

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



— April 2024 Education Bulletin —

Welcome to the April 2024 edition of the **Luzerne Intermediate Unit (LIU) Office of Professional Learning's (OPL)** monthly education bulletin. The intent of this communication is to provide subscribers with:

- Professional learning opportunities offered by our department,
- Provide school leaders with educational policy support, and
- Provide tips for practicing educators.

This edition will focus on our Training and Consultation (TaC) staff. These educators are experts in specific areas related to the education of students with disabilities, are experienced instructional coaches, and are amazing facilitators of professional learning.

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OPL Education
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TRAINING AND CONSULTATION

SPECIFIC AREAS AS DICTATED BY IDEA

The Luzerne Intermediate Unit (LIU) has on staff a team of educators dedicated to provide consultation and training services—federally funded through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This team, referred to as the Training and Consultation (TaC) department, is comprised of PA certified Special Educators that are both trained in specific areas of high need and cross-trained to ensure integration opportunities that are cohesive and research based. These areas of support have been identified by the PA Special Education Initiative and are:

- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
Academics
- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
Behavior
- Inclusive Practices/Least Restrictive
Environment (LRE)
- Autistic Support
- Assistive Technology
- Transition



This edition of the Office of Professional Learning Education Bulletin will define each of these areas, identify how these can support both students and staff, and provide an opportunity for you to get to know the members of our team proficient in each area.

TAC AREA #1

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT - ACADEMICS

MTSS Academic Services provides support to local school districts in initial planning, implementation, and monitoring of an MTSS framework. On site staff training includes the following:



- How to raise student achievement through evidence based practices across all tiers,
- Deepening teachers' knowledge in the development of reading and writing, and
- Implementation of assessment, progress monitoring, and data analysis.

Professional development builds the capacity of school leaders and staff to refine the core structures and practices required for MTSS implementation. Support is provided in the academics of reading/writing/math components of the framework.

TAC AREA #2

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT - BEHAVIOR

MTSS - Behavior services include all aspects of Positive Behavior Support including facilitating either classroom-wide, building-wide, or system-wide models. Training and consultation in behavior support always emphasizes the behavior/academic connection which is the essential and necessary relationship between social skill development and academic skill development in order to maximize student success.



Member school districts receive support in classroom and instructional management that will create a positive and supportive learning environment. This is accomplished through direct training on the use of differential reinforcement to prevent challenging behavior and the application of de-escalation and conflict resolution strategies to minimize challenging behavior.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) assistance is also included in this area and is designed to establish and maintain systems to support building-wide practices at the universal level. This systems approach is coupled alongside targeted and intensive supports developed after foundational practices are in place.

Assessment and data practices to facilitate ongoing evaluation and improvement of SWPBIS practices are also included in this area.

TAC AREA #3

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)



ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology services include the training and support of district and IU teams in the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices to provide students with disabilities the means to successfully access the general education curriculum and meet their educational goals. Training and consultation opportunities include but are not limited to: SETT facilitation for teams, on-site AT observation and consultation; and staff training on software/devices/equipment and/or technical assistance with product features, device use, and training of staff members. Members of this team attend all statewide trainings/networking sessions to ensure districts receive the most up-to-date information related to AT.

TAC AREA #4

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES / LRE

Inclusive Practices/Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) services provides educators with focused training and technical assistance to support in the design and implementation of sustainable inclusive educational practices for students with disabilities. Doing so includes but is not limited to supporting the development and monitoring of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Support can be provided on goal writing, progress monitoring, and special education supports and services.



Additional on-site assistance includes consultation related to specific student needs, use of effective instructional inclusive strategies within the general education curriculum, and facilitation of state tools to further identify resources, services, and best practices for all students. Training and consultation ensures that school personnel implement systems and practices to effectively educate students with

disabilities and is designed to include a special focus on students with low incidence. These are students with deafness and hearing loss, blindness, deaf-blindness, visual impairments, intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury, significant cognitive disabilities, and multiple disabilities.

TAC AREA #5

AUTISTIC SUPPORT

Autistic support services include training and consultation with district administrators, educators, IU teams, and parents in understanding and meeting the educational needs of children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Training and consultation opportunities are provided to ensure school personnel implement evidence-based practices in the areas of communication, social reasoning, social skills, cognition, sensory sensitivity, emotional regulation, and/or behaviors consistent with those of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Training and consultation opportunities include but are not limited to



on-site staff training (large group and/or small group) and classroom coaching to support the PA Autism Initiative.

TAC AREA #6

TRANSITION



Secondary Transition services include training and support to LIU and district teachers and administrators focusing on post-secondary education, training, employment, and independent living. Trainings and support for teachers and administrators include those around Successful Practices for Secondary Transition for Continuous Improvement (Indicator 13), My Plan for Success (Indicator 14), IEP measurable annual goal writing, transition IEP writing, agency involvement, and transition assessments. Secondary transition services also include LIU Transition Program support and development as well as LIU Transition Specialist support and agency collaboration.

WHO IS WHO?

OUR LIU TAC DEPARTMENT

You will now have a chance to meet each member of our TaC team, their specific areas of special education support, and the school(s) they serve as a Single Point of Contact (SPoC).

DID YOU KNOW! Each district in the LIU has an assigned Single Point of Contact (SPoC). This individual serves on our TaC team and is the school's direct support liaison for administration, teachers, and educational support staff in need of help.

Need assistance? Let your SPoC know...



George Butwin
(gbutwin@liu18.org):
George serves as a member of our MTSS - Academics, MTSS - Behavior, and

Transition teams. He is also the SPoC for Northwest Area and Hanover Area School Districts.



Cara Devine
(cdevine@liu18.org):
Cara serves as a member of our Inclusive Practices/LRE and Transition

teams. She is also our STEM TaC, and is the SPoC of the Hazleton Area School District and our LIU staff.



Tina Gelso
(tgelso@liu18.org):
Tina serves as a member of our Inclusive Practices/LRE and Assistive

Technology teams, She is also the SPoC for the Wyoming Valley West and Tunkhannock Area School Districts.



Loriann Hoffman
(lhoffman@liu18.org):
Loriann serves as a member of our MTSS - Academics team with additional

expertise in literacy. She is the SPoC of the Pittston Area and Lake-Lehman School Districts.



Stacey Raijski
(sraijski@liu18.org):
Stacey serves as a member of our MTSS - Behavior, Autistic Support, and

Assistive Technology teams. Stacey is the SPoC for the Crestwood and Greater Nanticoke Area School Districts.



Lynn Ziller
(lziller@liu18.org):
Lynn serves as a member of our MTSS - Behavior and Autistic

Support teams. She is the SPoC for Dallas Area and the Wilkes-Barre Area School Districts.

Susan Kuhl (skuhl@liu18.org): Susan, whom you met in our March 2024 edition, is also a member of our SPoC team. She is the SPoC for the Wyoming Area School District and both the West-Side and Wilkes-Barre Area CTCs.



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