembering every name. He offers them a blanket, a pillow, a snack or drink, and friendly small talk.

He also helps with stocking, cleaning, and sterilizing. Each chair gets the same level of focus – as if their cleanliness was as important as the surgery happening elsewhere in the hospital. Using spray bottles of disinfectant and rags, Mr. Creveling attacks each one systematically, never losing focus.

“From the first day on he was very, very good with patients,” certified nurse aide Justine Larish says. “He picked up on things very quickly.”

This story is an excerpt from Penn State Health News. The entire article can be read here <https://bit.ly/3Ch5kaJ>

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments



ECSS FREE PRESCHOOL INITIATIVES

Each year, enrollment for the Berks County Intermediate Unit's (BCIU) Head Start and Pre-K Counts

programs is a priority, as both programs prepare preschool-age children for school success by fostering intellectual, social, and emotional growth, and creating

opportunities for parent/guardian engagement.

Throughout the 2022-2023 year, the Office of Early Childhood and Student Services (ECSS) partnered with the BCIU Creative Team

to reach intended audiences in Berks County with a strategic multi-channel marketing campaign that included a dedicated webpage, local billboard and print advertising, school district partnerships, a paid social media campaign, and more. The social media portion of the campaign yielded great success, reaching more than 12,000 people and receiving close to 300 clicks in one week alone.

Through the Free Preschool initiatives and comprehensive campaign, the Office of Early Childhood and Student Services continues to provide opportunities for students and families to have access to high-quality early education.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



CORY Clark

BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND STUDENT SERVICES

Cory Clark shares that the best part of his job is working with students and teachers to find more ethical and effective solutions that benefit everybody.

You might not know: Mr. Clark's most enjoyable musical experience was playing Beethoven's Emperor Concerto with the world-renowned pianist Awadagin Pratt.

NEW INITIATIVES

& major accomplishments

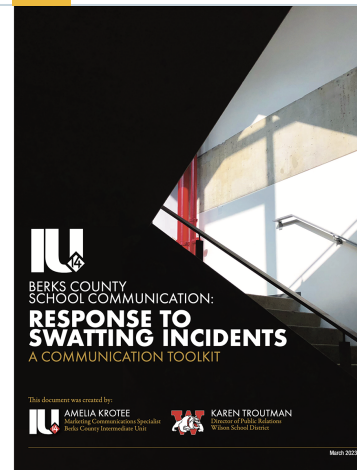
SWATTING TOOLKIT

In a coordinated effort to ensure Berks County school leaders are prepared to respond quickly and effectively to a possible “swatting” incident or other related emergency, the BCIU and Wilson School District worked collaboratively to create the “Berks County School Communication: Response to Swatting Incidents | A Communication Toolkit.” Along with information shared by the Wilson School District regarding details and lessons learned from a swatting incident at the Wilson High School on February 24, 2023, the toolkit was presented at a countywide meeting of superintendents,

career and technology directors, and public relations staff on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. The toolkit was designed to serve as a supplemental resource in the event of another swatting incident and was organized into the following sections:

1. Berks County District Attorney’s Office Statement and Guidance
2. Wilson School District Swatting Incident Overview and Takeaways
3. Internal/External Communication Templates
4. Tips for Emergency Preparedness and Additional Resources
5. Reunification

Berks County is extremely fortunate to have the support and collaboration of its 18 school districts, two career



and technology centers, local law enforcement and emergency responders, and community partners in its safe schools and emergency preparedness efforts.

Helson Francisco-Salgado started in the Berks County Intermediate Unit Early Intervention program in December 2020, first receiving services in an EI Specialized classroom with integrated speech and sign language as his communication mode. During the summer of 2022, before transitioning into a Head Start (HS) classroom in the fall, **Sarah Thompson**, Special Education Itinerant Teacher, worked with him at home to further support his hesitation in communicating with unfamiliar peers and adults. Within a few sessions, Helson was verbally communicating over 100 utterances with the itinerant teacher.

