

*celebrating*  
**30**  
**YEARS**



**bbec**  
**BERKS BUSINESS**  
**EDUCATION COALITION**

**2021**  
ANNUAL REPORT



Thirty Years. This year we celebrate three decades since the founding of the Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC) in 1992. The founders saw a need to create an organization that would facilitate conversation and collaboration among leaders in education and business. Before the launch of the BBEC there was a sense that more was needed to facilitate an understanding of the challenges faced by educators in preparing students for life after school. Likewise, business leaders wanted a forum for sharing the skills and traits they desired in the workforce of the future. Right from the beginning there was a clear consensus that fostering a dialogue among educators and business leaders would improve outcomes and understanding. The result: a winning formula has emerged.

BBEC founders included Marlin Miller, Paul Roedel, Chet Winters, and Rolf Schmidt. We cannot thank them sufficiently for their vision, commitment, and service. In May, we will recognize the many contributions of these visionary individuals. Their leadership and the ongoing commitment of many others has propelled the BBEC to evolve and succeed.

Among the hallmarks of the BBEC is the organization has changed as the needs and challenges facing education and business advanced. In an environment where the mission of some non-profits can drift, the BBEC has been able to remain focused on student success and preparation for a productive life after school. In that regard the BBEC has remained true to our mission across the years.

We have convened a workgroup of board members to examine BBEC's past to plan strategies for the future. Our expectation is that the workgroup will affirm some of our current programs while recommending new initiatives for the BBEC to pursue. We will share our strategic plan with you in future communications.

This year we will say farewell to Dr. Solomon Lausch who retires as our Executive Director after 10 years of service. We will celebrate Dr. Lausch's service to the BBEC at our May event. It is said the mark of a successful career is that one leaves the place better than one found it. By that measure, Sol has had a highly successful tenure at the BBEC. Thank you, Sol. Your efforts and contributions are sincerely appreciated. We began our search for Sol's replacement on February 1, 2022.

For me, I have been engaged in the work of the BBEC for more than 20 years. This year I complete ten years as the Chairman. My current plan is that I will continue to serve as Chair for a few more years. However, father time is chasing me as well and I expect we will be naming my successor sometime in the next year or so.

**John P. Weidenhammer**



# THE bbec IN REVIEW

The BBEC mission has remained consistent over the years, as we now recognize and celebrate 30 years as an organization. The BBEC mission then as today is to identify and support programs which lead to student development and growth.

The first 20 years saw a marked commitment to teacher training and formal programs such as Career Pathways in conjunction with the Berks Career and Technology Center. A \$200,000 grant from the Marlin Miller, Jr. Foundation provided licensing for 25,000 students to access high quality virtual curriculae in grades 8-12 for two years.

Carpenter Technology Corporation donated more than \$300,000 over two years under the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program to support academic improvement initiatives, including curriculum acquisition, technology infrastructure enhancement and data-based school improvement. In partnership with the Berks County Intermediate Unit and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, the Coalition established the program BerksWorks, a web-based tool to connect students with employers for internships and other workplace experiences.

The Coalition funded the creation of a series of Middle School Planner booklets to support teachers in career education in the middle school level and funded the development of Elementary School Planners to support

teachers in delivering career education at that level. The Coalition expanded its role in fostering connections between basic and higher education through the facilitation of dialogue between high school and college faculty.

## Past Ten Years

In more recent years, the Coalition has devoted particular focus on programs which have direct, demonstrable impact on student development. As reported in this Annual Report, the long-standing Higher Education Campus Visits and the more recent Students Interacting with Business Programs provide students “boots on the ground” visits, most for the first time onto the campuses and businesses of higher education and private sector enterprises based in Berks County.

Also, reported here, the Inside Berks Business Program, in partnership with the Berks County Intermediate Unit, brings educators into the workplace during the summer for in-person engagement with businesses across Berks County. The Coalition is a champion for workplace internship experiences for high school seniors (and juniors), a program highlighted in this 2021 Annual Report.

