



Connections

Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network

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From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

With the overall economy and the reduction in state revenue, it is certainly a difficult time for all governmental entities including schools. It is also a difficult time for the governor and the legislature as they have to make decisions to make up an \$8B difference in state revenue. The Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN) is no different than many other state agencies.

In FY08, the OECN received over \$29.5m in state funding. The proposed budget will cut funding nearly \$18.4m. That translates into a decrease of more than \$11m over the past four years. As you can see from the chart below, this represents a 10% decrease from the current fiscal year.

You can see on the chart that funding for the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) has been significantly reduced in the proposed budget. The money that was previously used for district subsidy will now be incorporated into the district's basic aid. ITCs also received a 10% reduction over the current fiscal year.

200-426 Set-Aside Changes

OECN 200-426	FY 11	FY 12	\$ Change	% Change
INFOhio	\$1,600,000	\$1,440,000	\$160,000	-10%
Connectivity	\$11,895,077	\$10,705,569	\$1,189,508	-10%
ITC Subsidy	\$5,800,000	\$5,220,000	\$580,000	-10%
OECN Support	\$1,130,479	\$1,017,431	\$113,048	-10%
Total	\$20,425,556	\$18,383,000	\$2,042,556	-10%

200-446 Set-Aside Changes

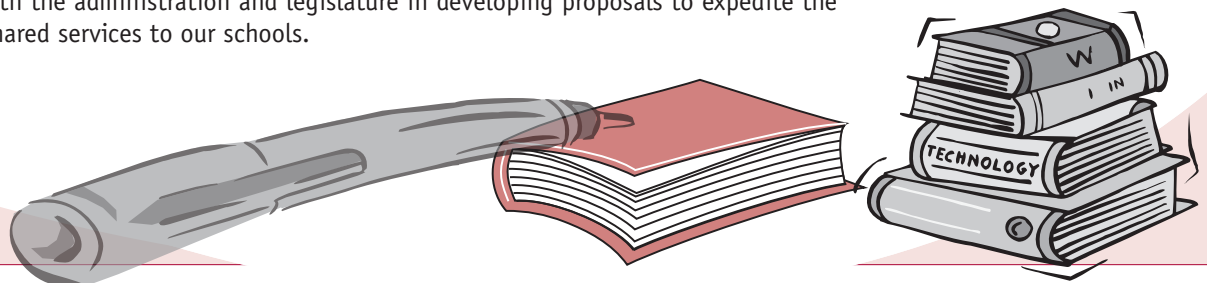
EMIS 200-446	FY 11	FY 12	\$ Change	% Change
District Sub.	\$4,960,388	\$0.00*	\$4,960,388	-100%
ITC Sub.	\$810,000	\$729,000	\$81,000	-10%
ODE Ops	\$6,163,896	\$6,104,070	\$59,826	-1%
Total	\$11,934,284	\$6,833,070	\$5,101,214	-43%

* Moved to foundation funding

The Management Council of the OECN understands the requirement that the state end each fiscal year in the black and the difficult decisions the governor and legislature have to make in order to balance this budget. With the ever-increasing dependency on technology, however, school districts must find ways to continue to provide payroll, accounting operations, connectivity, grade cards, scheduling, and library support. Difficult decisions need to be made at the information technology center (ITC) and school district levels.

In order to help sustain technological and other types of educational services, the proposed budget also calls for implementation of a new concept: shared services. The Director of 21st Century Education in the Governor's Office has been asked to integrate and consolidate the regional educational service organizations including information technology centers, education technology centers, educational service centers, area media centers, and others. This plan is to be presented to the governor and legislature by January 1, 2012, with planned implementation for July 1, 2012.

These new regional shared service centers (RSSCs) will be a very different and hopefully cost-effective way of delivering services to schools and potentially other governmental entities such as county commissioners and other local governments. Many details still need to be analyzed and issues addressed to make sure that quality services continue to be delivered. The Management Council looks forward to working with the administration and legislature in developing proposals to expedite the provision of quality shared services to our schools.



State Software Update Getting Rid of the “Big Ball of String”

Someone described the current 30-year old version of state software as “a big ball of string.” This analogy seems appropriate. Over the years, the state software has been built up layer upon layer, with new features “tied on” but with rarely any old features cut away. And the programs and features and coding of the software are intertwined just like tangles in a big ball of string.

