

The Consortium for Public Education

A member of the Public Education Network

INSIGHTS Just In ...

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Since our founding, we've proudly sent our partners, supporters and friends **Insights**, a print newsletter that provides close-up looks at our work, our events and our programs and alerts our schools and their staffs to all of the opportunities we offer.

With this electronic edition, we inaugurate **Insights Just In**, to ensure that we reach you as soon as we have something important to share. We hope you enjoy the updates.

Consortium to host "town hall" meeting with Pennsylvania's First Lady

Pennsylvania's First Lady will conduct a "town hall" meeting here on Monday, September 14th to demonstrate the importance of experiences that make democracy "come alive" for students. Nearly 1,000 high school students from 40 western Pennsylvania districts are expected to attend the meeting at the Carnegie Library of Homestead where U.S. Third Circuit Court Judge Marjorie O. Rendell will engage them in a dialogue about the rights and responsibilities of living in a democratic society. Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Center for Civic Engagement and Student Leadership, under the direction of Dr. Caleb Finegan, will support the event with student facilitators.



The Consortium for Public Education and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit have been asked to host the event as part of Judge Rendell's ongoing campaign to promote greater emphasis on civics education. The First Lady will join superintendents and high school principals from attending districts for a luncheon immediately following the meeting. Judge Rendell's dialogue with students will take place in the music hall of the Homestead library complex; the luncheon will be served in the library's recreation facility.

"We're honored to help Judge Rendell organize such a meaningful experience," said The Consortium's Executive Director, Linda L. Croushore, Ed.D. "It not only is consistent with the part of our mission that emphasizes helping young people prepare

for their roles as citizens, it also presents a wonderful opportunity to bring recognition to our region's students and schools."

Districts from across the region will each be invited to bring delegations of 25 to the student town meeting, including one or two faculty advisers. Seating at the meeting and the luncheon, however, will be limited. Formal invitations will come from the Office of the First Lady closer to the date of the event. But districts participating in Consortium programs are welcome to call our office before then to express their interest in attending.

Evaluation gives high marks to Consortium's career exploration program

A survey and evaluation performed for The Consortium for Public Education's career exploration program, *The Future Is Mine (TFIM)*, found TFIM meeting goals in all three of the areas in which it aims to support student participants.



Among other conclusions, the written evaluation said survey results showed "students overwhelmingly perceive TFIM as instrumental in helping them learn about their interests and careers that match their interests." Indiana University of Pennsylvania Assistant Professor Melissa Swauger, Ph.D., who performed the evaluation, conducted the survey in April among the 300 students and faculty advisers attending TFIM's annual student leadership conference. The survey consisted of 25 multiple-choice and several open-ended questions.

In addition to finding that the vast majority of participants feel TFIM has helped them gain information to guide their career choices, the survey showed students found TFIM helped them to become more engaged with their schools or communities and to develop the leadership skills needed to plan and organize projects, work in teams and communicate effectively.

"Building awareness of career options and helping students prepare for the post-secondary education or training they'll need is our primary focus," said The Consortium's Associate Executive Director Steve Seliy, who oversees TFIM. "We're delighted to have a formal evaluation that resoundingly demonstrates we're meeting that objective and also helping our participants grow in other critical ways."

Among some of the specific findings: 88% of students said participating in TFIM helped them better understand the aptitudes and personal qualities needed for particular careers; 94% felt TFIM improved their ability to work in teams; 89% said TFIM helped them become more engaged in their schools or communities and 88% said TFIM helped them make a connection between their classroom learning and the world of work. Advisers' perceptions of benefits accruing to students were remarkably consistent with the students' responses.

An Executive Summary of Dr. Swauger's evaluation is available on The Consortium's web site: www.tcfpe.org.

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