I have been associated with the Berks Business Education Coalition for most of its history, first as superintendent for the Schuylkill Valley School District for 15 years and now approaching 10 years as the BBEC Executive Director. There is synergism for the greater good that is realized when organizations find common ground working together to achieve something larger than themselves or when acting alone.

Good things happen when groups come together, when they have the foresight to set worthy goals, when they evidence the grit to overcome, and when they stay the course. I so perceive the BBEC and its partners, and I am heartily glad to be a part of it.

**Solomon Lausch, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director

# bbec in the news

## 20 YEARS OF iBb

Over the course of 20 years, the Inside Berks Business Program (iBb) has brought educators into the workplace each summer to experience first-hand the range of businesses in Berks County and the career and employment opportunities in the workplace. iBb provides the educators new knowledge to take back into the classroom, enhancing their role to include career education.

The program is run jointly between the Berks Business Education Coalition and the Berks County Intermediate Unit. Seventeen educators participated in the program the week of August 3-5, 2021. The educators spent one day each at three of the for-profit or not-for-profit enterprises in the career cluster of their choice.

Our sincere thanks to these participating businesses and organizations:

- Alcon Research, Limited
- Berks County Agricultural Center
- East Penn Manufacturing Company
- Family Guidance Center
- Habitat for Humanity
- Helping Harvest
- Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center
- Radius Corporation
- Reading Public Museum
- Spotts, Stevens, and McCoy
- United Way of Berks County



iBb participants gathered with the herd at the Balthaser Dairy Farm located in Spring Township.



Educators were all smiles at the Radius Corporation, who generously participated in the iBb Program.

## HIGHER ED CAMPUS VISITS

The long-standing Higher Education Campus Visits program takes students, primarily ninth graders, in class-size groups onto the campuses of Albright College, Alvernia University, Kutztown University, Penn State Berks, and the Reading Area Community College. Held in the spring each year, the program forms a compendium with the fall Students Interacting with Business program, to give students a first hand view of career and employment opportunities and higher education, all here in Berks County.

Over the course of 16 years, 2003-2019, more than 34,000 students from each of the 18 Berks County school districts participated in the program.

COVID intervened to stop the program abruptly in March 2020 and cancelled it completely in 2021. As of the writing of this report, the program is set to resume in March and April of 2022, with more than 3,200 students scheduled to participate at the five area colleges and universities. A special thanks to each of them for always going the extra mile.

# STUDENTS INTERACTING WITH BUSINESS



Ninth graders from Twin Valley High School visit the Good Life Companies.

The Students Interacting with Business Program resumed again this year after a one-year hiatus due to COVID. Since 2013, more than 27,000 ninth grade students and 1,350 teacher chaperones have visited participating Berks County businesses for a “boots on the ground” experience to learn first hand about a business career and employment opportunities, and most importantly, the soft skills that employers value in a good employee.

This year we had seven schools and 14 businesses engaged in the program. The number of businesses were reduced because of COVID precautions and the seven schools were selected by lottery, given the reduced number of available businesses.

Held the week of November 1-4, 2021, each day began with an assembly program hosted by a business representative, focusing on the soft-skill factors: school performance, communication skills, attitude, computer literacy, reputation, and understanding how and why a business operates. The assembly program set the stage for the onsite visits that followed.

## Our special thanks to these participating businesses this year:

- Arkema
- Berks County Agricultural Center
- Brenntag Northeast, LLC
- Cambridge-Lee Industries, LLC
- DoubleTree by Hilton Reading
- East Penn Manufacturing Company
- Electro-Space Fabricators
- Good Life Companies
- Met-Ed. A FirstEnergy Company
- Mitsubishi Chemical Advanced Materials
- NAI Keystone
- New Castle Lawn & Landscaping
- Sealstrip Corporation
- Vivinco Windows

# the power of Internships

In 2015, we began reporting on the concept of the senior year internship, an option in the curriculum for seniors to pursue a possible career interest after high school, whether college bound or directly into the workforce. Six school districts had formal programs in place. The number grew to nine in 2016, with Twin Valley and its longstanding model program leading the way with 120 students, mostly seniors, engaged.

