



**Chester County Intermediate Unit
Media Release**

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For immediate release:

Chester County school districts awarded prestigious Meritorious Budget Award

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Downingtown, PA – Each year school districts throughout the United States and Canada are eligible to receive the Association of School Business Officials International’s (ASBO) Meritorious Budget Award and several Chester County districts are among the recipients for the 2014-15 school year. Downingtown Area School District, Great Valley School District and Owen J. Roberts School District were three of the six school districts from Pennsylvania to receive this prestigious award.

“There are approximately 100 recipients across the United States and Canada and three of them are in the room today,” said Jeff Ammerman, the director of technical assistance for the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO). “This speaks of the excellence present in Chester County. Congratulations to everyone.”

District budgets can be large, complicated, and confusing. ASBO’s Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) is designed to recognize school districts that utilize best practices in budgeting to improve accuracy, transparency, sound fiscal management and communication to build district stakeholder confidence in each district’s finance office. The application consists of four sections, which require eight years worth of data. This process breaks down the budgeting process for taxpayers and clearly shows how district resources were spent. The MBA process also helps districts align their mission statements, strategic plans and operations together within the budget.

“It is a much more comprehensive process than a normal budget would be,” said Richard Fazio, chief financial officer of Downingtown Area School District. “You look at financial information, statistical data and performance data on the school district as well as academic performance. It is very comprehensive and a good communication tool.”

The districts who received the Meritorious Budget Award all agree that it is well worth the effort, especially in the confidence it instills in district financial reporting. Dr. Regina Speaker Palubinsky, superintendent of the Great Valley School District, stressed the importance of using this tool as an external metric. "It instills confidence," she said. "When others look at it, it shows that the district has aligned everything to the mission and thought about the financial implications of those decisions." Jackie Krumrine, chief financial officer for Owen J. Roberts added "It makes the numbers more transparent to the public as a whole. We actually use the budget throughout the district as a communication and management tool because it contains a wealth of information."

All three districts have been long time participants in the program. Great Valley and Owen J. Roberts have both received the award for the past 20 years and Downingtown for the past ten. West Chester Area School District also received the award for six years, but now participates in the equally demanding Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Great Valley participates in both the MBA and CAFR programs. "This award shows that we go a step beyond," said Suzanne Moore, director of business affairs for West Chester Area School District. "We follow some pretty strict and disciplined criteria that we use to prepare the budgets and financial statements."

With both large and small districts in Chester County participating in the MBA program, it is accessible and achievable to districts of all sizes. Ultimately, participating in the Meritorious Budget Award provides these Chester County school districts a way to communicate with their community members. "It's clearly another measure to demonstrate to tax payers that you are being good stewards of local, state and federal dollars," said Dr. Michael Christian, superintendent of Owen J. Roberts. "We have one gentleman who comes to our board meeting every year who stands up and says 'congratulations on your clean budget and open process.' To have that on the record is invaluable."

For more information about ASBO's Meritorious Budget Award visit: <http://asbointl.org/>

Photo Caption: *Left to right: Chuck Linderman (director of business affairs, Great Valley School District); Suzanne Moore (director of business affairs, West Chester Area School District); Jackie Krumrine (chief financial officer, Owen J. Roberts School District); Richard Fazio (chief financial officer, Downingtown Area School District)*

About the CCIU: The Chester County Intermediate Unit is an educational service agency that exists to provide quality, cost-effective services to the community and its residents. The Chester County Intermediate Unit administers instructional, enrichment and administrative programs and services to Chester County's 12 public school districts and to over 45 private and parochial schools in the county. These programs include instructional, remedial and enrichment services for regular and special education students. Other IU services support teachers, school administrators and school directors. The diversity of CCIU programs enables IU staff to interact with school district personnel at all levels and to maintain a cohesive educational network throughout Chester County.