



From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

Update on Activities Impacting Technology in Ohio's Schools

Educational Technology and the New State Budget

Budget hearing are currently being conducted on the state biennial budget for FY08 and FY09. Two line items that particularly impact educational technology are 200-426 which supports the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN) and line 200-446 which deals with the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

Support for the Ohio K-12 Network, INFOhio, State Software, and the OECN Information Technology Centers (ITC's) comes from the state budget line 200-426. Although the Ohio Department of Education requested a slight increase in line 200-426, the budget as proposed by the governor recommends an amount remaining level with the current biennium. Total state budget support of the OECN has actually decreased over this decade. The MCOECN will seek additional funding in line 200-426 in support of the programs designated within that line item.

Line Item 200-446 supports the EMIS system and provides EMIS subsidies to schools and ITC's. The State Board of Education and the governor have both proposed an increase to the subsidy levels provided by line 200-446. There is also an increase in EMIS operations and data exchange. In fact, the governor proposed an increase slightly higher than that requested by the State Board of Education. This line item would support the new data exchange project being implemented by the Department of Education including portions of the EMIS Rewrite.

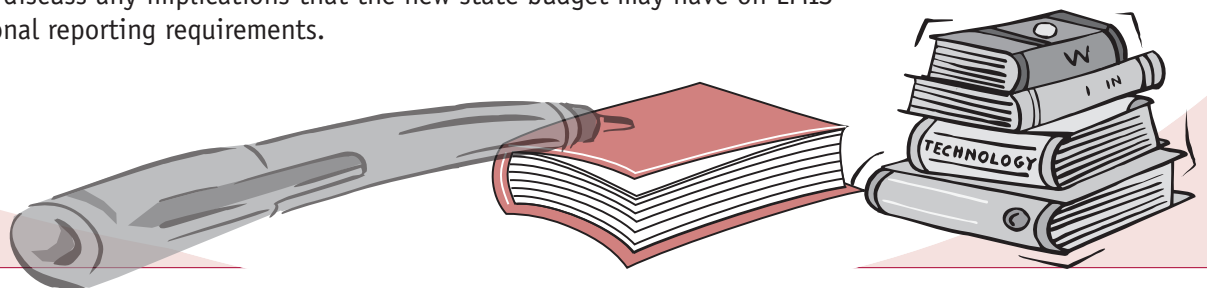
It is certainly early in the biennial budget process and further changes could happen as these line items progress through the House and Senate deliberations, but it is important we have accurate data on both student progress and administrative functions so that appropriate decisions can be made at the district, department, and legislative levels.

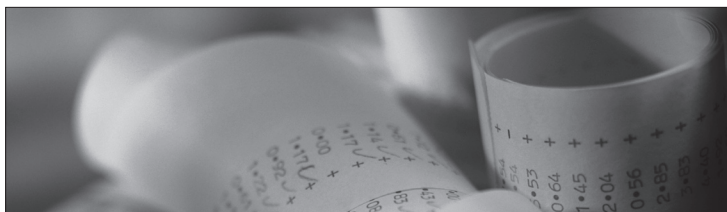
State EMIS Advisory Committee

Under House Bill 115 (the Educational Services Regionalization Bill) introduced by Representative Arlene Setzer, there was a provision to establish a state EMIS Advisory Committee. This committee consists of representatives from the legislature, the State Board of Education, the Ohio Department of Education, the Board of Regents, the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network (MCOECN), the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), the Ohio Association of EMIS Professionals (OAEP), the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, the Ohio Education Association, and the Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA).

This committee held their initial meeting on March 22. Representative Setzer was appointed the chair of this committee. During this initial meeting, there was an extended discussion on the history of EMIS, its current function, and how it can be used better to facilitate decisions at both local and state levels. The meeting was very informative and gave committee members a broader perspective of how we can work together to improve the EMIS system. The committee will meet again in April to discuss any implications that the new state budget may have on EMIS funding and/or additional reporting requirements.

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eTech Ohio Network Conversion Update

The eTech Ohio Commission has been working with OARnet and others for over eighteen months to implement a high-speed fiber backbone for the Ohio K-12 Network. As we approach the end of this implementation period, eTech Ohio has worked with the Ohio K-12 Network Advisory Committee to review a plan to migrate the network from ATM to IP, thus enabling the network to support Ethernet-based video connections. In February, this plan was adopted and eTech Ohio began procuring IP switches to locate in the OSCnet PoPs.