Even though the state software rewrite projects known as “USAS-R” and “USPS-R” are completely new development efforts, the composite effect of that old ball of string will still impact their timelines. The reason for this is that the first major goal of State Software Development Team (SSDT) in the redesign efforts is to duplicate existing functionality in the new system as much as possible. In order to get this goal “done” the SSDT will need to identify and duplicate necessary functionality from that big ball. However, “done” is not a precise term, and the SSDT can’t cut through that big ball of string entirely on its own. In order to define what “done” means, they will need the assistance of ITCs and the user community.

To overcome the “done” definition problem, the SSDT plans to begin distributing a cycle of what are known as “milestone releases” this coming fall (Oct-Dec 2011). This will represent the first opportunity to try the new software with the training wheels still attached. ITCs and schools will be encouraged to play with milestone releases and help inform the SSDT of missing functionality. This will help build the “What does done mean?” list of features. The SSDT will tackle items on this list with ongoing milestone releases until – to the extent practical – the new software is feature compatible with the old system. Note that milestone releases are not ready for prime time; they are just for testing. As development nears the end of this test cycle, the SSDT will distribute “release candidates.” Release candidates represent a final opportunity for schools and ITCs to test the software to make sure it has what is needed for a production environment.

For more information on the status of the state software rewrite projects, check out the presentations available at <http://wiki.ssdtdt-ohio.org/display/~smith/Home>.

The MCOECN Announces a New Microsoft’s Volume Licensing Program – Districts Can Now Take Advantage of the Microsoft Enrollment for Education Solutions Through an MCOECN Agreement.

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The Enrollment for Education Solutions (EES) is an easy, cost-effective licensing offer that provides academic institutions with assured coverage for desktop platform products with one annual employee count, the flexibility to add products in any quantity and simplified asset management—all under a single, subscription agreement.

This new program is the largest change Microsoft has ever made to their licensing program bringing tremendous cost savings of up to 70%. We are hopeful that this will allow schools to obtain a broader set of technologies and supporting programs.

EES provides participating school districts the following benefits:

- Easy Compliance: Through the simplicity and predictability of counting FTE

employees just once per year you can be confident you are fully covered for the desktop platform products you’ve selected regardless of yearly fluctuations in employees or devices.

- Customized Solutions: Easily add additional products organization-wide, department-wide, or for individual licenses at any time during your subscription term so you can deliver the right mix of technology and services to your faculty, staff, and students.

- Simplified Asset Management: Self-service tools such as the Volume Licensing Service Center enable you to easily track and manage your software assets and Software Assurance benefits from one convenient, online location.

- Low Administration: Subscription licensing eliminates the need to track licenses for the selected desktop platform products on every PC which enables your IT staff to be more productive as they

no longer have to track multiple licenses across the institution.

- Lower Total Cost of Ownership: Realize the maximum value from your licensing investment with included benefits such as access to current technology, Work at Home Rights for faculty and staff, product evaluation rights, and Software Assurance for Microsoft Volume Licensing.

Learn More

An entertaining guide to the advantages of this program is available by watching the video at: <http://www.microsoft.com/licensing/licensing-options/media/ees.aspx>

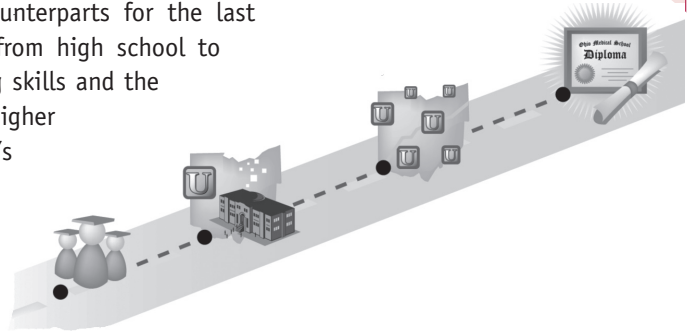
Please contact the MCOECN official large account reseller for all Microsoft programs at: www.cdwg.com/mcoecn.