When starting in the Head Start classroom, Ms. Thompson; **Kelly Birmingham**, Speech Therapist; **Chelsea Salgado**, Head Start Classroom Teacher; and **Yohanni Lantigua**, Head Start Paraeducator worked collaboratively to develop a low-tech lanyard of pictures allowing Helson to communicate with peers and staff. To further his communication, an Augmentative and Alternative Communication device replaced the low-tech lanyard of pictures, allowing Helson to verbally communicate while also being supported by supplemental aids, as needed.

Helson’s family has played an integral part in his educational journey. Helson is now an active participant in his classroom where he has established

STUDENT success story



peer and teacher relationships and progressed academically. The skills he has developed are fundamental during his upcoming transition to kindergarten.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT: CAMP READ-A-LOT

Families from non-public schools across Berks County gathered on the evening of Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) Main Office to bond over the joys of reading at the 11th Annual Family Literacy Night. The event was coordinated by the BCIU Office of Professional Learning non-public schools staff.

The theme for the event was "Camp Read-A-Lot" and featured "glamping" tents, camp-themed

rooms, and activities throughout the evening centered around the *five essential pillars of literacy*: Philly Phanatic Phonemic Awareness; Popcorn Phonics; Bedtime Stories and Rhyming Fluency; S'mores Vocabulary / Comprehension. Participants also came away with books and informational tools and resources to incorporate reading at home.



office of Human Resources | HR OFFICE overview

The Office of Human Resources has worked to support the Berks County Intermediate Unit and the Pennsylvania Key staff, which consists of 1,200 members. For the 2022-2023 school year, the department onboarded 151 new BCIU team members, while also strengthening their recruitment strategies and hosting various hiring events. Additionally, **Mary Franciscus** joined the BCIU Leadership Team as Director of Human Resources in February 2023.

The department's focus remains on providing exceptional human resources support to both internal and external stakeholders, including employee relations, benefits, mentorship for new supervisors, administrative searches, and many other areas.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

STUDENT EVENTS & PROGRAMS

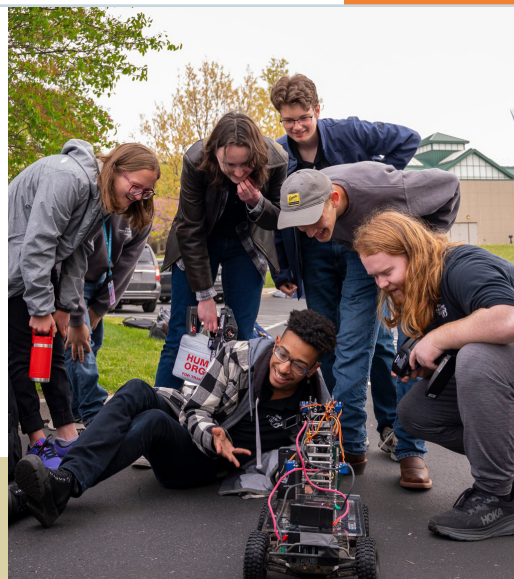
The BCIU Office of Professional Learning organized multiple student programs for the 2022-2023 school year, including:

STEM Design Challenge: The BCIU hosted the 10th Annual STEM Design Challenge at the BCIU Main Office. Forty-four teams of students in grades four and five competed on Wednesday, March 22, and 18 teams of students in grades six through eight competed on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. Students were tasked to research environmental issues, identify an issue for their team to address, and use K'Nex building materials to construct prototypes to create a solution. Teams also created a blueprint, documented their process in a design notebook, and prepared a presentation.

Land, Sea, and Air Challenge: Seventy-six students from Berks and Schuylkill counties participated at the annual Sea, Air, and Land (SeAL) Challenge on

April 27, 2023, at Cabela's in Hamburg. The program provided the opportunity for students to learn about the engineering process through the design and construction of a robotic system. On challenge day, students met as a group to compete in sea, air, or land challenges that replicated missions encountered by the military, national security agencies, and first responders.

