

Connections

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Management Council
of the

Ohio Education Computer Network

Providing Technology
Services to Ohio
Classrooms

Bruce Hawkins, CEO
hawkins@mcoecn.org

Columbus Office:
2455 North Star Road
Suite 1
Columbus, Ohio 43221
Phone: 614.995.1775
Fax: 614.752.2940

Mt. Vernon Office:
1365 New Gambier Road
Mount Vernon, OH 43050
Phone: 740.397.9510
Fax: 740.392.1547

Visit our website at:
<http://www.mcoecn.org>

1 ONEnet Ohio

Ready for Implementation

Since last October, several state agencies have worked together to design a network that will increase the speed of connectivity among the computers in Ohio's public and non-public school districts. The goal of the ONEnet Committee has been to develop a state education network which provides schools with universal access to low-cost, high-performance network capacity. This state educational network is designed to be a simple, uniform, reliable, standards-based system that provides both basic and comprehensive services.

The ONEnet Committee has made recommendations for the flow of allocated funds for both connectivity and equipment to implement this statewide network. The committee has also received input from school district technology coordinators, administrators, end-users and others as this network was being developed. There have been several panel discussions at state conferences and other meetings to gather input from the education community before the ONEnet plan was finalized.

The ONEnet Committee consisted of 15 individuals representing the Ohio SchoolNet Commission (OSNC), the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), the Ohio Educational Telecommunications Network (OET), the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN),

independent school districts and non-public schools. This committee looked at present and future voice, video, and data applications in Ohio schools.

The Gartner Group, a well-known consulting firm on technology, facilitated the initial meetings and worked with the ONEnet Committee on current acceptable standards as well as emerging technologies. The collaboration and respect for divergent views among the ONEnet Committee members was outstanding. As this committee worked together over the past few months, consensus was reached on nearly every issue.



Once a draft plan was developed, it was shared with the data acquisition sites for initial input. This draft was then refined and shared at statewide meetings such as the BASA/OSBA Spring Academy on Technology and the Ohio SchoolNet State Technology Conference. The input from these audiences has been taken into account and the final plan for implementation has been prepared. Because of the rapid changes in technology this will not become a stagnant plan, but will evolve as changes in technology occur. The ONEnet Committee will continue to review input and consider suggestions from end-users and other interested parties. Anyone interested in giving input or having questions about the ONEnet plan should send questions to the ONEnet Committee by e-mail at asktheONEnetcommittee@osn.state.oh.us. Your input into this plan is certainly encouraged.

Some Basics of the ONEnet Plan

- Each school building will be strongly encouraged to connect to the statewide network at a minimum of 1.5 megabytes (T1) connectivity or greater.
- Each DA Site and the 8 large urban school districts will be connected at a minimum of a DS-3 (44 megabytes) to the state cloud. The state network will be at an OC-3 (622 megabytes) level of communication.
- These connectivity standards will be the recommended minimums for school districts and as funding permits, school districts are certainly encouraged to expand their connectivity to greater bandwidth such as fiber connections.
- At this time, the ONEnet Committee plans to support wireless connections and cable connections for one more year. After that time, districts will be encouraged to convert to one of the ONEnet accepted standards of connectivity.
- Although the ONEnet Committee sees H.323 (IP connectivity) as an emerging technology, the committee is currently supporting H.321 (ATM connectivity) due to the guaranteed quality of service ATM provides at this time.
- The ONEnet Committee will continue to look at emerging technologies and revise the standards when they feel it is prudent to do so.
- The ONEnet standards will be used in other statewide initiatives such as the Interactive Video Distance Learning Pilot (IVDLP) that is being expanded in fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2001.
- Districts applying for the Ohio SchoolNet Telecommunity program are also encouraged to use the H.321 (ATM standards) for access to state video resources.

(Continued from Page 4)



Other benefits of joining the INFOhio network include resource sharing, web-based card catalogs and in-service training. And, most importantly, the students and teachers who use automated libraries will lead the way in applying the tools of the Information Age toward a better future.



Search the online catalogs of more than 700 building libraries served by 15 DA Sites at http://www.infohio.org/web2/web2_header.htm.

For more information contact Theresa M. Fredericka, INFOhio Executive Director at 614-752-2941 or e-mail at fredericka@infohio.org.

Update on AAL - New State Information Software Package

Some concerns have developed over the release of AAL, the new state Student Software Information System Package. The Ohio Department of Education has taken action to address those concerns and is working toward a stable release of the software.

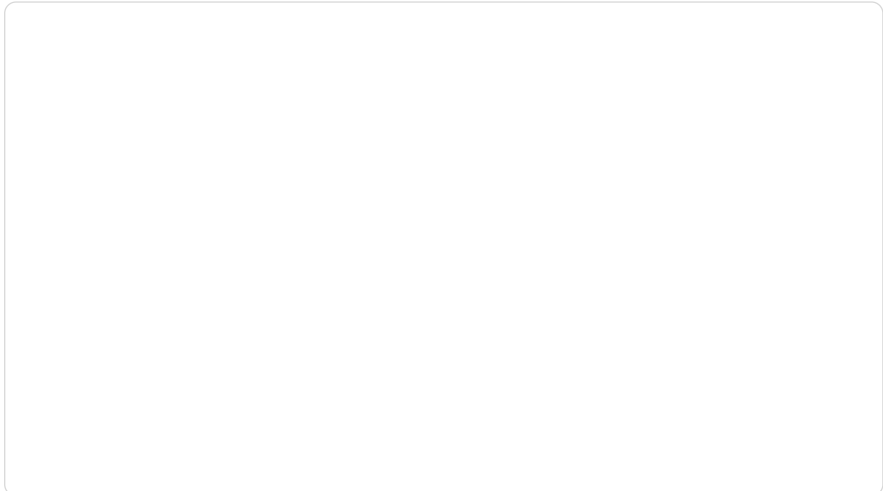
Initially, there were five pilot DA sites involved in the AAL project. That has currently been scaled back to two pilot DA sites so that any concerns can be addressed with a smaller number of districts. Some of the concerns that have emerged have been the flexibility of the software, the timeframes for implementation, staff training on the software, Oracle databases and the need for a stable release. To address these concerns, the Ohio Department of Education has:

