

**Names:** Stephanie Brilhart, Alicia Clark, Katharine Sherman, and Kelly Urbani  
**Conference Attended:** Cleveland Metropolitan School Visits-PATHS Program  
**Dates:** Tuesday, December 11, 2018 and Wednesday, December 12, 2018  
**Location:** Cleveland, Ohio

**A. Summary of Conference Session(s) Attended**

This conference consisted of a four school visits as well as informational time to network and collaborate with other school professionals as well as PATHS representatives. The PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum is a comprehensive program that promotes emotional and social competencies, reduces aggression and behavior problems, and promotes attention and engagement in preschool through elementary school-aged children.

Upon our arrival, we were greeted by Dorothy Morelli, Chief Executive Officer of PATHS Education Worldwide. She shared the background of PATHS and their collaborative-relationship with the Cleveland Metropolitan Schools. We learned that this partnership developed, as a result, of a school shooting in 2007 within the Cleveland Metro. School District.

During our time in Cleveland, we visited four schools; Clark, Luis Munez Marin, Willow, and Memorial. At each of these visits, we met with the school principals and various members of the leadership teams. We learned about the PATHS curriculum and saw it in action. We watched classroom lessons, at various grade levels. The students were engaged and actively participating in the discussion.

**B. Reflection of Conference**

This was a wonderful opportunity. Seeing the PATHS curriculum in action excited us and gave us the drive to share this wonderful program with staff at Ben Franklin. One of the observations that was so striking, was the overall behavior of the students that we observed. They were personable and kind, willing to engage in conversation. We are hopeful that, through the implementation of this curriculum as well as our existing School-Wide Positive Behavior program, that our students will gain the skills to grow into contributing members of society.

Scott Layden, Mathematics Teacher  
Understanding Depth of Knowledge and Scoring Open-Ended Math Items  
Workshop held on 12/13/18 at ARIN IU 28 Central Office

A. Summary of Conference Session(s) Attended

The presenter led participants through a workshop that consisted of two sessions. The morning session focused on Webb's Depth of Knowledge Model as it relates to mathematics problems, and the afternoon session focused on the scoring of Open Ended Math Items. In the morning session, we discussed how Webb's DOK is used to help determine the cognitive complexity of mathematical standards and standardized test items. We also discussed how teachers use Webb's DOK in their classrooms. In the afternoon session, we analyzed the rubric for scoring open ended PSSA math problems, and we practiced scoring several items both as a group and individually.

B. Reflection on Conference Value

The conference was valuable because it aligned with district initiatives related to helping students reach proficiency and advanced levels in mathematics. As an instructor, the conference gave me a better understanding of types of mathematics items on standardized exams, and students' performance expectations on open ended problems. The morning session provided me with valuable information that will help me select appropriate math problems that I can use in my classroom when preparing students for the Algebra I Keystone exam. The afternoon session clearly indicated what students must do to receive maximum scores on open ended items. I can now effectively assess students using the rubrics to provide them quality feedback that will help their future performance. Ultimately, the conference was valuable because I will be able to share this knowledge with my colleagues during math department meetings and future presentations.

Cori Anderson

School Counselor (JH)

Professional Development Day for Indiana County School Counselors - IUP/ROTC

12/20/2018

IUP/ROTC Facility

I attended an informational visit to the IUP/ROTC program to find out what opportunities exist for students interested in pursuing a college degree with the option of getting into military service. The meeting was held with SFC Aaron Stockwell from the Army National Guard and Mr. Chris Chavira from Army ROTC. The first part of the visit was a tour of their ROTC facility on the IUP campus. During the tour, we got to see some of the classrooms, fitness center, and shooting range. At the end of the tour, the school counselors were given a demonstration on how to shoot a rifle and then got the opportunity to use it by shooting it in the shooting range.