Academic Challenge: Thirteen school district four-person teams participated in four academic quiz competitions from November through February, determining six teams for the play-offs held on March 21, 2023, at the BCIU Main Office. The competitions tested students' general scholastic knowledge, covering various subjects such as literature, fine arts, history, geography, economics, current events, math, and science.



HEIDI | Gamler

PROJECTS COORDINATOR SPECIALIST OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Heidi Gamler shares that the best part of her job is the variety – never knowing what the day will bring.

Mrs. Gamler's supervisor reported that "Heidi demonstrates reliability through the work that she does each day. She is a problem-solver and critical thinker who takes pride in her work. Mrs. Gamler is always ready to tackle a new challenge and embrace it with a smile or a laugh."



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Pennsylvania schools experienced a shortage of staff members and transportation employees throughout the 2022-2023 school year. In collaboration with community partners and with proactive efforts such as hosting three hiring events, attending 15 job fairs, and conducting

paid advertising campaigns, the BCIU's Office of Human Resources (HR) was able to strategically plan to successfully hire 151 new employees across the organization.



Our Kids Need You!
Paraeducators
Assistant Teachers
BCIU www.berksiu.org/joinourteam



BUS / VAN DRIVERS
BUS / VAN ASSISTANTS
\$21.55/hour minimum rate for BUS DRIVERS
www.berksiu.org/drivers BCIU Berks County Intermediate Unit



BCIU human resources and transportation officials attend transportation job fairs to interview applicants on the spot (from left to right: Kellilyn Aten, Matthew Comfort, John Coakley, and Sheila Wyatt).



Conductores de Autobús GANAN entre: \$22 - \$32.10/hr.
Dependiendo de la experiencia de conductores de autobuses escolares y la antigüedad.
BCIU NOW HIRING
\$18.15/por hora para conductores de Van
\$14.85/por hora para asistentes de Van
¿Tiene su CDL y los respaldos adecuados? ¡Reciba un bono de \$1,500!
¿Interesado en aprender a conducir un autobús escolar? Reciba entrenamiento pagado. Tiempo Parcial! Mañanas y tardes (sin noches, fines de semana o días festivos)! Oportunidades para trabajar horas adicionales.
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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



VICKI Ravert

DATA OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND STUDENT SERVICES

Vicki Ravert shares that her favorite part of her job is that it is different every day.

Mrs. Ravert's supervisors share that she is always taking the initiative to look for better ways to improve processes and ensure data is accurate. In addition, she is always willing to adjust her schedule to accommodate staff and program needs.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

GUEST TEACHER INITIATIVE

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, the Berks County Intermediate Unit offered three Guest Teacher Training sessions for individuals interested in serving as substitute teachers in Berks County. The program yielded 39 graduates who are now eligible to serve as substitute teachers in 11 school districts, the Berks Career and Technology Center, and the Berks County Intermediate Unit!

The Guest Teacher Program provides participants who have college degrees, but limited or no classroom experience, the necessary training to advance their career and make a difference in their communities.

MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

become a substitute teacher

SPRING 2023
March 22-23, 2023

2023 ANNIE SULLIVAN AWARD



Dr. Christi Weitzel, BCIU Assistant Director, Office of Early Childhood and Student Services; **Gary McEwen**, BCIU Board President; **Christian Temchatin**, Superintendent, Kutztown Area School District; **Danielle Berger**, 2023 Annie Sullivan Award Recipient; **Dr. Michelle Reichard-Huff**, Director, BCIU Office of Early Childhood and Student Services; and **Jennifer Elliker**, Supervisor of Special Education, Kutztown Area School District

OFFICE overview



In early 2023, a restructuring of the Office of Business Services and Operations into two offices was implemented. **Rob Rosenberry** was named Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the **Office of Operations**, providing strategic leadership and supervision of operations, safety and security, and transportation.