That number has more than doubled county-wide in 2021 to include 590 seniors from 16 school districts, representing 12.84% of the total grade cohort of 4,595 students. Leading the way is the Wilson School District with 184 seniors or 35.3% of the high school's senior cohort of 493 students.

internships  
**2021**  
590 seniors  
16 school districts

The undergirding precepts are important, whether the program is characterized differentially as an internship, practicum, work-based learning or some other term entirely. Each school's program establishes guidelines, criteria, and requirements for a student to be enrolled and to remain enrolled. Site supervisors, whether at a business or other enterprise external to the school or internally, working with a teacher to provide the school with scheduled reports on the student's activity. The school coordinator intervenes in the unusual circumstance where there is a problem. Students typically are released for part of their school day to go to the internship site or are otherwise scheduled for approximately 45 hours each quarter. The students are evaluated quarterly, just as with any course, and typically can earn up to two credits for the year.

In the pages that follow, you will read real-life testimonials regarding the value of the internship experience. For all

participants, it is a maturing experience. For some, it is life changing; for some an affirmation for study or work after high school; for others it reveals that the direction is one they do not want to take.

**Jennifer Leibowitz**, Governor Mifflin School District, and **Lydia Beck**, Tulpehocken Area School District, summarize the internship concept from the perspective of the school coordinator. The student reports illustrate the breadth of their internship experience.

**Dr. Jennifer Murray**, Superintendent, Reading School District, reports on RSD's innovative program which engages students early in high school with learning and involvement that can lead them to select education as their career choice for college study. The program addresses what is becoming a significant problem nationwide, the steep decline during the past ten years of individuals choosing to pursue education for their career.

Berks County High Schools' Internship Placements			
First Semester 2021–2022 School Year			
School	Seniors	External	Internal
Boyertown Area Senior HS	524	7	34
Brandywine Heights HS	119	9	3
Conrad Weiser HS	182	34	16
Daniel Boone Area HS	310	14	16
Exeter Township Senior HS	320	6	2
Fleetwood Area HS	203	1	2
Governor Mifflin Senior HS	371	58	5
Hamburg Area HS	170	8	2
Kutztown Area Senior HS	119	1	1
Oley Valley HS	120	9	0
Reading HS	960	50	0
Schuylkill Valley HS	184	1	21
Tulpehocken Jr/Sr. HS	95	24	5
Twin Valley HS	275	41	26
Wilson HS	493	112	62
Wyomissing Area Jr/Sr HS	150	8	12
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,595</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>207</b>



## Reading School District Initiative



As Pennsylvania faces the largest teacher shortage in history, Reading School District faces its own challenges in not only finding certified teachers, but also finding certified teachers who are bilingual and bicultural and who represent the students of the City of Reading. The Aspiring Educators' Program was developed to be a solution to our challenge by growing our own teachers among our students and families through a highly-engaging program which is geared towards high school students interested in exploring a career in the field of education.

The Aspiring Educators' Program aims to introduce interested students to the role of a classroom teacher. The pathway is composed of four courses (Aspiring Education I-IV) with a curriculum derived from the Educator Rising Curriculum, culminating in coursework offered in conjunction with Shippensburg University. Students can earn up to nine hours of college credit and have the ability to earn an early childhood certificate.

Aspiring Educator I and II: These semester-long courses,

introduce students to the four domains of the Educator Rising Curriculum: Understanding the Profession, Planning for Instruction, Implementing Instruction, Assessment, and Reflection. Students will experience fieldwork at all levels of the K-12 spectrum. Aspiring Educator I and II are for students in grades nine and ten.