College and Career Transitions Supported by INFOhio and OhioLINK Go Further! Initiative

A fruitful collaboration between K12 librarians and their college counterparts for the last three years is geared at helping Ohio students make the transition from high school to college. Based on standards that are in-line with 21st century learning skills and the Common Core State Standards, INFOhio is working with OhioLINK and higher education to develop initiatives that will encourage students in Ohio's school system to "Go Further" with career and college readiness at each stage of their education from elementary school through the first year of college. For a brochure summarizing the initiative, go to www.infohio.org/PreparingOhioLearners/GoFurther201101.pdf



Tools for Success – Helping today's students & tomorrow's teachers

The Transition Task Force made up of primarily school and academic librarians is working on providing resources for our youngest learners through the first years of college helping prepare 21st century Ohio learners for success. The INFOhio website www.infohio.org/PreparingOhioLearners.html is providing these tools for success for students and teachers:

- Electronic Resource databases specifically designed for academic and other post-secondary school research are available to all Ohio students.
- Learning Commons provides an online, interactive site for educators, including pre-service teachers, to help them understand how learning has changed; adapt teaching to inspire students to think critically; solve problems; collaborate; innovate; and create.
- LearningExpress Library contains more than 100 programs to help students learn, practice, and prepare for tests on a variety of subjects including college entrance exams. It includes the Job & Career Accelerator for researching careers and job-hunting.
- Research Project Calculator assists students by providing starting and due date projects step by step, along with lots of helpful information.
- TRAILS is an online student knowledge assessment with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills for grades 3, 6, 9 and 12.
- Transitioning to College provides videos for the transition plus other helpful resources that focus on college libraries.

Case Studies in College and Career Readiness

With the encouragement of the Go Further! Initiative, Ohio high school librarians and classroom teachers are working with nearby college and university colleagues to create exciting and valuable opportunities for students making the transition from the K-12 environment to post secondary experiences. For more details, visit www.infohio.org/PreparingOhioLearners/TransitionStudies.html

Brush H. S. Visits Cleveland State Library

"This opportunity introduces students to the same resources they will use if they attend any Ohio college or university... We believe this experience will assist students in successfully transitioning to college. That's where my expertise as a licensed school librarian comes in. The INFOhio research databases offer a good starting point to find reliable information."

— Joanna McNally, HS Librarian

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Eastwood High School's Team-taught Lessons by School and Academic Librarians

"Eastwood [Pemberville, Wood County] has developed a lesson sequence that gives the students a real edge when they arrive at campus—an edge that should translate into better grades, decreased time till graduation, and perhaps higher salaries later on!"

— *Visiting academic librarian*

Muskingum U. Workshop for Librarians and Teachers

"I met Nancy Kirkland, a library media specialist at Buckeye Trail High School, through Muskingum University's Preparing 21st Century Learners workshops. We were able to present the importance of the INFOhio and OhioLINK resources to faculty, who were impressed to see the wealth of resources offered to students." — *Cherie Bronkar, Muskingum University Library*

Using Technology to Bridge the Gap at Southern State

"Students taking part in the program will be able to access college and library resources without leaving the confines of their own school. Via videoconference, our students are guided through OhioLINK research databases. Our high school students have valuable exposure to the technology... This will allow them a successful transition into college." - *Laurel Marion, Zane Trace*

"That was great! [It's] hard to believe that people in three places can get together on the Internet like that. When are we doing this again?" — *Dawson Little, Manchester HS Senior*

Hicksville Visits Bowling Green State University Library

Hicksville High School English students visit Bowling Green State University to work on their senior research papers and utilize the university's collection of research databases and print materials. Students find this a valuable experience that includes a tour of the facility.

Using Modules to Search University Catalogs, Visits Xavier University and University of Cincinnati Libraries

Mariemont High School students have used Xavier University Library and the University of Cincinnati Libraries during their Senior English Research paper. After selecting a topic, students must complete a set of research modules designed by the school librarian to help prepare them for their visit to the university libraries. These modules are graded and corrected by the school librarian and used as a grade for their English class.



Mariemont High School students visiting Xavier University Library. (Picture Credit Emily Colpi)

Thanks to the work of INFOhio, OhioLINK and school and academic librarians across the state, Ohio students are being provided with opportunities to learn information literacy skills needed to succeed at each grade level, complete high school and make a successful transition to college.

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