

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & STUDENT SERVICES



ECSS

Dr. Michelle Reichard-Huff, Director

The Director, at the direction of the Executive Director, shall be responsible for planning, administering, and supervising areas of the general administrative and educational functions for the Office of Early Childhood and Student Services (500+ staff members). In addition, the Director will maintain direct supervision responsibilities for the Assistant Directors, Office Supervisor, and Regional Coordinator for the PA Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) and Educational Stability for Foster Care Youth. The Director will lead initiatives within the Office specific to mental health and school safety, mentoring and professional learning for ECSS supervisory staff, employee engagement, and human resources.

Other key assignments include the BCIU Comprehensive Plan, IU Special Education Plan, coordination of the Berks Administrators of Special Education (BASE) and Berks Pupil Services Administrator's Committee networks, PAIU Special Education Regional Lead, PDE Liaison, Local Right to Special Education Task Force, and Berks Initiative for School Attendance.

Dr. Christi Weitzel Assistant Director

Early Childhood Services

The Assistant Director of Early Childhood Services, at the direction of the ECSS Director, shall be responsible for the planning, administration, and supervision of all programs serving children in the BCIU's Early Childhood Programs.

These programs include Pre-K Counts, Preschool Early Intervention, Head Start (State / Federal), and Early Head Start.

The key areas of focus are as follows:

- Early Childhood Instructional Practices
- Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports
- Trauma-Informed Approaches
- Professional Development, Mentoring, & Peer Coaching Programs

In addition, the Assistant Director of Early Childhood Services will be responsible to serve on committees such as the Berks Early Care and Education Council, Ready.Set.READ! Board, and PAIU Early Intervention Committee.

Dr. Sara George Assistant Director

Student Services & K-12 Education

The Assistant Director of Student Services & K-12 Education, at the direction of the ECSS Director, shall be responsible for the planning, administration, and supervision of all programs serving students in Alternative and School-Age Special Education Services. These programs include School-Age Special Education (classroom and itinerant services), Alternative Education County Programs, and the Learning Academy at Thomas Ford.

The key areas of focus are as follows:

- Alternative Education Program
- Transition to Adult Life Programs
- Mental Health Services / Community Liaison
- Student Services Collaboration

In addition, the Assistant Director of Student Services will be responsible to serve on local committees / job alike groups such as Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP), Student Assistance Program (SAP) Meetings (state/regional), and PAIU Mental Health, and Safe Berks Board of Directors.

CONTACT US

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Shared Responsibilities:

The Assistant Directors will support initiatives specific to mentoring and professional development of supervisory staff, school safety and security, employee engagement, school district requests, and human resources.

The Assistant Directors will work collaboratively to support Office initiatives and cover each other's assignments as needed.

Preschool Early Intervention

Elizabeth Angstadt
Program Administrator
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Early Intervention is a public special education service provided to children who have a disability or are experiencing a significant delay in development. The goal of the program is to provide individualized services to help every child meet their educational needs. This program provides classroom-based and itinerant educational services and related services (e.g., speech, occupational, physical therapies) to students based on eligibility / need. The BCIU provides services to more than 2,500 students, ages 3-5, annually, in this program.

School-Age Special Education

Jessica Head | Program Administrator
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Brian Hocking | Program Administrator
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In partnership with the county's public and non-public schools, the BCIU works to help students with special needs succeed in school and in adult life after graduation. the BCIU's involvement in school-age special education is extensive and varied; it responds to the community's need to care for a population of students who face a wide range of challenges. Classroom programs provide educational programming, such as life skills support and preparation for independent living. BCIU's special education professionals travel throughout the county to provide many related services, including audiological, psychological, sign language interpreting, and more.

Alternative Education

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Dr. Sara George
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The BCIU provides educational supports and services in alternative educational settings which include the Berks County Jail System, Tower Behavioral Health Care Facility, and Learning Academy at Thomas Ford, a PDE-Approved Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) program. These programs are designed to meet the educational needs of students considered at risk due to significant behavioral challenges, mental health needs, and / or drug and alcohol use.

Berks County Head Start and Pre-K Counts

Mandy Gerhard | Program Administrator
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Head Start is designed to bring about a greater degree of social competence and to prepare children of low-income families for kindergarten. Head Start is operated primarily through federal funds with state supplemental funds to support additional classrooms. The BCIU serves 695 students, ages 3-5 years, who are living in poverty and meet federal guidelines. In addition to educational programs, Head Start provides comprehensive services in areas of health / nutrition, family engagement, mental health, and disabilities.

The Pre-K Counts Program is a state-funded program that provides high quality pre-kindergarten opportunities at no cost to families. PA Pre-K Counts is targeted to children at risk of school failure, either because of income, language (English is not the first language), or special needs issues. Students served are ages 3-5 years who are identified as at risk based on state guidelines and eligibility criteria related to income, language proficiency, or other needs.

Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness / Educational Stability of Youth in Foster Care

Kristen Hoffa
Program Administrator
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The BCIU provides services and supports to school districts and community agencies through statewide programs designed to break down barriers to education for children and youth experiencing homelessness or in foster care environments. The program provides guidance and training to school districts, advocates for

BCIU Berks County
Intermediate Unit
an educational service agency

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