

From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

Updates on Activities Impacting Technology in Ohio Schools

Educational Technology in the Recently Passed State Biennial Budget

This past June the state biennial budget for fiscal years 08-09 was passed by the legislature and signed by the governor. A major surprise in the final version of the state budget was the inclusion of the second ADM (Average Daily Membership) count for each school year. Because of calamity days early last February, this second ADM count in the 2006-2007 school year was very problematic. The original recommendations from the governor and the versions of the bill that were passed by both the House and Senate eliminated this second ADM count; however, the Conference Committee re-inserted this count, and it was passed in the final version of the bill.

The OECN operating funds, connectivity fund, INFOhio funding, and OECN support received the same funding as they did in the previous biennium for fiscal years 06-07. There were small increases in the EMIS subsidy for both districts and the ITCs, as well as a small increase in the EMIS Operation and Data Exchange line item. Since approximately 80% of the districts in Ohio are on the EMIS guarantee, the district subsidy will not impact these districts.

These past budget deliberations were very difficult due to the limited amount of money the legislature had to allocate to state programs, and the Management Council is appreciative of the efforts of educational personnel and legislators in attempting to impact technology funding in Ohio's schools.

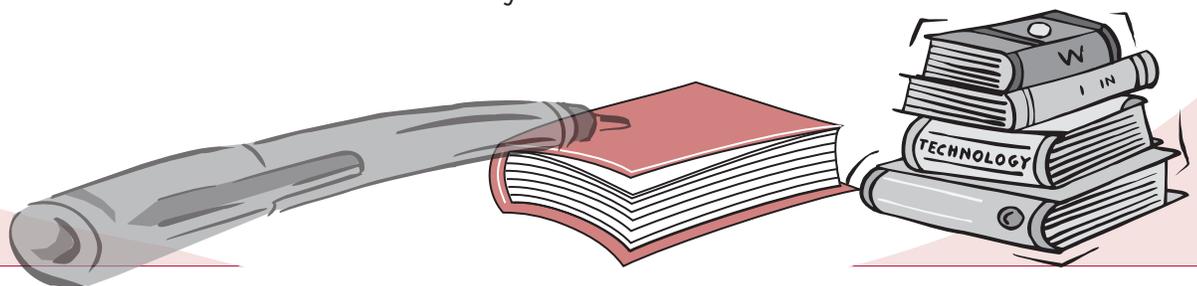
OSCnet and Ohio K-12 Network

All 30 sites (23 ITCs and 7 large urban districts) are now connected to the fiber network which has been renamed from TFN (Third Frontier Network) to OSCnet or the Ohio Supercomputer Network. Some sites are now beginning to migrate to Gig-E or gigabit Ethernet which will greatly increase the speed of Internet transmission and video connections.

Video Migration

ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) has been the primary state supported transport for video since 2000. With the increase in bandwidth, schools are now able to go to IP (Internet protocol) for video. This should prove to be a more cost effective means of transferring video in Ohio schools. eTech Ohio is housing the bridging for IP video and it is now up and in operation. ATM video will be phased out; however, it will continue to be supported for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year.

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Redesigning EMIS to Improve Reporting: Answers to your Questions

This article was submitted by Edustructures who was awarded the RFP for the EMIS Rewrite.

What is the redesign and how will it benefit education in the state?

Recently, the ODE received a federal Longitudinal Data Systems grant to update Ohio's EMIS reporting process to better enable longitudinal analysis of student performance and other data. This groundbreaking project, the EMIS Redesign for Longitudinal Data (EMIS-R), will utilize dynamically defined vertical reports based on the gold standard for data sharing in PK-12, the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF®).

This format will allow the ODE to decide *what* to collect and *when* to collect it. A more automated approach using SIF-based collections that are less labor intensive will offer more timely access to data and provide monitoring and management of collections via a unified Web console. Disordered data—once business logic is applied—becomes *actionable* data with relational integrity thanks to a new, more powerful staging database, the operational data store (ODS). A highly automated data collection process minimizes administrative inefficiencies with a workflow that supports data cleansing with local control. The result is a system that is more responsive to ever-changing reporting requirements.