As eTech Ohio begins to install this equipment through the late spring and summer months, we will be testing the IP connectivity. It is important to note that eTech Ohio will not be immediately taking down the ATM network. Rather, we will continue to support the ATM network and the IP network in tandem for a transition period. During this transition period, ITCs and large urban districts that wish to migrate their connectivity to IP should contact eTech Ohio to discuss their local migration plan.

As ITCs and large urban districts begin planning to implement IP connections, there are several issues you should be aware of:

- First, once an ATM connection is migrated to IP that connection will no longer be able to support ATM videoconferencing. ITC's are encouraged to contact schools within their network to ensure that they are aware of this conversion and how it may affect videoconferencing users.
- Second, ITCs and large urban districts will be responsible for any equipment upgrades they need to make locally to enable IP connectivity.

In addition to migrating the data network from ATM to IP, eTech Ohio is also working to implement a new videoconferencing scheduling system. This new scheduling system will allow eTech Ohio to begin providing full support for IP videoconferencing during the 2007-2008 school year. As part of this implementation, we are currently working to develop end user training and we will be offering training for a limited number of ITC and large urban district technical staff. Additional details about these training opportunities will be forthcoming.

As part of the implementation plan for this new videoconferencing scheduling system, videoconferencing users may need to re-register their video equipment. Additional details about registering your videoconferencing equipment in the new scheduling system will be forthcoming.

If you have any questions of these or other eTech Ohio projects, please feel free to contact Eugene Wallis at 614-485-6049 or via email at eugene.wallis@etech.ohio.gov.

"Select" the Management Council for Your Microsoft Software Needs

Administrators, teachers, and students should be aware of two exciting purchasing programs covering Microsoft software products.

If your school is looking to purchase new licenses or upgrade existing licenses for Microsoft software products you may be wise to consider purchasing through the MCOECN "Select" software program. The Management Council has worked with Microsoft to establish a volume discount licensing purchase program for all K-12 schools – both public and private – in Ohio.

This program, known as a "Microsoft Select Licensing Agreement" brings two distinct benefits to Ohio schools. First, the Select agreement generates significantly lower pricing on all Microsoft desktop and server product lines. Second, it allows districts to purchase any number of licenses with no minimum or "pool" purchases required. Schools can save on the cost of each license and avoid buying extra licenses they may not need. Schools can also purchase any time throughout the year, and Software Assurance upgrade protection is available if

desired. Our Select program is administered in partnership with Educational Resources. Check out <http://www.edresources.com/mcoecn> for more information on this program.

The Microsoft Select program is a great benefit for school purchases ("school use"), but it has one drawback – it does not cover individual or private "home use." However, there is a second program that can fill the need for individual purchases. Any employee or any student of a K-12 school in Ohio can purchase a selection of Microsoft products for home use through the "Microsoft Student Select" program. Unlike retail "student" versions that offer a limited feature set, the Microsoft Student Select program allows employees and students to purchase full-featured versions of popular titles like Microsoft Office and Microsoft Vista. Furthermore, these versions are offered at a significant discount when compared to normal retail pricing. Please note that proof of student or employee status is required in order to complete your purchase. Our Student Select program is administered in partnership with Educational Resources and Journey Ed. For more information or to order online go to <http://www.journeyed.com/er>.

For school or home, "Select" the MCOECN for your Microsoft software needs.

INFOhio News

Improved Digital Video Collection – New Titles Added



The INFOhio server hosting the Ohio Area Instructional Media Centers' (OAIMC) Digital Video Collection (DVC) has seen major improvements, making the DVC more accessible than ever. www.infohio.org/DVC.html.

The use of appropriate instructional resources in the classroom provides learning experiences that lead to greater student conceptual understanding. In fact, earlier research conducted by the 3M Company in Minnesota showed that the human mind processes visual images nearly 60,000 times faster than text. It is evident that INFOhio and the Ohio Area Instructional Media Centers have increasingly embraced digitization and online content fulfillment as one of the primary vehicles for service delivery in fulfilling our mission to support the state's teachers and students.