Aspiring Educator III and IV: These full-year courses are aligned with the Early Child certificated pathway at Shippensburg University. Students will engage in online, college-level coursework with the support of a Reading High School teacher. Over two years, students have the opportunity to complete three courses for nine credit hours that can be transferred throughout the PASSHE system. Students who complete the full two-year program also complete 500 hours of fieldwork in pre-kindergarten classrooms in RSD or with an accredited childcare center. Students exit the program eligible for the Early Childhood certificate ready to enroll in post-secondary education programs. Aspiring Educator III and IV are for

students in grades eleven and twelve. Along with an internship experience in the summer at one of our 13 elementary schools or five middle schools, these students also have the opportunity to work in afterschool tutoring programs, summer school, and the extended school year program.

It is our goal to set our Reading High School students for success in education, either in a certified teacher college program supporting them along the way, or in employment in the Reading School District out of high school. Students will be offered field placement and student teaching experiences in Reading throughout their college years. After they obtain their degree and Pennsylvania teaching certification in education, they would be accorded preferential opportunities to earn contracted teaching positions or employment in another capacity, such as a paraprofessional, in the Reading School District.

**Dr. Jennifer Murray**  
Superintendent  
Reading School District

# Governor Mifflin Senior High School internships

As the Internship Coordinator for Governor Mifflin High School, I have witnessed firsthand the value an internship has in shaping the future of a student. My students have learned many valuable, life lessons over the years while participating in our school's internship program. The students are able to see what a certain career is like by having actual hands-on experiences. These experiences allow them to learn, mature, and most importantly figure out if this is the direction they would like to pursue upon graduation. It is so critical for students to have these experiences before they graduate high school and decide on a college major. Internships help students to see what they are or are not passionate about for their future. When going to college, the interns have had more experiences in their chosen major/career path which also gives them a step up on their peers.



**Jennifer Leibowitz**  
Internship Coordinator and Business Education Teacher



My name is **Faye Dorman** and I am currently interning with the Governor Mifflin Communications Department. I have worked on programs and posters for school activities, written articles about happenings in the community, as well as worked on communications from the superintendent of the school. Upon graduation this year, I will be majoring in communications with a potential minor in creative writing at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. This internship is an exciting opportunity. I look forward to continuing my learning and experiencing as much as possible with this internship.

My name is **Ben Gerhard** and I am an intern for Aftan Engineering, a company run by Dr. Lisa Peterson. I have learned many things through this internship, whether it is time management, the design process of an engineer, or more specifically, ways to better myself as a 3D designer. This internship has helped to guide my career path as an engineer and has sparked additional interests. After high school, I plan to attend Georgia Institute of Technology to study mechanical engineering while also competing on their swim team.

My name is **Callum Hazlett** and I am currently an intern with The W Group Financial Services, an affiliate firm of MassMutual Financial Group. Throughout the last three months, I have learned a lot about the business world. I have been able to expand my knowledge of the financial side of business. I am now able to assist with insurance and investment portfolio construction at a high level. My mentor has done an excellent job in teaching me the mechanics of his profession. I am very thankful to be able to intern and be one step ahead for my future. My future career goal is to become a successful stockbroker. I will begin to achieve this goal by going to a four-year college and majoring in marketing/finance.





My name is **Madelyn Leibowitz**, a junior at Governor Mifflin. I am an intern at the Medicine Shoppe of Shillington. My internship is a very good experience that has taught me a lot about how to run a business while still being involved in medicine. I have learned how important it is to ask questions, analyze information, be consistent, as well as being personable. It is important to be aware of who you are talking to, even if you have a bad day you need to put everything aside because you are dealing with the customers and you are who they trust with their health. My future career goal is to become a doctor and this internship has allowed me to learn about different medicines, as well as work with people in all different situations, both of which will be important in my future career path.



My name is **Owen Mitzel** and I am an intern at New Castle Lawn & Landscape, Inc. My mentors are Dan Marshall and Brad Stephenson. I have learned a ton of information ranging from in the field training to office work; to even getting certification from ICPI (Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute). Everything I have learned so far has been extremely helpful and I can't wait for the remainder of my internship. My time at New Castle has benefited me because it has allowed me to explore different career paths and think about what it is that I actually want to do in the future. After high school, I plan to work in the landscaping industry while continuing on with some post-secondary education mixed in.