These programs contributed to a successful 2022-2023 year for the BCIU by accomplishing several initiatives. Operations staff, in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood & Student Services, set up a Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab in the BCIU Main Office lower-level. They also planned and coordinated the School Community Testing Center hosted at the BCIU Main Office through May 2023.

Safety and security program staff provided oversight of physical security improvements for BCIU locations and provided several training opportunities for employees which resulted in the improvement of emergency preparedness and situational awareness for staff. Another major highlight, which resulted in the recognition of several employees as BCIU Champions, was when the BCIU transportation staff volunteered with an emergency mission for the residents living in B'nai B'rith Apartments in Reading after a prolonged power outage during extremely cold weather in December 2022.

The Office of Operations remains dedicated to delivering exceptional services and assistance for facility and maintenance needs, custodial services, transportation, safety and security, and logistical support.

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

OFFICE overview

The **Office of Professional Learning** (OPL) had a successful year, offering educators and administrators across Berks County and the Commonwealth a variety of professional development experiences while continuing to focus on several major initiatives. Career Ready Berks, which helps students prepare for future careers by providing them with tools and resources to help them explore various career pathways, created numerous opportunities for engagement and development. The Leadership Series provided district leaders with the opportunity to learn from experts in the field and connect with other professionals. The Administrators' Conference gave Berks County school administrators the chance to learn about new strategies and leadership techniques that can help them better serve their staff and students.

Through the services provided by OPL's Training and Consultation team, educators were supported to improve outcomes for students receiving special education services. At the Transition Expo, students with



Dr. Dan Richards, Director of OPL

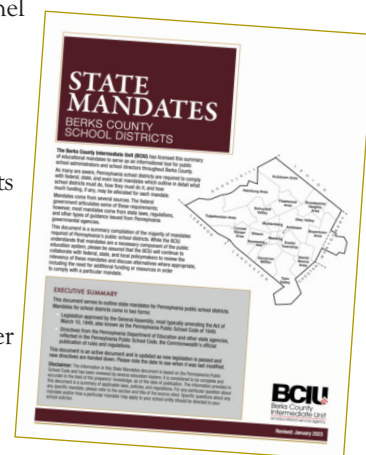
disabilities and their families were connected with local agencies and organizations who provide assistance for the transition from school to adult life.

Family Literacy Night offered families an opportunity to come together for "Camp Read-A-Lot" to learn the five essential pillars of literacy while exploring themed-glamping tents. Finally, FLEX Learning continued to be an important platform for educators to access flexible and convenient learning to earn professional development credits. The Office of Professional Learning looks forward to continuing their professional development and student engagement offerings in 2023-2024.

2023 STATE MANDATES

The Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) Executive Office released the 2023 State Mandates and State Mandates Checklist documents during the week of February 13 to Berks County school districts, career and technology centers, and professional partners, as well as the 19 intermediate units who subscribe to this service. First designed in early 2021, the 82-page State Mandates document is a compilation of mandates required of Pennsylvania's public schools. The State Mandates Checklist serves as a companion document providing, at a glance, required training/drills, reporting, policies/plans, and personnel to assist schools to meet the established requirements and deadlines.

The 2023 editions offer revised language to provide clarification and additional content to summarize requirements in accordance with Act 55 of 2022 (as well as other acts). These reports provide individuals with a comprehensive summary of federal, state, and local regulations and laws. The documents were shared with state legislators and the BCIU's professional partners (the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators [PASA], the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials [PASBO], the Pennsylvania School Boards Association [PSBA], the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units [PAIU], and others) to show the impact mandates have on public schools and to leverage advocacy efforts.



NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

CAREER READY BERKS / PA DREAM TEAM

Over the past school year, Career Ready Berks served 38 local education agencies, including Berks County school districts, higher education institutions, and local organizations; and worked with over 230 business providers.