- 1 reduced the number of pilots from five to two.
- 2 been working on establishing a stable release of the software.
- 3 developed a model office for quality control, testing, etc.
- 4 dedicated ODE resources to project management.
- 5 begun conducting a readiness assessment with DA Sites and districts to determine interest and technological readiness

(Continued on Page 3)



Management Council Forms Committee to Study Data to Improve Student Learning



Educators around Ohio are working on ways to improve student instruction and to develop continuous improvement plans for their school districts. With all of the data being entered into computers across the state, educators have been looking for software that could be used to interpret this data to help improve student instruction in our classrooms. Some interested school superintendents and OECN personnel have been meeting to determine the type of software that would be most beneficial to improve student learning.

Educators and technical staffs meet in Newark to discuss the development of software to improve student learning.

A very exciting two-day conference was hosted by LACA in Newark on April 26th and 27th to

preview various software programs that have been used or developed by different DA Sites. Some of the software previewed included absence graphs, Seagate Analysis, TEACH_PROF, ASK, SIMS, DSIS, ChIP, M.O.L.E., and REMIS on the Web.

During the evening of the 26th a technical round-table was held at the LACA offices. The various software packages were discussed, and the beginnings of a plan were mapped out. It was determined that many of these packages were linked to a relational database. If the OECN would develop this relational database even further, historical information from EMIS, Proficiency, and other testing could be included. This database could then be mined for CIP and IEP data. The committee is continuing to work on this plan and hopes to make a presentation to the DA Sites in the near future.

(Continued from Page 2)

- for conversion.
- 6. begun planning to bring back into the project the other three DA Sites in June 2000.
- 7. developed a user advisory group on the new software system.
- 8. begun plans for the next wave of districts converting to the new software in 2001.

The project manager for AAL is Kimberly Ratcliff and questions on the new software can be addressed to her at ims_Ratcliff@ode.state.ch.us.

SchoolNet Plus Computers for Grade 5

The state legislature in the biennial budget allocated \$53 million to purchase SchoolNet computers for grade 5. The funding requests for these computers are now being received at SchoolNet. The requirements to receive this funding are:

1. the completion of the AETA survey (that survey is available online through SchoolNet);
2. to have a district technology plan that is no more than three years old;
3. to have a treasurer's certificate indicating the amount of funds remaining

from Round 1 through 3 of SchoolNet Plus (Note: Districts must have spent at least 65% of Round 1 through 3 funding.);

4. submission of a commitment letter indicating expected purchases.

At the March meeting of the Ohio SchoolNet Commission, the commission revised the workstation guidelines to reflect important industry trends. The computer standards for SchoolNet Plus can be seen on the SchoolNet website. Questions regarding the SchoolNet Plus project can be sent to Colleen Sexton at SchoolNet or by e-mailing her at sexton@osn.state.ch.us.



THE INFORMATION NETWORK FOR OHIO SCHOOLS

*by Theresa M. Fredericka, Executive Director
INFOhio (fredericka@infohio.org)*

Imagine a tool that lets teachers provide online, durable links to more than 161 full-text magazines. Imagine being able to post an online reading list, with a specific expiration date, for students in connection with a certain lesson. And, imagine automatically receiving full-text, electronic articles on current events from magazines such as *Newsweek* and *Time* by simply creating a key word list.



Imagine this and more, and what you have is SiteBuilder – a powerful, easy-to-use database and web page builder, which currently is available to your school. Funded by the state legislature through FY2001, SiteBuilder is a companion product to INFOhio Electronic Resources for Social Studies ProQuest Database.

The required login ID and password are available from your building librarian or your INFOhio DA Site Provider. All you have to do is ask.

To better understand and appreciate the power of

SiteBuilder, just click on <http://www.infohio.org/er/SiteBuilder_samples.htm> to view several examples of SiteBuilder links created by your colleagues.

Milestone: 1,000 Schools Automated with INFOhio and DRA

INFOhio began its grass roots effort with two schools in 1992. Now, we've reached a significant milestone – 1,000 libraries automated. And, we are well on our way to automating all our school libraries and providing relevant, easy-to-use, cost-efficient online technology.

While there is much to celebrate, there obviously is still much more to accomplish. About one-third of the districts are automated, but many have only just begun. Some need to migrate from older, stand-alone automation systems. And, still others need to make library automation a priority.

In an effort to achieve this goal, INFOhio offers state-negotiated prices for software, helping reduce costs while allowing libraries to offer more and better services to students and teachers. INFOhio also uses the existing state telecommunication networks, including the Data Acquisition Sites of the Ohio Education Computer Network, so there is no duplication of effort or funding.

(Continued on Page 2)



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Mount Vernon, OH 43050