



Connections

Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network

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From the CEO...

By Bruce E. Hawkins, CEO

Update from the Management Council

In a recent survey completed by two-thirds of the ITCs, some astounding numbers were reported from activities provided by your Information Technology Center. Last year, those 17 ITCs processed 5.5 billion paychecks, circulated over 21 million books through INFOhio, and responded to over 1.2 million support requests. Since this data only reflects 17 of the 23 ITCs, the actual totals will certainly be much greater. The OECN also filters over 41 million spam messages per day.

As technology becomes ever-more important in both the educational and administrative aspects of our schools, the ITC's role becomes ever-more important as well. The Internet bandwidth to Ohio's schools in the past five years has increased over ten-fold. With projections that half of the high school classes will be offered online in the next five years, it is easy to see that the importance of technology will dramatically change the way we deliver educational programs and services to our students and communities.

OECN Administrative Code Review

Every five years, each Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) section must be reviewed and approved by the State Board of Education. This year is the time of the five year annual review of the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN) rules. The State Board reviewed and made recommendations at their January and February board meetings and approved the Intent to Adopt at their March meeting. In April, these rules went before a State Board 119 hearing and a JCARR (Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review). In May, the State Board gave final approval for these rules. Since there were extensive rule changes five years ago in this process, there were just minor changes during this most recent review. These changes included removal of the requirement for a certain carryover for ITCs. This required change was specified in House Bill 1 last July. The rules were also changed regarding the ownership of certain equipment in the ITCs and in CEU requirements for OECN staff.

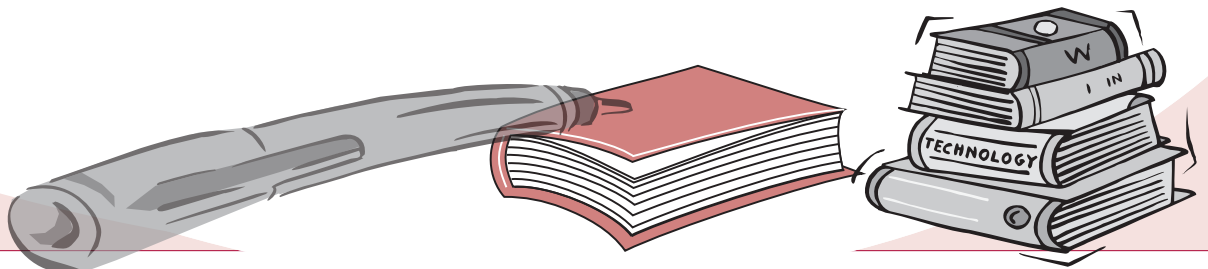
The Ohio School Funding Advisory Council

House Bill 1, the budget bill, established a School Funding Advisory Council consisting of legislators, educators, and community members to make recommendations to the legislature on Ohio school funding. The first report to the legislature is due on December 1 this year. This advisory council has several subcommittees including the Regional Variation Subcommittee. The two major charges of this subcommittee are the study of Educational Service Centers and open enrollment. However, since there are many regional service providers in Ohio's schools, other agencies such as ITCs and Ed Techs have also been discussed in this subcommittee. The Management Council is monitoring the procedures of this committee and has had some input in their deliberations.

Ohio School Facilities Commission

The Management Council has had two recent meetings with the Ohio School Facilities Commission regarding technology implementation in the school buildings going through the OSFC process. Technology is an important aspect of new school

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Is Your Head in the Clouds?

By Andrew Tompkins, CPO

Is your head in the clouds? There was a time when this question meant you weren't paying attention. Today with the popularity of a concept called "cloud computing" this question has a whole different connotation. What is "cloud computing" and is this something you should be doing at your school?

First, what is cloud computing? This term is used to describe a service that is accessed via the Internet. Sometimes the term "elastic" is added before cloud computing to describe a service that can shrink or grow as demand requires. Conceptually, cloud computing allows you to access a needed service without the inherent hassles of buying, installing, and managing hardware or software. In some respects this is not new technology, just a different marketing pitch. After all, remotely hosted services have existed for many years – for example, think how most schools access the services provided by their ITC. What is new is the granularity that accompanies this concept. With cloud computing one can acquire services that were once only available on the local desktop, like document processing, image manipulation, or file conversion. And because these services are accessed via the Internet they can be used when, where, and as much or as little as needed.

