



**Bucks County Intermediate Unit
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For Immediate Release:

Pennsylvania Department of Education Holds a Roundtable Discussion with the Bucks IU on Their PAsmart Grant

March 1, 2019, Doylestown PA: The Bucks County Intermediate Unit (Bucks IU) was proud to host the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for a roundtable discussion regarding their award to the Bucks IU of a PAsmart Advancing Grant. This grant, for \$412,656, is for the creation of a Mobile Fab (Fabrication) Lab and its related educational programs. Facilitated by *Mr. Judd Pittman, Special Advisor to the PA Secretary of Education and PDE Special Consultant on STEM*, the grant was made available through [Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf's PAsmart program](#).

The importance of this grant, and what the educational opportunity it represents, was evident as seen by the legislature and county-wide personnel that joined Mr. Pittman at the roundtable:

- PA State Representatives
 - Rep. Meghan Schroeder (District 29)
 - Rep. Wendi Thomas (District 178)
 - Rep. Wendy Ullman (District 143)
- Bucks County Intermediate Unit
 - Dr. Mark Hoffman, Executive Director
 - Dr. Lindsey Sides, Supervisor of STEM Education
 - Ms. Nicole Borland, Supervisor of Federal and Non-Public Programs
- Dr. Michael Donnelly, Palisades School District Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Ms. Laura Enama, Central Bucks School District Supervisor of Science and Elementary QUEST

- Dr. Leon Poeske, Bucks County Technical High School Director
- Ms. Karen Snedeker Bristol Township School District Director of Elementary Education
- Mr. Mark Solis, Bucks County Workforce Development Board, Business and Industry Specialist
- Mr. Brian Suter, Neshaminy School District Lead Science Teacher

Senator Steve Santarsiero was represented by both Mr. Stephen Seufert and Mr. Dan Fagan from his office.

Mr. Pittman's questions helped highlight how a Mobile Fab Lab will serve as a platform for learning and innovation: a place to play, to create, to learn, and to invent by providing students with project-based, hands-on, STEM education. Information was provided on the transit van that will be equipped to transport coding and robotics materials, 3D printers, laser and vinyl cutters, and more. The Mobile Fab Lab will be available to travel throughout the county to provide age-appropriate curriculum, in week-long programs, at schools through the academic year, Saturday and summer programs for students living in homeless shelters, and summer camps.

The Educators and Curriculum Directors on the panel provided several points of information on the benefit and impact they eagerly anticipate seeing from their students as related to STEM education and ultimately STEM careers. As the state has projected regional and statewide Pennsylvania labor force shortages, specifically in the computer science and STEM job markets, several panelists focused on the importance of early exposure of students to futures in STEM related fields.

For more information STEM programs from the Bucks IU, please contact Dr. Lindsey Sides, Supervisor of STEM Programs at 215-348-2940 Ext. 1460 or email her at LSides@BucksIu.org.

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ABOUT THE BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT:

With over 45 years of service, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit has established itself as an abundantly skilled, technology-rich, provider of high quality, cost-effective, instructional and operational services to public and private

schools, school districts, charter schools, and our community. From an exceptional and broad foundation of specialty education support services we advocate for every child, while also offering a wide-range of programs, from cooperative purchasing to professional development courses, to nurture a stronger community. Visit our website at www.BucksIU.org or call us at 215-348-2940 for more information.