Information was given concerning programs they offer as well as scholarship opportunities for students. If a student is interested in the ROTC program but doesn't know if they want to commit to enlisting into a military program, they can enroll in their wellness program first before making a decision. If a student knows they want to enlist into the Army or National Guard, they can begin the program their first semester which includes PT time. The benefit to joining the ROTC program includes money allocated to student per semester and tuition reimbursement. Students also have the option to apply for an ROTC scholarship through [goarmy.com](http://goarmy.com), if a student qualifies and receives it, 100% tuition reimbursement is granted as well as a stipend per month and drill pay. The information that was given was very informative and helpful when talking to students who may be interested in obtaining a 4 year degree, but also want the connection to the military. These programs are a great option for us to share with our students when looking at postsecondary planning. IUP/ROTC is also very willing to come into our schools to talk to our students and conduct any presentations that would assist Indiana County Schools. This was an overall great networking day with the IUP/ROTC.

Name: Karlene Gutierrez

Position: Life Skills Support Teacher (BF)

Conference Attended: Intensive Skill Training in Applied Behavior Analysis

Dates: December 11-13, 2018

Location: PaTTAN Pittsburgh, PA

#### Summary of Conference:

This was an intensive three day training held at PaTTAN Pittsburgh. The main presenter was Mike Miklos. There were three purposes of the training. The first one was for teachers to help students achieve great outcomes. The second was that teachers have reaped the benefit of significantly expanded professional skill sets. The third was that the training was a starting point for building a specific skill set related to effective instructional methods for students with autism.

Throughout the training, there were various opportunities to demonstrate the skill set that was taught. By the end of the training, there was a written and oral tests that all participants needed to take to show that they understood the importance and value of positive and negative reinforcement, motivation, discriminative stimulus, as well as how to prompt students. Students with autism are taught using a card sort method. Various operants are taught via this method. Students are assessed on a daily basis as to what is taught and what is mastered.

#### Reflection on Conference Value:

As a Life Skills Support Teacher, I have several students with an autism diagnosis on my caseload. Applied Behavior Analysis is a intensive teaching one on one model that has shown to work with students that are on the autism spectrum. This would be a beneficial and research based program to use with all students that lack various skills. All instruction needs to be taught at an intensive level using one on one teaching with various reinforcers.

I would like to thanks Mr. Michael Vuckovich and the Indiana Area School Board for giving me the opportunity to participate in this intensive training. There are many more opportunities to learn how to teach students with autism. This was the initial training and part of the Autism Initiative.

Elizabeth Woods, Gifted Support Teacher  
2018 PAGE Conference: Create and Innovate: Cultivate the Gifted Mind  
November 29 and 30, 2018

**A. Summary of conference sessions attended:**

**Learning to exhale: Meeting the Intellectual and Emotional Needs of Gifted Children  
Dr. Jim Delisle**

Gifted children possess unique social and emotional needs that must be understood and appreciated before they can be addressed appropriately. In this session, Dr. Delisle reviewed these needs and ways to deal with them both in school and at home. Some of the issues reviewed included understanding what giftedness is (...and what it is not), accepting personal imperfections in self and others, and recognizing the fact that being gifted means a whole lot more than simply being "smart." Using specific examples from his 40+ years as a teacher, counselor and parent of gifted kids, Dr. Delisle brought the world of gifted children and teens to life for his audience.

**Under the Radar: Innovations in Identifying Students from Underrepresented Populations  
Ashley Flynn**

It is widely recognized that students from low resource backgrounds are underrepresented in advanced academic programming. However, we also know that students with high academic ability exist in this population, but we are failing to identify them. Innovative efforts by the Johns Hopkins center for Talented Youth (CTY) attempt to address this problem in Baltimore City using an approach that combines identification, characterization, and programming to develop scalable solutions for CTY and beyond.

The presentation focused on the innovative efforts implemented by CTY used for the identification of students within the low resource background population using a psychoeducational assessment of Spatial Reasoning Skills. Spatial reasoning represents a broad category of cognitive skills that enable us to manage, manipulate, reason about, and organize information about spatial relationships in real and imagined spaces. These skills have been associated with various aspects of academic and career achievements. Recent work with advanced learners from different backgrounds and environments has explored the role these fundamental skills might play in identifying students with the potential for academic achievements. Focusing on these skills may offer insights into ability that more traditional curriculum-based tests cannot capture, opening new door to both characterizing students and developing educational opportunities that foster the needs of the diverse range of advanced learners.