The Office of Professional Development (OPL) staff coordinated the 3rd Annual Career Ready Berks Night which was hosted by the Reading Royals at the Santander Arena on Friday, March 3, 2023. Sixteen local businesses were present to provide information about their organizations and to talk with students, parents, and attendees about career awareness and opportunities available in the community. To engage participants, school-age students were given a passport to help keep track of the businesses' tables they visited.

The Berks County Dream Team, a group of young professionals who work in the manufacturing field in STEM-related careers, is comprised of 16 team members, from 10 local manufacturing companies. These team members were able to complete 96 classroom presentations and community events, impacting nearly 2,500 students. Funded by the Berks County Workforce Development Board and the United Way of Berks County, the Dream Team is a partnership between the Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC) and the BCIU. We look forward to continued growth of the team into the next school year to inspire students to explore careers in manufacturing.



Jill Darlington and Stacy Dunleavy from the BCIU with Slapshot, Reading Royals Mascot, at Career Ready Berks Night at Santander Arena.



The Berks County Dream Team assisted at the 2023 What's So Cool About Manufacturing Award Ceremony at the DoubleTree of Reading on March 21, 2023.

DEBRA Gaenzle

ATTENDANCE AND COMPENSATION SPECIALIST OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Debra Gaenzle shares that the best part of her job is that every day is different. She appreciates the friends she has made, both personal and professional.

You might not know: Mrs. Gaenzle enjoys going to the beach and spending time with family and friends. She also enjoys watching her grandsons play baseball and soccer.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

NEW INITIATIVES & major accomplishments

COLA | CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR EDUCATION

The Berks County Committee on Legislative Action (COLA) met quarterly throughout the 2022-2023 school year to continue advocacy efforts. The Committee, co-chaired by **Andrew Potteiger**, Superintendent of the Brandywine Heights Area School District and **Dr. Greg Miller**, Superintendent of the Fleetwood Area School District; and facilitated by **Dr. Jill Hackman**, BCIU Executive Director, determined priority areas for 2022-2023 focusing on School Safety; Physical Security and Mental Health Grant Funding; Future Funding; Basic Education Funding (BEF); and Special Education Funding (SEF), State Mandates, and Charter / Cyber Charter Schools. Leaders from the

BCIU's professional partner organizations were invited to each meeting to offer insight and perspective on legislative issues and the impact they will have on our schools.

The purpose of COLA is to provide schools with a forum for review, analysis, and comment on state and federal legislation and regulations affecting education in Berks County and across the Commonwealth. The Committee's efforts have made a significant impact on the educational landscape of Berks County, ensuring that the needs of students, educators, and schools are represented and heard at the legislative level.



BCIU Executive Director **Dr. Jill Hackman**, FASD Superintendent **Dr. Greg Miller**, PASBO Executive Director **Hannah Barrick, Esq.**, and BHASD Superintendent **Andrew Potteiger**, sharing ideas at the April 11, 2023, COLA meeting held at the BCIU Main Office.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



LUZ | Ruiz

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER OFFICE OF OPERATIONS, TRANSPORTATION

Luz Ruiz shares that the best part of her job is transporting students safely while being with her BCIU family helping wherever she is needed.

Mrs. Ruiz's supervisor shares: "Mrs. Ruiz is always looking for ways to help the transportation operation to be successful. She is willing to assist with extra routes and is quick to help other employees as well as guiding new hires."

GIVING BACK

The Berks County Intermediate Unit United Way charitable and employee engagement efforts begin anew annually at each State of the Unit / Start of the Year event in August. In the 2022-2023 school year, 82 members of the BCIU and the Pennsylvania Key staff raised over \$19,000 in the August through October payroll and one-time giving campaign.

Through various fundraising activities managed by the United Way Committee throughout the year, the BCIU will be able to provide an additional \$2,400 to the United Way of Berks County to support our families, friends, and neighbors.