Should you reach for the clouds at your school? The answer is "definitely maybe!" We are constantly tempted by all things new and exciting,

but new doesn't automatically mean right. Homework is required. As with any decision you need to determine what it costs to get in, what it costs to be in, and what it costs to get out. In non-technical terms cloud computing is simply trading a capital expense for an operational one, so a long-term financial analysis is important. Is this service less expensive than a locally hosted alternative? Can the service support your specific needs or is it "one size fits all?" Do you require customization that adds additional costs? What local management or other staff resources are required? It is also important to consider the peculiarities of the education environment. Is your data secured? Is this service safe for the educational environment? Does it offer a true instructional benefit? Also understand the nature of a different delivery system. Can you support additional capacity via your existing Internet connection? Is the provider dependable and reliable? And finally, if you change your mind or find something better, can you get your data back out or relocate to a different provider? Is there an exit cost? All of these are important questions that must be answered before entering into the realm of cloud computing.

Technology is as much about marketing hype as it is about innovation. As with all things look for best practices that mirror use in your environment, and carefully consider both the advantages and the pitfalls before you "get your head in the clouds."

Columbus Update/The Hannah Report May 3, 2010 OAEP/Ashland University Enter Certification Agreement

The Association of EMIS Professionals (OAEP) and Ashland University have entered into an agreement that will support and strengthen the EMIS professional's certification program. The joint certification program became effective in the spring of 2010 and first recognition of the joint certifications were presented at the OAEP annual conference on April 26, 2010.

EMIS professionals are responsible for reporting school district data to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). High quality school district data is necessary for reporting student information that is used in the state "report card," including state funding criteria. The school district data may be used by districts to make decisions concerning student placement and instruction.

OAEP is a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to utilizing and sharing best practices for reporting school district data. The organization provides professional development to members and other district EMIS professionals to improve efficiency and correctness in reporting data through best practices and procedures. Sandy Vore, President of OAEP, Lorain City Schools, said the mission of OAEP is to serve EMIS professionals by facilitating professional growth and providing instructional support.

Vore said it became the responsibility of OAEP to develop a certification process that would enable EMIS professionals to enhance their knowledge of EMIS reporting and to receive recognition for their experience, completed professional development and OAEP level assessment. Presently, OAEP, Office of EMIS-ODE, and Information Technology Centers (ITC) coordinate with OAEP to offer professional development opportunities for EMIS professionals.

OAEP began professional development in 2001 with those meeting qualifications and assessment receiving the Certified EMIS Professional (CEP) certificate in 2004. According to Vore, the Master Certified EMIS Professional (MCEP) was soon established with first certificates given in 2007. Vore said further, "Our professional development structure requires applicants to continue the educational process with a required accounting of CEUs and education experiences over a three year period before recertification may take place."

In December 2009, OAEP met with Ashland University to obtain their support of the OAEP certification process and to develop an EMIS professional's specific professional development program. Vore said OAEP and Ashland University have entered into an agreement where Ashland will review the professional development, award CEU value, provide certificates of accomplishment, develop EMIS specific workshops and award certificates for the EMIS certification levels.

Tom Lavinder, Director of the Telego Center for Educational Improvement, Ashland University, said, "Ashland University is pleased to be working closely with OAEP as we continue our excellent professional relationship with all school districts in Ohio. We look forward to supporting all professional development activities of OAEP through speakers, consultants and training expertise. We are also proud to verify all CEU activities of OAEP and certify EMIS professionals for the various levels of designated training attainment."

OAEP members Sheri Ballman, MCEP, Princeton City Schools; Amy Pogacsnik, MCEP, Medina County Career Center; Tammy Hrosch, MCEP, MVECA ITC; Doris Klemann, CEP, Cambridge City Schools; Michelle Reichard, MCEP, SPARCC ITC; and LuAnn Mulica, CEP, EHOVE JVSD expressed their approval of the OAEP/Ashland University agreement by emphasizing the importance of having an institution of higher education's stamp of approval and direct involvement with professional development and program planning. They said the agreement further legitimizes OAEP's efforts to bring best practices for data collection and reporting to all Ohio schools.

