



# The BSE Communicator

A Quarterly Update from the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education

Spring 2009

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## The 2009 PDE Conference, April 14-17

**John J. Tommasini, Director**

Plan to attend the 2009 PDE Conference *Getting Results: Educating Students in a Standards Aligned System Network*, April 14-17, at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. This conference brings national presenters to our area as we continue the discussion of effective instruction and interventions to promote student achievement to meet the needs of ALL students. Our conference is available for all parents, educators and others interested in general and special education issues. To find out more about the conference or to register, please go to [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net).



## Opening Keynote: The Six Secrets of Change for Effective Leadership



Michael Fullan, Ph.D., a Professor Emeritus of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto will present "The Six Secrets of Change for Effective Leadership" on April 15 at 9:00 a.m.

Recognized as a worldwide authority on educational reform, Dr. Fullan is currently Special Advisor to the Premier and Minister of Education in Ontario. His book, *Leading in a Culture of Change*, was awarded the 2002 Book of the Year Award by the National Staff Development Council; and the book, *Breakthrough*, written with Peter Hill and Carmel Crevola, won the 2006 Book of the Year Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. His most recent publications include *What's Worth Fighting for in the Principalship* (second edition) and *The Six Secrets of Change*.



## PDE Conference Schedule

Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 1:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 15, 2009, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 16, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, April 17, 2009, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



## Mark Your Calendar:

### Full Summer of Professional Development Scheduled!

The BSE is proud to announce the following summer institutes for Pennsylvania parents and educators that will enhance student achievement. For more information and registration, go to [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

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| <b>June 15-16</b> | <b>2009 AT-OT-PT (Assistive Technology-Occupational Therapy – Physical Therapy) Summer Institute</b> |
| <b>July 22-24</b> | <b>2009 PA Community on Transition Conference: Success by Design</b>                                 |
| <b>July 27-30</b> | <b>Special Education Summer Leadership Academy</b>   |
| <b>August 3-7</b> | <b>National Autism Conference</b>  |
| <b>August 3-7</b> | <b>Low Incidence Institute</b>   |



## Office for Dispute Resolution Honored

Pennsylvania has been chosen by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) as an "exemplar state" in the field of special education dispute resolution, a function of the Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR). CADRE will host one person from each exemplar state at their Eugene, Oregon office to share with them the dispute resolution activities occurring in each of the respective states. CADRE will showcase these states to the nation.

You're the only one  
who can make a  
difference. Whatever  
your dream,  
go for it!

Earvin "Magic" Johnson

## Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Edward G. Rendell,  
Governor

## Department of Education

Gerald L.  
Zahorchak, D.Ed.,  
Secretary

## Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Diane Castelbuono,  
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## New Chapter 14 Regulations Questions & Answers Publication Posted

The new Chapter 14 Questions and Answers (volume 3) publication is now available on the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) website at: <http://www.pattan.net/searchresults.aspx>. This new Q&A addresses many topics in Chapter 14. It includes the explanation of positive behavior support, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), evaluation/reevaluation and special education plans.

## National Recognition for Response to Intervention (RtI)

Pennsylvania has been chosen as a state to be highlighted in an upcoming document about RtI systems by a collaborative program between the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Partnership, the National RtI Center and Project Forum at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). The criteria used to select Pennsylvania, and the other states to be highlighted, include:

- States in a variety of developmental/implementation stages
- RtI framework being developed/conceptualized for various purposes
- RtI work in various areas (e.g. early childhood, secondary, grassroots beginning versus state level planning, etc.)

RtI is an early intervening strategy. The overarching goal is to improve student achievement using research based interventions matched to the instructional need and level of the student. In Pennsylvania, RtI carries dual meaning. First, it is a comprehensive, multi-tiered, standards aligned strategy to enable early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk. Second, RtI is an alternative to the aptitude-achievement discrepancy model for the identification of students with learning disabilities. This strategy allows educators to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties **prior** to student failure. Monitoring student response to a series of increasingly intense interventions assists in guiding instruction to prevent academic failure and provides data that may guide eligibility decisions for learning disabilities. RtI is consistent with Pennsylvania's *Standard Aligned System (SAS)* and the continuous school improvement process articulated by Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education Dr. Gerald Zahorchak. It is not a stand-alone strategy; rather, RtI is one strategy within a comprehensive school improvement effort.

The Bureau of Teaching and Learning and the Bureau of Special Education partner to provide leadership for RtI in Pennsylvania. If you have questions or need additional information concerning RtI please contact Dr. Joy Eichelberger at [joye@pattan.net](mailto:joye@pattan.net).

## Brain STEPS Injury Program Receives National Award

Each year, over 3,000 of Pennsylvania's children survive traumatic brain injuries significant enough to require hospitalization. Many of these children are left with life-altering difficulties in physical, cognitive or behavioral functioning. In 2007, the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania (BIAPA), under contract from the PA Department of Health, created the Child & Adolescent Brain Injury School Re-entry Program called Brain STEPS (Strategies, Teaching, Educators, Parents, Students).



In December the Brain STEPS Brain Injury School Re-Entry Program in Pennsylvania was recognized by the national BIAPA with a prestigious National Excellence for Programs and Services Award. In the photo to the left are Dr. Drew Nagele, Director of Rehabilitation at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

and Past President of the BIAPA, and Brenda Eagan Brown, program coordinator. According to Eagan Brown, "We emphasize that the success of Brain STEPS is due in part to the overwhelming support and partnership from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education."

The program has 19 Intermediate Unit and two individual school district based teams. Pennsylvania educational professionals are gaining a better understanding of brain injuries and the impact on educational functioning; families are getting the support they need to navigate unfamiliar territory and, students with brain injuries are receiving appropriate education. Contact Brenda Eagan Brown: [eaganbrown@biapa.org](mailto:eaganbrown@biapa.org) or call 724-944-6542.