The Berks County Head Start Program in the Office of Early Childhood and Student Services hosted a Staff Wellness Day in May 2023. The Head Start Health team partnered with Centro Hispano of Reading to make guacamole for Cinco de Mayo. Dressed up as avocados are BCIU team members **Rebecca Thomas**, Nutrition and Food Service Specialist (left), and **June Malocu**, Health and Nutrition Specialist (right).



BCIU STUDENT ARTWORK SHOWCASE

As part of the acknowledgment and celebration of School Director Recognition Month in January, the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) presented the sixth annual BCIU Student Artwork Showcase based on the theme of "What Makes our District Unique?"

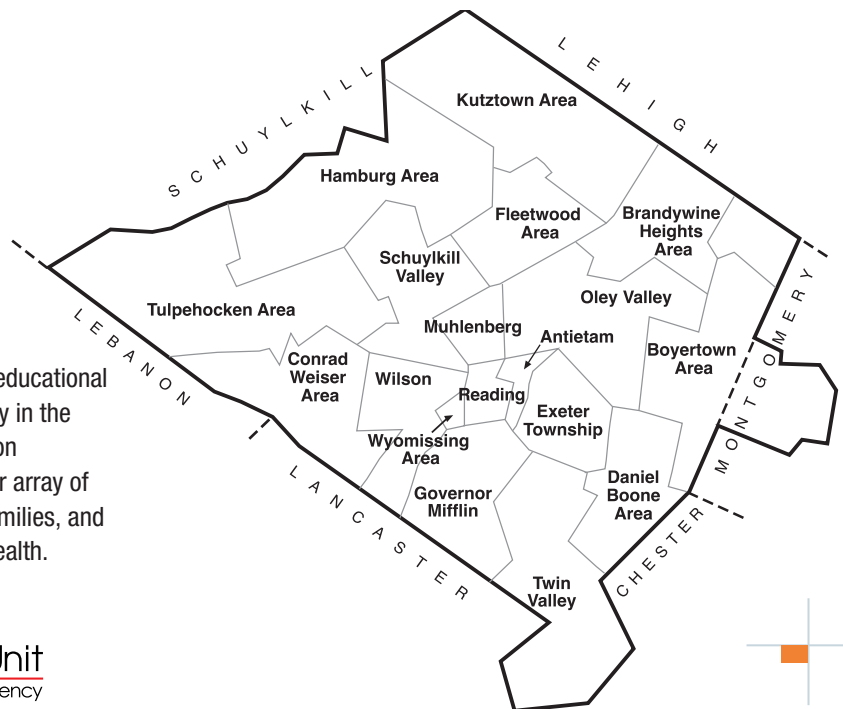
The Showcase is comprised of one original art piece by a high school student from each Berks County school district. The artwork will be on display in the BCIU Board Room at the BCIU Main Office through the end of 2023. In addition, the students and their work are highlighted in a virtual gallery on the BCIU public website (www.berksiu.org) as well as a video showcasing both art and artists that can be viewed on the BCIU YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/zpMWoWb3NyU>



The Learning Academy at Thomas Ford received a generous donation of winter coats through Gallagher's annual "Coats for Kids

Program" to support their Mosaic's Closet Program. Mosaic's Closet is open to students and families in need of items such as clothes, bedding, and toiletries. Several individuals in need of winter coats benefited from this program. Pictured above are **Jessica Bailey**, School Counselor, and **Jesse Bishop**, Assistant Program Administrator from the Learning Academy at Thomas Ford.

Berks County Intermediate Unit was created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1971 to serve the educational needs of public and nonpublic schools in Berks County in the fields of student services, special education, education planning, and technology. BCIU has adopted a broader array of services focusing on the unique needs of students, families, and educators in Berks County and across the Commonwealth.



BCIU Annual Report | June 2023 Edition



MAIN OFFICE 1111 COMMONS BLVD. READING PA 19605