Ohio Senate recognizes INFOhio for service to classroom instruction

The Ohio Senate has recognized INFOhio for its two decades of service to Ohio students, parents and educators. Senate Resolution 163, adopted in February by the full Senate, was presented to INFOhio Executive Director Theresa M. Fredericka and other INFOhio leaders during a Senate Education Committee meeting on March 9, 2010, by committee chair Gary Cates (R-West Chester).

Fredericka expressed appreciation to the Senate Education Committee for “recognizing the efforts of the INFOhio community to improve instruction and learning in our state. The past two decades have been exciting and rewarding, especially the many expressions of thanks we have received from students, parents and educators. The INFOhio delivery model is an efficient and effective way to deliver statewide services to all Ohio students and educators. We think no other state does it better,” she said.

Accepting the Senate resolution with Fredericka were Donna Davis Norris, co-chairperson, INFOhio Governing Board, and assistant director, Southwest Ohio Computer Association (SWOCA); Bruce Hawkins, chief executive officer, Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network; and Sarah Thornbery, school librarian, Springboro Junior High School, and 2010 president of the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA).



Picture credit: Senate Education Committee



Ohio's education community now has **free** access to a new dynamic, collaborative learning environment that allows educators to leverage the changing technological landscape to prepare students for the 21st century.

The **INFOhio 21st Century Learning Commons** is designed to help classroom teachers, school librarians and administrators embrace new learning methods and opportunities that include essential skills for today's students such as critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation – the four Cs, along with the three Rs, necessary to ensure our students have the skills they need to succeed.

Educators who visit The Learning Commons at <http://learningcommons.infohio.org> will find an array of resources including:

- **Professional development opportunities.** By participating in our self-paced online course entitled 21 Essential Things for 21st Century Success, you will learn how to integrate 21st century skills into your classroom instruction. You may use these modules without cost for your own learning. If you are interested in credit, there are several options including individual module CEUs, graduate college credit, or a 21st Century Skills Certificate with a specialization in Media and Information Resources.
- **Information on 21st century learning skills.** Focus on 21st century student outcomes with new technologies to help students master the skills they will need to be successful in the 21st century.

INFOhio Assists Teachers with 21st Century Skills

- **INFOhio Videos** that will help you learn more about some of INFOhio's most popular online resources created in cooperation with the Montgomery County Educational Service Center.
- **Glossary** that continues to grow and expand. There are three separate glossaries of terms relevant to Web 2.0 technologies, 21st Century skills, and Information Literacy and Research.
- **Discussion Forums.** Using INFOhio's discussion forums, you can collaborate with your peers while you complete your coursework.

Development of The Learning Commons supports Ohio's October 2009 designation as a Partnership for 21st Century Skills Leadership State. The Partnership is the leading national advocacy organization focused on integrating 21st century learning, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills, into core subjects. Ohio was the 14th state to join the State Leadership Initiative, a coalition aimed at creating rigorous education systems.

21st Century Learning Skills

ARE YOUR STUDENTS:

- Critical thinkers?
- Problem solvers?
- Good communicators?
- Information and technology literate?
- Flexible and adaptable
- Innovative and creative?
- Globally competent?
- Environmentally literate?



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construction including the connectivity, heating/ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, security systems, and IP Telephony (Internet telephone services). We are stressing the importance of the total cost of ownership in implementing these services including the long-term maintenance of the equipment once it is installed.

EMIS Redesign

The EMIS redesign has had several setbacks in the implementation of this new program. The purpose of redesigning EMIS is to make the system more efficient and interactive so that the same data does not have to be entered multiple times. It is important that the program be tested thoroughly before it is implemented. The current performance period will start in May and will extend through mid-June. This performance period will coincide with year-end reporting using the legacy system to assure consistency between the previous EMIS data collection and the new EMIS redesign.

State Budget Status

We are all watching the state budget and the actual income and expenditures in comparison with the current state budget. Although the income is running behind projections, there is hope that the turnaround in the economy will allow the state to continue the current biennial budget without further reductions. Of concern to all state agencies as they prepare for the next biennial budget is how much the economy will turn around and what impact non-recurring revenue streams will have on future budgets.

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