**Improv-ing Social Skills:Using Improv Games to Develop Social Skills in Gifted Students**  
**Matthew J. Zakreski**

Improv games are an effective and fun way to teach and shape prosocial skills. This presentation reviewed the psychological theory behind using Improv as a social skills methodology. This presentation also demonstrated some various Improve games and invited attendees to observe and participate.

**Cultivating Creativity**  
**Mike Sernoffsky**

This session addressed the question, "How can we cultivate creativity?" in a hands-on sessions designed to excite, motivate, and stimulate critical and creative thinking. The goal was to pique the interest and curiosity of participants and in turn, pass that onto the participants students.

**Create & Innovate Through Project Based Learning**  
**Scott Stickney**

In this session participants learned firsthand about Project Based Learning and how to design, plan and implement PBL endeavors into their classrooms. We heard about successful projects from Scott Stickney.

**The Other 97%: Challenging Gifted Learner in the Regular Education Classroom**  
**Bob Young**

Gifted and high-achieving elementary students spend 97% of their time in the general education classroom setting. Bob Young, a second grade teacher at Harbor Creek School District shared his "Husky Challenge" and explained how he provides enrichment resources to gifted and high-achieving students on a daily basis.

**Creating Capstone Experiences: Designing Multifaceted Projects that Foster Innovation and Creative Problem Solving**  
**Dr. Ashley Nestor, Susan Kreit, Sarah Everest**

During this session, participants learned about the Fox Chapel Area School District's experience writing elementary gifted programming and curriculum centered on Capstones. A Capstone is a multifaceted experience designed to encourage student to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop 21st century skills such as flexibly, creating, innovating, persisting, and working collaboratively. Capstone projects are interdisciplinary and encourage students to connect their projects to real-world issues or problems. Participants will leave this session with the tools and materials necessary to create Capstone experiences in their home districts.

## **Doing Poorly on Purpose: Strategies to Reverse Underachievement and Respect Student Dignity**

**Dr. Jim Delisle**

Dr. Delisle presented on the premise that “Most of the “antidotes” for reversing academic underachievement in able adolescents are punitive and disrespectful. It is no surprise, then, that they are also ineffective and emotionally debilitating.” This session provided a new look at “underachievement” from the eye of the students who wear this label. A series of school-based suggestions and solutions were offered, each one bearing a similar foundation: preserving the dignity of students who choose to perform poorly on purpose.

## **Effective Advocacy with a Common Goal**

**Jen Zatchey**

Effective advocacy is key to the overall well-being and educational experience of gifted children. Parents, teachers, administrators, school boards, psychologists and counselors must work together to raise the academic ceiling if all children including the gifted are to advance. Jen Zatchey shared her insights and experiences into advocating respectfully, peacefully, and firmly for gifted education that meets the needs of the gifted students in question.

## **The Cultivation of the Collective Among Gifted Students: Achieving Success Through Social Emotional Development**

**Kate M. Kossare**

This session explored the importance of social emotional development in the life of a gifted student through a sociological lense. Kate M. Kossare spoke about the influence that a feeling of collectivity and belonging can have on the gifted child and shared meaningful modes and outlets for social emotional engagement.

### **B. Reflection on the conference value: Explain how this conference aligns with district initiatives, programs, and instruction.**

The opportunity to have a district representative attend the 2018 PAGE conference was meaningful because it demonstrates IASD’s commitment to gifted education. Beyond the mandates of Chapter 16, IASD is committed to providing the highest quality Gifted Support Services programs and instruction to the gifted learners in our schools. The conference provided learning opportunities that will directly impact teachers, staff, and students at IASD through professional development and direct instruction provided by attendee, Elizabeth Woods.

