



Connections

Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network

Volume 14: Issue 3

Fall 2011

From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

In the current economic and political environment there are several “buzz words” being used to describe possible strategies or desired results for transforming our educational system. These buzz words include “shared services, consolidation, efficiency, effectiveness, and redundancy.”

Strategies like shared services and consolidation can have a positive impact if they are designed with value in mind. When improving the value-proposition is not the main purpose of the consolidation strategy there is evidence that consolidation may actually increase the cost of operating schools and negatively impact student performance.

A recent report from the Great Lakes Center for Education, Research and Practice found that moving to fewer school districts and therefore fewer superintendents and top administrators, larger school systems are more likely to be financially inefficient when compared to smaller ones. For instance, larger districts require more mid-level administrators zeroing-out potential cost-savings. The report further states that consolidation has not been shown to improve student achievement, but instead can result in diminished academic and social performance. The study shows bigger districts and larger schools are associated with reduced rates of student participation and extracurricular activities, less safe schools, lower graduation rates, lower achievement level for poor students, and wider achievement gaps, particularly among low-income and minority populations.

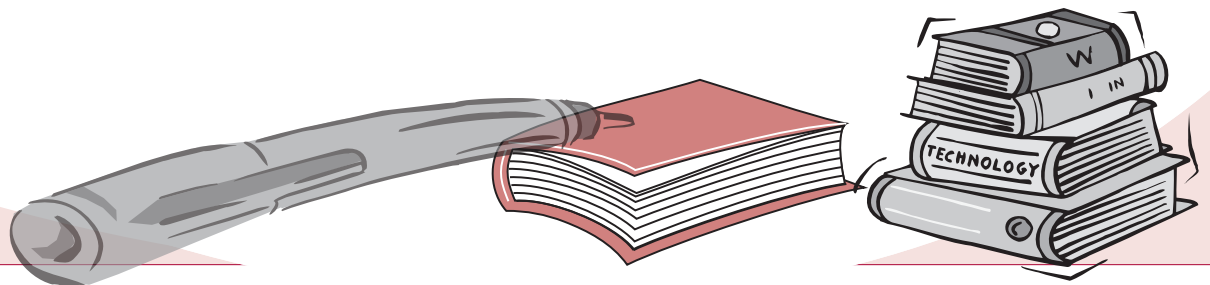
As the state and local communities weigh their options for school improvement including consolidation, what must remain central to any strategy beyond cost efficiencies is how those efficiencies are re-invested in additional strategies that lead to improvements in student achievement.

In addition to consolidation, another topic of conversation across our state is shared services. Shared services are strategies that combine facility, human, technology or other resources to generate economies of scale and lead to improved efficiencies. The OECN was established for this purpose. The current budget bill requires the Governor’s Director of 21st Century Education to develop a plan for the integration and consolidation of the publicly supported regional shared services organizations serving Ohio’s public and chartered non-public schools. This plan is due by January 1, 2012 and the recommendations included are to be implemented by July 1, 2012.

The Management Council supports a study of such shared services, especially how existing investments in shared services can be leveraged to the greater benefit of schools statewide. For the past six months our organization has been examining the operations of the Ohio Education Computer Network to determine how our services can be more efficient. We are exploring how new technologies that enable cloud computing may help the OECN provide additional products and services to schools statewide.

In an environment where school district and students’ expectations from technology continue to expand, an expanded partnership with other organizations such as the Ohio Education Service Center Association, The Ohio Department of Education, and the State Administration is necessary to meet the educational needs of students today and well into the future.

Now is not the time to resist change, but to embrace change and to work together to thoroughly examine all implications as we move forward in delivering quality services to the citizens in Ohio.



The Ohio Educational Technology Conference brings together thousands of educators, administrators, and thought leaders annually. With more than 300 sessions that offer pragmatic strategies, answer nagging questions, and share valuable insights from all corners of the education field, you won't want to miss all that's in store for Conference 2012. Get involved today in any of the following ways at www.etech.ohio.gov/conference:

REGISTER—Early Bird Rates Expire on December 1

The OETC is designed to convene all of us--teachers, faculty, librarians, instructional designers, administrators, students, and technicians—to tap into the best educational currents across the state and re-energize. Secure your spot at Conference today at the Early Bird rate and save more than 20%!