Who is managing the project?

The ODE and its contractors—Edustructures and IBM—will work directly with the ITCs and large independent reporting districts to implement the EMIS-R project over the next two years. Edustructures, the prime contractor on the project, is the leading provider of SIF solutions and services and has successfully implemented more statewide, SIF-based Longitudinal Data Systems

than any other supplier. IBM, working as a sub-contractor to Edustructures, offers extensive expertise in PK-12 enterprise data systems, including the D3A2 initiative in Ohio.

When and where will the project roll out?

The EMIS-R project is statewide. ITCs and large independent reporting districts will implement the EMIS-R beginning FY10. Three pilot locations will test the new EMIS system in FY 2009, and the remainder of the regional sites will receive the software between February and March of 2009.

Can I deploy SIF for my districts?

Additional benefits of this project to the ITCs include the licensing of the SIFWorks® Enterprise Zone Integration Server (ZIS)—the messaging center of a SIF Zone—on behalf of all ITCs by the ODE. Further, ITCs gain membership in the Edustructures Certified Education Service Agency program. This agreement between the ODE and Edustructures offers ITCs access to the software, training, and tools they need to host SIF-based services for their districts as soon as they are ready to deploy. ITCs wishing to host district SIF services will be able to deploy a SIF infrastructure sooner than the EMIS-R rollouts.

Where can I learn more?

Watch this space, as well as the ITC forums and your email inbox, for upcoming information on the EMIS-R project and how it can help you and the schools you serve. If you need additional information, contact Nancy Haefeli at ODE, nancy.haefeli@ode.state.oh.us

Ohio K-12 Network Phase I Complete

For some time we have been keeping you informed about the status of improvements to the network supporting Ohio's K-12 schools. Through a partnership with the OSCnet (formerly known as the Third Frontier Network) the Ohio K-12 Network has been upgraded to a high-speed fiber optic backbone. We are happy to inform you that the first phase of this upgrade is now complete. All twenty-three OECN Information Technology Centers and seven large urban school districts are now connected to the new fiber network at the OC-3 speed (155 megabits per second). The second phase of this network build-out has been fully funded and is now in progress. Phase-II will involve a migration of the backbone network from the Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) protocol at OC-3 bandwidth to a Gigabit Ethernet protocol running 1000 megabits per second.

However, changes within the new network are not all about "speeds and feeds." Approximately a year ago the network moved to a new Internet Service Provider (ISP). In the past twelve months Internet usage has increased from 650Mb/month to an average of 1950Mb/month. By switching to services provided by Qwest the network has been able to enjoy a three-fold increase in Internet bandwidth within the existing available funding. ISP bandwidth utilization will be studied with an eye towards a possible increase during this fiscal year. The thirty primary network nodes also received state support to purchase additional Internet caching appliances. These cache engines will help make backbone traffic utilization more efficient across the network.

Another noteworthy improvement has been the move from the ATM-based VC Wizard video scheduling package to the new "VC Manager" system. The new package will handle scheduling for both ATM and IP base video bridging needs. There is an on-line tutorial on the eTech Ohio web site at http://www.etech.ohio.gov/jcore_images/programs/videoconferencing/tutorial/. The new system is now in place and the legacy VC Wizard will be phased out by the end of September 2007. Please note that state-level support for legacy ATM video will be phased out by September 1, 2008.

The Ohio K-12 Network is also taking steps to reduce unwanted junk email. During the summer of 2007 a new SPAM filtering system was installed. Fifteen of the ITC's and large urban districts have volunteered to be connected through this filter. The new system is preventing over **17 MILLION** junk mail messages each day from cluttering local email systems.

These are just some of the major improvements that have happened over the past year. Please stay tuned as the Ohio K-12 Network continues to add services and features to maintain our state's status as one of the premier K-12 educational networks in the country.

INFOhio News...

State Report finds the “effort to automate Ohio’s school libraries has been demonstrably successful and has produced significant advances in information access for Ohio’s K-12 students.

