



**Pennsylvania State Senate and
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Education Committees Joint Hearing:
Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act
May 18, 2016**

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Good morning, Chairmen Smucker, Dinniman, Saylor, and Roebuck and members of the Senate and House Education Committees. My name is Dr. Jill Hackman, Executive Director of the Berks County Intermediate Unit 14. I am here on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) for which I serve as the Chair of the Government Relations Committee.

Every year, more than 175,000 students and 75,000 educators and adults receive services from one of Pennsylvania's twenty-nine intermediate units (IUs). As public, regional educational service agencies, IUs provide educational, administrative, and technology services to the Commonwealth's 500 school districts, 120 charter schools and 2,400 non-public schools.

At Berks County IU, we serve over 65,000 students across 18 school districts and 1 charter school, as well as nearly 700 students in 31 non-public schools.

PAIU's work is focused on facilitating educational and operational collaboration across IU boundaries; leveraging partnerships and resources to expand high quality services to students, schools and communities; ensuring communication to school and community leaders on matters of educational practice and public policy; and working with policymakers in the General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and other state agencies to support students, schools and communities throughout the Commonwealth.

PAIU applauds the Education Committees' interest in ensuring a comprehensive and transparent discussion of Pennsylvania's plan for the implementation of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). As you clearly understand, ESSA creates both new expectations and new opportunities for us to shape the education landscape in Pennsylvania for years to come.

IUs will contribute to the development of Pennsylvania's plan, including having nine IU leaders serving on PDE's practitioner-led work groups, and many more IU staff who are part of the larger stakeholder engagement group. Done well, Pennsylvania's ESSA plan will serve as the state's vision and strategies for an excellent education system where all students are educated to high standards.



I want to focus the Committees' attention this morning on a consideration that will be essential to our success; that is, our **capacity to deliver** on that vision and those strategies that ultimately will be laid out in our state plan.

We know that our state plan will speak to some of our greatest educational challenges: struggling districts and schools, under-performing student subgroups, data and technology infrastructure, community engagement, and more. A well-conceived state plan alone will not move the needle on these challenges. We need to commit to having a structure in place that has the capacity to support one district, school and community at a time.

Members of the Senate and House Education Committees: please know that intermediate units across the Commonwealth stand ready to contribute in a major way to that capacity.

The good news is that we already have a systematic structure and collaborative partnership in place with PDE for delivering support locally that can be used going forward. IUs and PDE have come to refer to this structure as the "Statewide System of Support."

Annually, PDE identifies through Statements of Work priority initiatives for which they need IUs to support school districts and charter schools. The nature of the work ranges from the development and implementation of training and technical assistance, to onsite support for school improvement or professional development activities, communication coordination, engagement of schools and districts in pilot programs, and more.

The PDE initiatives have included focus schools and priority schools (including charter schools) support, school improvement plan development and implementation, new teacher and principal evaluation system training, Pennsylvania academic standards training and technical assistance, safe schools and school climate supports, data quality and reporting training and technical assistance.

Once PDE identifies what work they would like from intermediate units, IUs then collaborate on the development of a plan for how that work will be accomplished. Over the past 5 years, IUs have worked in nine regions of IUs to consider how they can efficiently and effectively support schools regardless of IU boundaries. IUs are



accountable to PDE for all deliverables, and provide detailed quarterly reports on work that has been accomplished.

To give you a sense of the breadth and depth of the work that has occurred as part of the Statewide System of Support, please consider the following data from just one year's effort:

- 22,000 educators trained on Student Learning Objectives, a key component of Pennsylvania's new teacher evaluation system;
- 2,000 Administrators trained on the new Principal evaluation system;
- 3,500 school leaders supported on safe schools initiatives;
- 5,300 school staff trained on data quality systems and reporting;
- 11,500 educators trained on aligning local curriculum with Pennsylvania's academic standards; and,
- 11,000 educators trained on the use of school improvement tools including the use of data to inform instruction of students.

While the details of Pennsylvania's ESSA plan are still in development, we do know the key components that will be addressed and for which support capacity will be essential. As you move forward in your oversight of ESSA implementation, and as you consider the state budgetary implications of that plan, PAIU urges you to take into account the need for a robust statewide system of support.

Allow me to conclude by outlining what are likely to be components of our state ESSA plan and where intermediate units are prepared with the capacity to support our schools and communities.

1. **District/School Improvement Planning:** IUs have significant expertise and experience assisting schools and districts with improvement planning. We have a long history of using PDE's comprehensive planning process and other tools to identify improvement opportunities and develop meaningful strategies.
2. **Teacher/Leader Professional Development:** IUs have long played a role in providing teacher and leader professional development. We understand how to deliver effective professional development that is job embedded, sustained and impactful.



3. **Design and Implementation of Intervention Strategies for the 5% Lowest Performing Schools:** IUs have assisted schools and districts in supporting turnaround efforts. We have high-quality leaders and the experience to make a difference in this area.
4. **District/School Data Analysis and Use to Drive Improvement:** We recognize that many of our districts simply do not have the capacity to analyze data. We have the capacity to support this activity in a significant and systematic way.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement:** We regularly help both PDE and our districts with stakeholder engagement strategies. Because of our presence in every corner of the state we can be an efficient mechanism for gathering input and feedback, and sharing information.
6. **Special Student Populations – Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Low Performing Students:** IUs have a long track record of providing specialized services and supports to schools and districts that address the needs of special populations. We already have significant assets in place to do this work.
7. **Online Assessment** – IUs have already made the investment to provide the Commonwealth with the technology infrastructure to enhance the experience and security of online assessments. Because of that, Pennsylvania is well-positioned to accomplish what has become a consensus goal: fewer and shorter assessments, but that produce meaningful data our teachers can use to improve instruction and raise student achievement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning. This is an exciting moment in time for public education in Pennsylvania. On behalf of the 29 IUs across the Commonwealth, I extend our offer to work with you to make the most of this opportunity.

STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

PA'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS & INTERMEDIATE UNITS

Examples of work:
Teacher and principal evaluation; data quality; academic standards and assessment; safe schools and school climate; school improvement for priority and focus schools.

PDE crafts Statements of Work (SOW) on initiatives for which capacity and support is needed.

IUs collectively develop plans for accomplishing work expectations in PDE SOWs and then submit plan to PDE.

systematic, structured collaboration

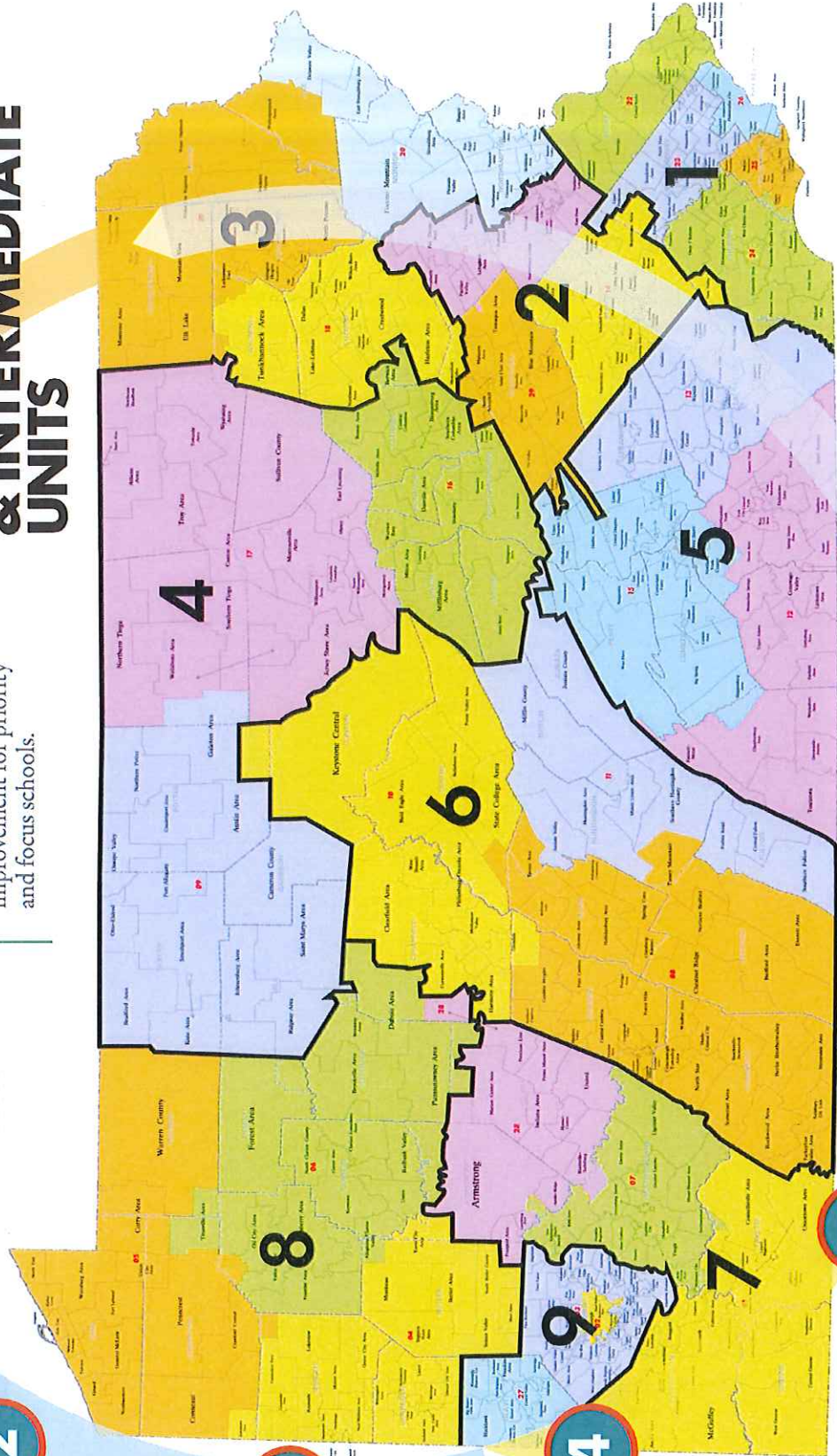
PDE reviews and approves IUs' plans; coordinates with IU regional leads and IU points of contact.

IUs deliver training, technical assistance, and other supports to districts and charter schools across 9 regions.

accountability performance measures approvals

PDE reviews IU reports on deliverables.

Pennsylvania's 29 Intermediate Units collaborate as nine distinct regions to provide systematic, structured plans to meet PDE's Statements of Work and provide services to school districts and charter schools across the Commonwealth.



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