Name: Claire Pajak & Karlene Gutierrez

Position: Special Education--BF Elementary

Conferences Attended: QBS Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training

Date: December 10, 2018

Location: IU 28

A. Summary of conference session

The Safety Care Recertification Training must be renewed every year. This program is designed for educators who work with students with social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs. The purpose of Safety Care is to discuss incident prevention techniques, as well as review the physical safety techniques that may be used. It is critical for educators to understand behaviors and their purpose. We discussed the various types of triggers, signals, antecedents, behaviors, and consequences when working with students with behavioral needs. The trainers review de-escalation techniques (help, prompt, and wait strategies). It is stressed to support students at the bottom on the "staircase", before the behaviors increase and become more intensive. These types of interventions must be attempted prior to more intensive supports. Trainees complete competencies in order to obtain recertification. A written test is also administered at the end of the training.

B. Reflection on conference value: Explain how this conference aligns with the district initiatives, programs, and instruction.

IASD Special Education Plan incorporates Safety Care training. As Special Education teachers, it is critical that we continue to get recertified on a yearly basis. The students that we service require these behavioral interventions in order to participate in the school setting. We would like to thank Mr. Michael Vuckovich and the Indiana Area School Board for giving us the opportunity to continue to renew our Safety Care certification.



Jennifer Westrick, Learning Support and Math Teacher

Math Open-Ended Item Workshop

9/28/18, 10/18/18, 11/9/18 & 12/5/18 at ARIN IU28

A. This conference was about more than the PSSA open-ended math questions. It covered scoring of PSSA but also stressed the need to do more problem solving in our classrooms. We talked about strategies for giving feedback such as complimenting something the students did well and asking a question to make them think about their mistake instead of just telling them they are wrong. We focused a lot on Noticing and Wondering which makes every problem accessible to students because every student is able to notice some detail in the problem or wonder about something. We discussed 3 Act tasks (problems to solve for each standard that are introduced with a video and based on real-life problems) and the mathematicians that publish them as well as free curriculum and lessons all over the Internet. We were given homework such as trying new problem solving techniques between sessions.

B. This was a worthwhile training for me. I am excited to share some of the things that I learned with my colleagues and truthfully, I have already started. The kids I teach are benefiting from this conference. We have done some of Andrew Stadel, Robert Kaplinsky, and Dan Myers' 3 Act tasks. One I really like is a video of a guy eating packets of sugar while people sipping on soda are giving him dirty looks. It generates the question, "How many sugar packets are in a bottle of soda?" The students then identify the information they would need in order to solve the problem which includes the grams of sugar in a sugar packet and the grams of sugar in a bottle of soda. The students can then use their knowledge of equivalent ratios to solve the problem.

I'm going to share more on 3-Act tasks as well as free resources that were shared with me on the January Technology day. I also have a binder of information and problems, a folder of slides with resources, and a book called Powerful Problem Solving by Max Ray from the conference. The need for better problem solving practices is imperative since teaching the skills is not enough. Teachers across the state of Pennsylvania keep struggling to cram in the whole math book but not taking anything in depth so the concepts are not sticking. I'm hoping that allowing time for problems that encourage productive struggle with real-life problems presented in a way that motivate the kids will have more lasting relevance.

**Name/Position:**

- Robert Rizzo/Assistant Superintendent
- Wade McElheny/Senior High Principal
- Mike Minnick/Junior High Principal
- Kelly Urbani/Ben Franklin Principal
- Marilyn Walther/Eisenhower Principal
- Mike Travis/Transportation and Safety Coordinator
- Robert "Bubba" Fatula/Gittings Protective Services Security Consultant
- Stan Webb/Senior High Security Guard
- Robert Valyo/Junior High Security Guard

**Conference Attended:**

- Safe Schools Summit

**Date:**

- December 3, 2018

**Location:**

- Clarion University

On Monday, December 3, 2018, Mr. Robert Rizzo, IASD Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Mike Travis, Transportation and Safety Coordinator, Mr. Bubba Fatula, Gittings Protective Services Security Consultant, Dr. Michael Minnick, Indiana Area Junior High School Principal, Ms. Marilyn Walther, Eisenhower Elementary School Principal, Ms. Kelly Urbani, Ben Franklin Elementary Principal, Mr. Stan Webb and Mr. Robert Valyo, ASI School Security Guards, and Mr. Wade McElheny, Indiana Area Senior High School Principal, attended Clarion University Safe School Summit. The safety summit featured prominent national and regional speakers and various breakout sessions for school employees, mental health personnel, and law enforcement agencies.

