School Age Programs Celebrates 30 Years of Service

School Age Programs is celebrating 30 years of providing quality services to families, schools, and community agencies in western Connecticut with the unveiling of a new name, BASES - Before & After School Extended Services.

“We are very proud of our continuous growth in meeting the needs of students, families, and schools in our communities. Our staff of highly-qualified professionals are also active in local, regional, state, and national organizations, which enables us to bring innovative, evidence-based practices to our programs,” commented Tracey Lay, EdAdvance’s Chief Talent & Collaboration Officer and the Director of School Age Programs, now BASES, for over 25 years.

BASES provides licensed before and after school programs, enrichment opportunities for students, customized professional development for teachers and administrators, as well as consulting and technical assistance to schools, districts, agencies, and organizations. BASES works in close collaboration with school districts, parents, and students to deliver engaging and enriching extended learning experiences.

For more information about BASES contact Sarah Moran, Department Manager, at 860.567.0863 x1193 or moran@edadvance.org.

Making Connections Fall 2019

Jeffrey Kitching, EdAdvance Executive Director, is joined by David Merchant, Mayor of Plymouth, PLA Administration, members of EdAdvance Board of Directors, and representatives from Thomaston Savings Bank at the school’s ribbon cutting.

EdAdvance recently celebrated the opening of the Partnership Learning Academy (PLA) in Plymouth. The Partnership Learning Academy is an elementary program designed for students in grades K-5, providing flexible options for school districts in meeting the short or long-term complex needs of students with significant behavioral issues. PLA was named to exemplify the close partnership with referring school districts and families in meeting each student’s unique needs through personalized learning and behavioral and social-emotional supports. EdAdvance has partnered with area districts for more than 20 years, providing cost effective, specialized educational, behavioral, and diagnostic services for students. Services are provided in three locations in Litchfield and Fairfield counties: The ACCESS Program in Danbury, the Partnership Learning Academy in Plymouth, and Steps at East School in Torrington.

For more information on Special Education Programs contact, Jennifer Douglas, Director of Special Education Programs at douglas@edadvance.org or 203.205.0000.

Jennifer Douglas, Director of Special Education Programs; Danyell Danielson, Teacher; Alyssa Ouellette, LCSW; Scott Rossignol, Principal

Tracey Lay (second from left), Chief Talent & Collaboration Officer, with the BASES administrative team.

EdAdvance Opens Partnership Learning Academy in Plymouth

For more information about BASES contact Sarah Moran, Department Manager, at 860.567.0863 x1193 or moran@edadvance.org.
Skills21 at EdAdvance Awarded $1.2 M NSF ITEST Grant

Skills21 at EdAdvance, in collaboration with a statewide STEM education and industry partnership, has received a NSF ITEST Strategies Project Award, Augmented Reality Experiences in 21st Century STEM Careers (ARX21). ARX21 will develop a series of next generation Augmented Reality (AR) digital Learning Labs and incorporate this cutting-edge technology into existing high school science, engineering, and manufacturing courses. AR is an emerging technology that brings digital information into the physical world, overlaying digital artifacts onto the physical environment that are then accessed via a mobile phone, a tablet, or wearable technology. The ARX21 Learning Labs’ multidimensional content will be specifically designed to heighten student motivation for STEM learning, increase interest in STEM-related education and careers, and deepen collaboration skills. ARX21 supports rigorous STEM project-based learning that incorporates emerging technologies, aligned with 21st century workforce skills, in student populations that are underrepresented in STEM fields.

A comprehensive series of ARX21 Learning Labs will be developed, implemented, and evaluated in ten diverse high school settings in CT over the three-year project. The Learning Labs will be hosted on Skills21’s web-based learning platform (Launchpad), created under a prior NSF award. Student-led teams will be engaged in the Learning Labs to deepen their level of inquiry and content knowledge in their STEM-related coursework. Student teams in each course will collaborate to develop AR-enhanced Innovation Challenge Projects, featured at Skills21’s nationally acclaimed Student Expo Fest, and competitively judged by a panel of STEM industry and higher education experts. The ARX21 Learning Lab series and curricular resources developed will be published under an Open Education Resource license and disseminated statewide with the support of the CT State Department of Education, the CT RESC Alliance, and the CT Association of Public School Superintendents.

Jonathan Costa, EdAdvance’s Assistant Executive Director and ARX21’s Principal Investigator, commented that “this NSF award adds a new, exciting dimension to the Skills21 digital teaching and learning model and holds great promise in advancing equitable access for underrepresented students to 21st century STEM coursework.” Matt Mervis, Skills21 Director added, “this project represents a robust partnership among the Skills21 team’s instructional experts, high school educators, higher education faculty, and industry professionals working together to amplify student knowledge and skills in STEM fields, and we are grateful for our collaborators’ contributions to this important work.”