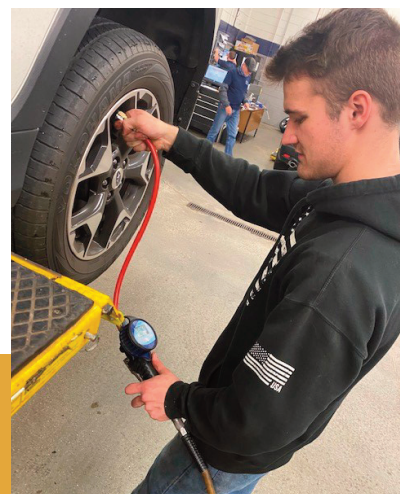


My name is **Elliot Schmehl** and I am interning at New Castle Lawn & Landscape in the design center with my mentor, Phil Neri. While I have been at my internship I have learned many new things. My internship has exposed me to a different and new work environment and I have been able to meet and work with people on a higher level. In addition, I have learned a lot more about other career paths similar to engineering and design. This internship has opened my eyes to careers and other schooling options for my future. My future plans are to go to college. Currently I am unsure what major I want to pursue, but this opportunity has definitely expanded my knowledge and opened up new ideas for me to consider for my future.

# Tulpehocken Area School District internships

The Tulpehocken Area School District, along with many other Berks County districts, realizes and supports the need for a practical approach to learning in order to prepare students for life after high school. As part of the work-based learning program at Tulpehocken, students have the opportunity to explore career fields through job shadowing, internship (unpaid), and apprenticeship (paid) programs. Students who have not attended Berks Career & Technology Center, have changed their career goals, or are undecided can benefit from work experiences rather than taking electives that are not related to their career goals. Some work-based learning students are planning to attend college, some want to join the work force, and others are still discerning the best path to meet their career goals.

**Lydia L. Beck** | K-12 Career Specialist



**Ethan Shartle**, a Tulpehocken Area School District senior, is involved in a work-based learning experience with Moyer Subaru in Leesport. Ethan entered his 2021-2022 school year with an interest in the automotive field. Having not attended a career technology center for any training during his formal high school years, his only experience with the industry was tinkering on his own vehicle and a fascination with cars.

The TASD K-12 Career Specialist reached out to various automotive companies who offered entry-level work. Andy Moyer with Moyer Auto Group was enthusiastic about the idea to work collaboratively to provide a work experience for students which could lead to full-time employment after graduation. Ethan attends school in the morning, taking his academic

courses which are required for graduation, then goes to his work-based learning experience in the afternoon at Moyer Subaru. He is an express care technician who does oil changes, tire rotations, and multi-point checks. Ethan was given the opportunity to attend evening classes for emissions and inspection certification for which Moyer Auto Group is reimbursing the cost of the program and testing. Ethan passed his emissions certification and will soon start his inspection training. Ethan's plan is to continue working with Moyer Subaru full-time after graduation, taking advantage of advanced training to become a master Subaru technician.

Moyer Auto Group is extremely impressed with Ethan's motivation and envisions great potential for him. "This program is amazing,"

states Ethan. "Every student who has an interest in learning this way should take advantage of a work-based learning experience. It has been one of the best experiences of my education!"

Ethan is not alone in his thoughts. Numerous Tulpehocken students have shared similar thoughts about how this program has helped them with their future goals and is extremely meaningful, more than they could get from being in the classroom. TASD's work-based learning program has grown from seven students the first year to more than 35 students by the third year, which is about thirty percent of the senior class (including some juniors). Work-based learning is a win-win for the student and the business as is evident with Ethan and Moyer Auto Group.