The DVC contains more than 200 videos, with more than 700 instructional modules, that include programs for almost all subjects and grade levels. The entire collection is available without charge to Ohio's K-12 community. Home access is provided with the same username and password required for INFOhio's Core Collection of Electronic Resources. www.infohio.org/ER/ERcore.asp

New features include:

The alphabetical browse list of videos now provides running time and file size for each instructional module.

New PDF title lists include names of instructional modules, running times, and file sizes. This list is generated on-the-fly each time the URL is visited so you'll always have the most current list of videos.

Additional PDF title lists are available, one annotated with descriptions and one by subject.

The newest programs include:

Inside the Living Cell

Visualizing Cell Processes

Copyright Law: Internet and Multimedia Education for Schools

Put the Brakes on Bullying

Our Ohio: Exploring Our Heritage* - 26 programs produced by Think TV

Air Force Museum

Change Is in the Wind

Copley School Gardening

From Colonial to Contemporary

Malabar Farm

Marietta

When Canals Ran Through It

Ohio Waterways

Potato Chips

Science of Composting

Soil Types

Spring Planting

Underground Railroad

Sunwatch Village - Native American Artifacts

Apple Harvest

Cheese Production

Fall Harvest

Love of Quilting, A

Mansfield Reformatory

Ohio Amish, The

Pizza Factory

Sauder Village

Sheep to Sweaters

Soybeans to Japan

Veterinarian's Life, A

Ohio State Fair

*Funding for the series came from the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Nationwide Insurance and eTech Ohio. Visit the Our Ohio site for more information. www.ourohio.org

Video Your Way



View Now (.WMV files) - Real time video streaming works best with fiber, cable or full T1 connections. Teachers may want to check with the school's technology coordinator to find out if there are streaming video restrictions due to the high amount of bandwidth needed.



Download (.MPG files) - If streaming will not work or is prohibited, temporary downloading is an option. The video can be saved to a computer - or several classroom computers - for use any time during a 45-day period.



CD-ROM or DVD

If streaming or downloading are not available, contact your OAIMC to borrow CD/DVD versions. <http://www.infohio.org/Medianet/Directory.html>

ITC Oversight Committee

In September of 2005, the State Board of Education approved the new Ohio Administrative Code regulations for the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN). Part of these new regulations included the development of an ITC Oversight Committee. This committee also consists of users including OASBO, BASA, OAEP, community schools, the Management Council, and ITCs. The committee is chaired by members of the Ohio Department of Education who listen to the recommendations from the Oversight Committee. This committee has already met twice this year and is looking at ways to support the ITCs in remaining in compliance with the Ohio Administrative Code including financial reports, constitutions, audits, and continuous improvement plans. At the last meeting, the Oversight Committee made a recommendation to the Department on implementing the requirement for the continuous improvement plans (CIP's) that are developed by ITCs.

Technology Services Group (TSG)

For nearly two decades, the Management Council has had an arm of the organization called the MCOECN VAR (Value Added Reseller). The VAR has provided an important program of technology group purchasing in support of Ohio schools and the ITC's. Since the inception of the VAR, there have been numerous cooperative purchase opportunities that have provided a direct financial benefit for Ohio schools.

This past fall, the Management Council decided to restructure the VAR to refocus our technology service offerings. The new name for this organization is the Technology Services Group (TSG) which more closely reflects the purpose of this program. The strategies of the TSG are: 1.) provide technology leadership to Ohio educational entities to assist in improving instruction and administrative capabilities by identifying optimal technical solutions; 2.) conduct product research, customization and support; 3.) develop a team capable of providing the identified services; 4.) establish vendor relationships and 5.) build collaboration with other service agencies such as ODE, eTech Ohio, and the Ohio Supercomputer Center Network.

One of the first steps in the implementation of the new TSG is to hire an Executive Director. The Management Council is pleased to announce that Todd Hellman has accepted this position and will begin on May 1. Todd has an extensive background in education, technology, and business making him highly qualified for this position. He worked for several years for Ohio SchoolNet which became eTech Ohio and more recently was the Director of the Center for Technology at the Franklin County Educational Service Center. Todd has a vision for the development of the TSG, and the Management Council is very pleased to have him in this position.

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