PRESENT—Submit Session Proposals Through October 12

This year's theme, Next Generation Innovation, invites proposals that embrace thoughtful integration of technology into the classroom experience; share advancements in educational technology; and evaluate tools for teaching all of our students.

VOLUNTEER—Apply Online Today

Volunteers provide assistance necessary for making the Ohio Educational Technology Conference a reality. Applications are accepted online only and are considered on a first come, first-served basis. In exchange for working six hours onsite, volunteers receive full complimentary registration for all three days of the Conference.

Local educators value the quality of INFOhio resources and services...

In April 2011, when asked to evaluate INFOhio's services, statewide over 2700 district administrators, librarians, teachers and technology coordinators echoed comments similar to these.

"Students use Google and are not aware that the information could be incorrect, biased, or non-relevant to curriculum. They need to have electronic resources that will provide high quality articles and other media to be able to build higher order thinking skills. Districts that cannot afford subscription databases need INFOhio to provide their learners with quality information that is accessible 24x7."

"INFOhio makes a positive impact on teaching and learning because it offers best practices which assist teachers in developing "rich lessons."

"Comprehensive information on so many topics. We would never be able to afford to have subscriptions to this many entities to support testing, curriculum, and educational topics. They support teacher's needs, as well as students, with the periodicals, newspapers, and encyclopedias. Very efficient and economical way to level the playing field for all demographics and socio-economic strata."

"Utilizing the SMART Board with the information available through INFOhio enables classroom instructors to differentiate instruction that encompasses all learning styles. Students become actively engaged in the learning process. Resources through INFOhio provide instructors with a variety of formats to present lessons to students. It also provides instructors with lessons/concepts that, due to cost or safety, can not be conducted in the classroom. Chemistry class is one example."

"This source can be used outside the school by any student or staff member for accessing reliable information 24/7. INFOhio is like carrying a library on your smart phone, iPad, laptop, or desktop."

"Our students are learning the value of authentic research which prepares them for college and the work place. They learn that where your information comes from, and what it says matters. It reinforces that using the right tool for the right job makes a huge difference in what you are able to achieve. It is an indispensable value for students and staff and families that allows for personal and professional growth for everyone regardless of income, or school report card standing, or school personnel cuts. It is the only true way that students (public, private, home schooled, charter) have equitable access to valid resources. INFOhio ensures students have a chance to be effective learners."



Continuing free statewide access to INFOhio's Core Collection of electronic resources is essential to Ohio schools...

INFOhio's survey asked if schools would be able to afford the approximate \$19.90 cost per student to buy local subscriptions to the databases if funding changes would prevent INFOhio's continued statewide participation in Libraries Connect Ohio.

- 75% Responded that their district could not afford subscribing locally to the same core resources.
- 24% Responded that their district might be able to subscribe locally to 1 or 2 select core resources.
- 1% Responded that their district could afford to subscribe locally to the same core resources.

INFOhio Core Collection News for 2011-2012

INFOhio's Core Collection of Electronic Resources for 2011-2012 is expanded by the addition of three new resources. *Mango Languages*, *ProQuest Ancestry Library Edition* and the *World Book Early World of Learning* join the resources already available to Ohio's PreK-12 community. Funding for the new resources - and continued support for the current Collection - was approved by the State Library of Ohio Board. Visit <http://www.infohio.org/> to make use of the entire Core Collection. Visit <http://www.infohio.org/ER/ERhelp.html> for Getting Started Guides, teaching materials and other helpful items for each Core Collection resource.



World Book's Early World of Learning offers a wealth of resources to help preschoolers and children in the early grades grasp critical early childhood themes while developing reading and oral language skills. The Early World of Learning uses narrated stories with word-by-word highlighting, interactive games, interactive reference material for beginners and more to help young learners build vocabulary, comprehension, phonics and reading fluency.