# Schuylkill Valley School District internships

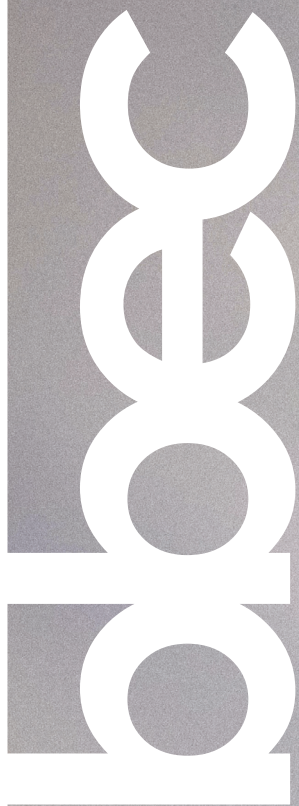


My name is **MacKenzie Riggins**. My role at the Schuylkill Valley Elementary School is to grade papers, make copies of worksheets and tests, read to the students, help give tests to students and help out wherever I'm needed. I work directly with second grade students in Mrs. Gwiazdowski's classroom under her leadership.

During my internship experience with Schuylkill Valley Elementary School, I was able to develop patience, communication, respect, time management, and adaptability skills. I particularly found my confidence has grown whenever I read in front of the class or

when I communicate instructions to students about class assignments. Although I've found it challenging discovering each student's learning technique and evolving the lesson plans to involve everyone's learning style, I've found it to be valuable in developing my teaching and collaboration skills.

My experience at the Schuylkill Valley Elementary School has been crucial in helping me decide that Elementary Education is the field that I look forward to majoring when I go to college. I will take the lessons and skills I've learned and apply them to my future career.



## MISSION:

The mission of the Berks Business Education Coalition is to develop and to coordinate programs within the business and education communities which improve the competencies of students and ensure that they have the aspirations, skills, and knowledge to plan appropriately for their lives after high school.



## GOALS:

1. Promote career awareness and development programs for students in Berks County.
2. Support member schools in the effort to improve basic academic performance.
3. Promote appropriate, differentiated interest in pursuit of post-secondary education.
4. Facilitate continuing dialogue between, with, and among Pre-K, K-12, and higher education.
5. Support initiatives to assure that quality Pre-K education, ages 3-5, is available for all children in Berks County, in particular, for those from disadvantaged or at-risk backgrounds.
6. Provide for the viability and sustainability of Coalition programs and services.





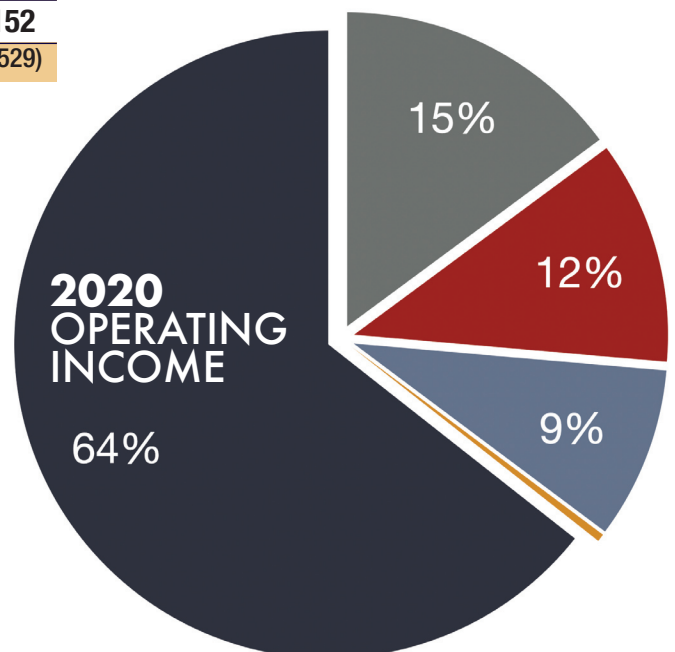
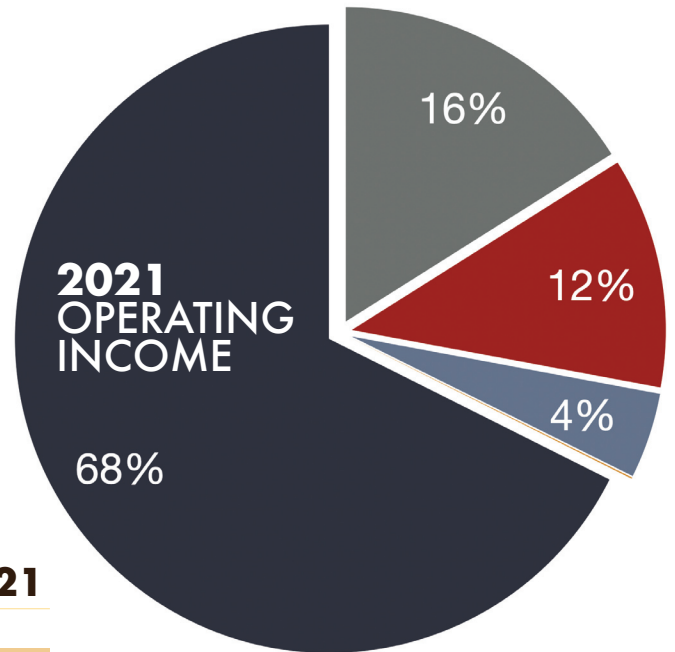
## FINANCIAL REPORT