Ms. Kristina Anderson, survivor of the 2006 Virginia Tech school shooting massacre, shared with attendees her personal story and insights about the tragedy and preventive measures for consideration. She recounted in detail the events of the attack, including shooter actions, pathways, and recovery measures of the campus community. Additionally, she discussed relevant considerations for potential workplace violence and ways in which such violence is classified. Other important safety response procedures and factors included information about victim tracking, media proximity, triaging victims, long-term needs, and community organization of an active shooter event. Her story and perspectives were powerful and impacting.

Thomas Seefeld, Murrysville Chief of Police, spoke about his experience and insights regarding the school violence attack at Franklin Regional School District. Chief Seefeld shared firsthand observations and experiences including 911 emergency reporting, school video camera systems, medical needs, reunification processes, media communication, hardening soft targets, and critical incident management. He emphasized the importance of preparation and adaptability to such emergency situations. Chief Seefeld stressed the significance of effective communications and cooperation between school and emergency response agencies and organizations.

Mr. Rizzo, Dr. Minnick, Mr. Travis, and Mr. McElheny attended breakout sessions of Prevention and Incident Management by Ms. Anderson and Chief Seefeld, respectively. The Prevention session included information

about Safe School Initiative including identifying pre-attack behaviors of Violence Ideation, Research and Planning, Pre-Attack Preparation, and Attack phases. Ms. Anderson also spoke about the importance of roles and responsibilities of SRO officers, school administrators, school counselors and law enforcement and other types of first responder personnel. She emphasized building effective relationships within and beyond the school community.

Chief Seefeld stated that training staff is paramount to preparing for and dealing with school violence incidents. He stressed that doing so establishes and preserves legitimacy and reputation of an organization when it comes to credibility, authority, and liability issues and concerns. He provide insight and rationale of best practices for calling 911, demeanor, and safe actions to take when first responders arrive and enter school buildings. Additionally, he encouraged effective preparation, leadership, management, and after-action responses and reports. Chief Seefeld encouraged table-top exercises with emergency response personnel and agencies, including access and accuracy of building floor plans.

The information and insights gained from the guest speakers are immensely valuable. Both individuals provided descriptive accounts of school violence incidents that provide a basis and motivation for IASD to continue to strengthen school safety measures and programs for all members of our school community. The breakout sessions affirm our focus and progress for evolving our practices and procedures.

We appreciate the opportunity that the Indiana Area School Board of Directors provided to us to attend the safety summit. We will incorporate our learning into our continuous improvement efforts and utilize the information as a standard against which we can measure our progress and evaluate our efforts to protect all members of our school community.

Name: Erica Aiken

Position: School Counselor

Conference Attended: ROTC Visit at IUP/Indiana County Counselor Meeting

Dates: 12/20/2018

Location: IUP

**Summary of the Conference Sessions Attended:**

The Indiana County Counselors were able hear a presentation from the IUP/ROTC program. We learned about the benefits of IUP/ROTC to our students as a postsecondary option, we took a tour of the facility, and even tried out the indoor shooting range. The Recruiting Operations Officers provided a thorough explanation of the options available to students who enroll. We were able to hear from active cadets and the pathways they have have chosen. The ROTC program emphasized the importance of developing the "whole person" and building leaders. There was also a full discussion on scholarship opportunities.

**Reflection on conference value:**

It was very beneficial to learn of this opportunity for our students and to build partnerships with the local ROTC program. We look forward to introducing this option to our students and families who are interested in the military. We plan to incorporate an explanation of the ROTC program into our career lessons with students. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to attend for the day.