Mango Languages is an online foreign language learning system teaching practical conversation and cultural awareness for the world's most popular languages. The languages covered by the package are Arabic (Levantine), Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dari, Dutch, Farsi, Finish, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Pashto, Portuguese (Brazil), Russian, Slovak, Spanish (Latin American), Tagalog, Tami, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu and Vietnamese. In addition, there are 15 English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) packages to help various foreign language speakers learn English. Mango Languages has been funded as a one-year pilot project.



ProQuest Ancestry Library Edition, also funded as a one-year pilot project, delivers billions of records in census data, vital records, directories, photos and more, contained in over 7,000 databases. Unlike the other INFOhio Core Collection databases, Ancestry Library Edition will be restricted to in-school computers with IP addresses registered with INFOhio; home access is not available. Features include:

- U.S. collections - Hundreds of millions of names from sources such as federal and U.S. censuses; birth, death and marriage records including the Social Security Death Index; and U.S. border crossing and trans-ocean ship records.
- U.K. collections - Census data for England, Wales, Isle of Man, Channel Islands and Scotland, with nearly 200 million records; Births and Baptisms (1834-1906), Marriage Licenses (1521-1869), Deaths and Burials (1834-1934) and Poor Law Records (1840-1938) in London; and more.
- Military collections - Over 150 million records containing information often not found elsewhere; includes records from the colonial to the Vietnam era.
- Multimedia collections - Millions of files ranging from family and gravestone photos to postcards and newsreels.

Other important Core Collection information for 2011-2012:

- The current home access username/password is unchanged.
- Webinars are scheduled to assist Ohio educators in learning more about the new Core Collection resources and how best to use them in district curricula. See a current list of sessions at <http://www.infohio.org/Educator/Webinars2011-2012.html>.
- Masters for bookmarks, posters and other Toolkit Supply List items will be unchanged. The link to the Supply List is <http://www.infohio.org/FallUpdate2011/SupplyList1112.html>.
- A PowerPoint presentation for back-to-school meetings is available in the Toolkit Slide Library at <http://www.infohio.org/FallUpdate2011/SlideLib1112.html>.

I know you share my gratitude to the State Library of Ohio board and staff for its ongoing support for PreK-12 resources through Libraries Connect Ohio (INFOhio, OhioLINK and OPLIN). Even in these times of budget reductions, I am gratified to report the continued growth of the Core Collection, Ohio's PreK-12 virtual reference library!

Theresa M. Fredericka
INFOhio Executive Director

Barriers to Change

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

There seems to be a natural resistance to change. It is easier to just continue on with the way we have always done things. With the challenges of today like the economy, governance models, technology, and public scrutiny, this is not the time to become a barrier to change. If we always do what we have always done, we will get what we always got!

In my experience of change, there has always been terrible T's that prevent people and organizations from changing.

Terrible T's:	Sample Statements:
1. Trust	Why do you want to be involved?
2. Turf	That is my job.
3. Time	I have enough on my plate right now.
4. Treasury	We do not have the money for that.
5. Talent	No one else can do the job as well as we do.
6. Tradition	We have always done it this way.

All of these are major barriers, but of these six, trust is often the most difficult to overcome. As we look at ways to make schools and other government entities more efficient and effective, we need to get past all six of these hurdles. Don't assume horses would still be our primary mode of transportation had Henry Ford had not adapted the assembly line to automobile production – someone else would have created that mix of technology.

Schools have many challenges today and if we do not make important changes, someone else will. So now is the time to overcome those terrible "T's" and look at better ways to provide quality education to our students.

www.mcoecn.org

Mt. Vernon Office:
1365 New Gambier Rd.
Mt. Vernon, OH 43050

Columbus Office:
8050 North High Street
Suite 150
Columbus, OH 43235
(614) 840-9810

Bruce Hawkins, CEO
hawkins@mcoecn.org



PERMIT NO. 117
LEWIS CENTER, OH
US POSTAGE PAID
STANDARD
PRESORTED