### OPERATIONS

	2020	2021
<b>Operating Income:</b>		
Business	72,750	76,850
Education	16,800	18,250
Foundations	13,000	13,500
Grants	10,000	5,000
Interest on Savings	444	73
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>\$112,994</b>	<b>\$113,623</b>

<b>Operating Expenses:</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	99,988	95,518
Other Operating Supplies & Expenses	20,896	21,634
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$120,884</b>	<b>\$117,152</b>
<b>Operating Gain (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$7,890)</b>	<b>(\$3,529)</b>

	EDUCATION
	FOUNDATIONS
	GRANTS
	INTEREST
	BUSINESS





## MEMBERSHIP & SUPPORT



Albright College  
Alcon Research Limited  
Alvernia University  
Antietam School District  
Arkema  
Berks Career & Technology Center  
Berks County Agricultural Center  
Berks County Intermediate Unit  
Berks County Workforce Development Board  
Brenntag Northeast, LLC  
Brentwood Industries  
Boyertown Area School District  
Brandywine Heights Area School District  
Cambridge-Lee Industries, LLC  
Carpenter Technology Corporation  
Catherine V. & Martin W. Hofmann Foundation  
Conrad Weiser Area School District  
Customers Bank  
Daniel Boone Area School District  
Diocese of Allentown  
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel  
East Penn Manufacturing Company, Inc.  
Electro Space Fabricators

EnerSys  
Exeter Township School District  
Family Guidance Center  
First Energy Foundation  
First Priority Bank  
Fleetwood Area School District  
Fulton Bank  
Gage Personnel  
Good Life Companies  
Governor Mifflin School District  
Greater Reading Chamber Alliance  
Hamburg Area School District  
Helping Harvest  
Herbein+Company, Inc.  
Jerlyn Foundation  
Kutztown Area School District  
Kutztown University  
M&T Bank

Marlin Miller, Jr. Family Foundation  
Met-Ed, A FirstEnergy Company  
Mitsubishi Chemical Advanced Materials  
Muhlenberg School District  
NAI Keystone  
Newcastle Lawn & Landscaping  
Oley Valley School District  
Penn State Berks  
Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center  
Penske Truck Leasing Co.  
Radius Corporation  
Reading Area Community College  
Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center  
Reading School District  
Schuylkill Valley School District

Seakeeper, Inc.  
Sealstrip Corporation  
Solo Laboratories  
Spotts, Stevens, and McCoy  
Tompkins Vist Bank  
Tower Health  
Tulpehocken Area School District  
Twin Valley School District  
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UGI Utilities, Inc.  
Viwinco Windows  
Weidenhammer  
Wilson School District  
World Affairs Council of Greater Reading  
WORLD electronics  
Wyomissing Area School District  
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[www.berksbec.org](http://www.berksbec.org)



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**BERKS BUSINESS  
EDUCATION COALITION**

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