Highlights

As part of the Five Year Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) Evaluation, **the State Library of Ohio selected to evaluate the impact of LSTA funding on school library automation** in Ohio over the last ten years. In the last ten years, approximately \$12 million in LSTA funds have been used to automate 1400 school library media centers. Dr. Greg Byerly conducted the evaluation. In summary, “The use of LSTA funds to automate school libraries in Ohio has been found to have had a significant impact on schools, teachers, librarians, and others involved in K-12 education. These funds have also made a difference in how school libraries are used and perceived. School library automation has also resulted in more resource sharing, although primarily within districts.”

- The automation of over 1,400 school libraries has had major positive impacts on Ohio K-12 education.
 - Access to information is more equitable.
 - Students are learning important searching skills through the online catalog.
 - Teachers demonstrate higher respect for librarians in automated libraries.
 - And, students are better prepared to continue their education and/or become life-long learners.
- Some *differences that stand out* between automated and non-automated libraries include:
 - Librarians are more unified, more likely to work together professionally, and more committed to collaborative relationships.
 - Teachers and administrators have improved perceptions of libraries and librarians, are more aware of the materials in the library, and have a different and better relationship with the librarian.
 - Students with more equitable access to information have improved learning and more positive opinions about both the library and the librarian.
- Librarians and others working in Ohio’s schools feel strongly that INFOhio has been and continues to be a highly effective agent for change for school libraries.

Report Details

Ohio’s Use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Funds to Automate K-12 Schools: An In-Depth Evaluation as Part of the State Library of Ohio’s 5-Year LSTA Evaluation of a Major LSTA-Fund Initiative

Author: Greg Byerly PhD, TIP Associates

Methodology: Document review, electronic surveys, interviews and focus groups.

For access to the full report:

<http://winslo.state.oh.us/publib/LSTAschoolautomationREPORT.pdf>

On June 28, 2007, the State Library of Ohio Board awarded INFOhio the LSTA Library Automation Grant which will automate thirty-seven buildings from the following fourteen districts:

Boardman Local, ACCESS
Cincinnati Public, HCCA
Clark Shawnee, MVECA
Gibsonburg Exempted, NOECA
Greeneview Local, MVECA

Licking Valley Local, LACA
Manchester Local, NEONET
McComb Local, NOACSC
Poland Local, ACCESS
Seneca East Local, NOECA

Lake Local, NWOCA
Lakewood Local, LACA
Sidney City, WOCO
Tallmadge City, NEONET

Important Upcoming Dates

Ohio K-12 Network Connectivity Subsidy Application Deadline:

- Deadline to apply is **Wednesday October 31, 2007**
- **NO APPLICATIONS** will be accepted after that date
- Application is available on the district tech coordinator’s eTech Hall Pass account

eTech Ohio State Technology Conference:

- Conference dates are February 4th – 6th 2008
- Registration is now open via the eTech Ohio web site
- Presentation proposal deadline is Wednesday September 26th
- Technology Award Applications (Teacher, Coordinator, Administrator) due by October 3, 2007

Legacy ATM Video Support

- State-level support of legacy ATM video will end on **September 1, 2008**
- On-line training for the new VC Manger scheduling application is available at: http://www.etech.ohio.gov/jcore_images/programs/videsconferencing/tutorial/

OECN Oversight Committee

This committee oversees the compliance for the Ohio Education Computer Network within the Ohio Administrative Code. This year, each ITC will be required to complete a checklist stating their compliance to these rules and also submit a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

EMIS Advisory Committee

House Bill 115 created the EMIS Advisory Committee. This committee is chaired by Representative Arlene Setzer and has been very active over the past few months. At recent meetings, there was an extensive explanation of the changes to EMIS in this current school year as well as the EMIS Rewrite which is projected to be implemented in the 2009-2010 school year. This committee has representatives from the various educational organizations, the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Department of Education, and key state education legislators.

MCOECN Technology Services Group

Last year, the Management Council reorganized the previous VAR (Value Added Reseller) program into the Technology Services Group. This arm of the Management Council is investigating hardware, software, and other initiatives that will be beneficial to Ohio schools. You can see more of the activities of the TSG on our website at: www.mcoecn.org and click on the VAR link.

www.mcoecn.org

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