For more information contact Matt Mervis, Director of Skills21, at 860.567.0863 x1129 or mervis@edadvance.org.

Green LEAF Project

Green LEAF Project is a two-year United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded grant to support CT Green LEAF Schools. Green LEAF Schools are recognized as those that: provide effective environmental and sustainability education, improve the health and wellness of students and staff, reduce environmental impact and cost of the resources used in the school.

EdAdvance supports approximately 130 Green LEAF schools across the state by offering ongoing professional development workshops for teachers, access to educational resources, grant funding opportunities for special programs or purchasing products, field trips for participating urban elementary and middle school students, and assistance with applications for national Green Ribbon status. Connecticut
Green LEAF Schools is a free statewide initiative to help K-12 schools grow “greener.” Any public or private school in Connecticut is welcome to join.

For more information about Green LEAF contact Abby Peklo, Director of Student & Community Programs, at 860.567.0863 x1166 or peklo@edadvance.org.

Annual Meeting Highlights

EdAdvance’s Annual Meeting was held at the newly-opened Partnership Learning Academy (PLA) in Plymouth on October 3rd. Attendees included EdAdvance Board of Directors, Executive Cabinet, Program Directors, and area Superintendents. The morning began with breakfast and conversation, followed by a presentation by Dr. Jeffrey Kitching, Executive Director, and Jonathan Costa, Assistant Executive Director. The presentation featured an overview of new programs and services, including the agency’s cooperative work with districts developing cost-effective regional approaches in the areas of Special Education and Transition Services. Accomplishments in the areas of shared staffing solutions in HR, IT, and Marketing; regional efficiencies in curriculum development; Social-Emotional Learning initiatives; and state-wide collaborations via the RESC Alliance were also discussed.

All Agency Day

EdAdvance hosted All Agency Day, an annual event that highlights the accomplishments of the agency and staff. Dr. Jeffrey Kitching, Executive Director, opened with an agency overview and priorities for the upcoming school year followed by the annual staff recognition. Forty EdAdvance staff were recognized for years of service to the agency.

The remainder of the morning featured a Health & Wellness Expo, coordinated by EdAdvance’s Health & Wellness Committee. The Expo included workshops as well as demonstrations and informational displays. Workshops included: Aging Masterfully, Chair Yoga & Relaxation, Financial Fitness: How Money Works, Guided Tour of EdAdvance Property, Mindfulness; and Networking for Better Health. Informational Displays and Demonstrations offered guidance on: Chronic Disease Management; Community Resources for Preventive, Primary Care, and Mental Health Services; Diabetes Prevention; Fitness; Heart Healthy Eating/Meal Planning; Preventing Tick-borne Illnesses; Public Health Programs & Services; Smoking Prevention & Cessation; and Tai Chi. Many thanks to our participating community organizations: Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Fit Together NWCT, Community Health & Wellness Center of Greater Torrington, Greenwoods Counseling Referrals, Northwestern CT YMCA, Torrington Area Health District, and The Regional YMCA of Western CT.

Fall 2019 Member District Workshops:
Enhancing Your District’s Capacity to Win Grants

Presenter: Joyce Dunn, EdAdvance Grants & Development Specialist

EdAdvance – Danbury Campus
4 Mountainview Terrace, Suite 201
Danbury, CT 06810
Thursday, November 7 • 9:00-10:15 AM

EdAdvance – Litchfield Campus
355 Goshen Road
Litchfield, CT 06759
Tuesday, November 19 • 9:00-10:15 AM

For more information or to register, contact: Joyce Dunn at dunn@edadvance.org or 860.567.0863 x 139.
Litchfield County Family Child Care Network

EdAdvance has worked collaboratively with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) over the past year to form the Litchfield County Family Child Care Network. This special OEC grant-funded project supports twenty-seven family child care providers in western Connecticut though professional development and best practices in business. The network creates ongoing opportunities for family child care providers to connect with each other and share resources and expertise to enhance the quality of their programs.

Members of the Litchfield County Family Child Care Network have participated in professional development sessions addressing infant, toddler, and child development; social and emotional development; and promoting school readiness. Safety trainings, fingerprinting assistance, hiring support, and social media training have also been provided as business support initiatives.

For more information about the Litchfield County Family Child Care Network contact Michelle Anderson, Director of Early Childhood and Family Programs, at andersonm@edadvance.org or 860.567.0863 x1177.