OME-RESA INSIGHT

Ohio Mid-Eastern Regional Education Service Agency

An Information Technology Center (ITC) of the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN)

Serving an 11 county area and 45 school districts in Mid-Eastern Ohio

By Angela Underwood, Executive Director

Hello . . .

OME-RESA would like to welcome our newest members to the team. We recently hired two new employees, **Wendy Barr**, Cooperative Services Liaison working in the Co-op/Erate Department and **Emily Bickerstaff**, Student Software Support Liaison working in the Student Services Department. They are both great additions to the team and will assist in providing quality services to our members.

. . . and Goodbye

OME-RESA has also experienced a loss to our team. **Wilbur Unklesbay** passed away on October 7, 2015. Wib was hired by OME-RESA in 1997 in the Technical Services Department. He worked out of the Ohio Valley ESC office and supported members around the Cambridge area with their technical needs. Wib was a valued member of the OME-RESA team and a great friend to those that were lucky enough to meet him. Our condolences go out to his beloved family and friends.

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CO-OPERATIVE SERVICES/ERATE UPDATE

With school districts struggling to do more with less, it's essential to receive maximum value for every dollar spent. OME-RESA assists by providing a mechanism for schools to pool their collective purchasing power – saving money and improving efficiency.

OME-RESA's Food Program Rebates
School Districts Over $29,000

Through various rebate incentives with GFS, OME-RESA has rebated participating Cooperative Members over $29,000. This amount is based on purchases during the 2014-2015 school year. The rebate consists of 0.5% rebate on eligible purchases from the Food Program as well as an additional 1% for those members participating in GFS' Prime Vendor Program. OME-RESA will rebate a total of $29,098.35. Districts can save additional dollars by enrolling in GFS' Quick Pay Incentive. If you'd like to enroll in GFS's Prime Vendor Program or Quick Pay Incentive next school year, please contact your local GFS sales representative or Cooperative Services.

Purchasing Catalogs

Cooperative Services updates the purchasing catalogs on our website frequently. Please ensure that you are using the most up to date version by accessing our website for catalogs when you order supplies. Changes occur when it is necessary to revise product offerings, change pricing, etc. When a catalog is updated, a Cooperative Update E-mail is sent to our mailing database. If you'd like your email added to our mailing list, please email coop@omeresa.net with the purchasing programs you would like to learn more about.

Natural Gas Aggregation Update

OME-RESA's two natural gas programs have transitioned to new suppliers. If you are part of the Ohio School Consortium (OSC), your supplier switched to Direct Energy effective July 1, 2015. Districts will receive monthly invoices from Direct Energy. For questions, contact Jessica Hood, Business Development Manager, at jessica.hood@directenergy.com or call 908-239-3064.

CO-OPERATIVE SERVICES/ ERATE UPDATE -CONT.

School districts enrolled in this program with OSC will be billed annually based on prior year usage by OME-RESA to cover the OSC administrative costs of this program. For those districts enrolled in the Titan Energy program, you supplier is IGS Energy effective July 1, 2015. Districts will receive invoices from IGS Energy and possibly your local utility (i.e. Columbia Gas of Ohio or Dominion) depending on the account type. For questions, contact Jason Salzgeber, Senior Energy Consultant, at jsalzgeber@titanenergyne.com or call 614-949-6680.

Why it Pays to Utilize OME-RESA's Cooperative Services

Each program offered by OME-RESA and partner cooperatives is checked for quality assurance. That means that we don't allow vendors to work with our members who have poor customer service records or are unwilling to provide the best possible pricing for members.

We also take care of legal bidding requirements and fees on behalf of our members. We offer sample board resolutions, brochures, and other detailed information for each of our programs. Member districts can rely on the OME-RESA Cooperative Services team to take the guess-work out of a complicated bidding process.

We advocate on your behalf with vendors. If at any time you have issues or questions regarding a program vendor, allow us to assist you. We are here to help.

Not sure if we offer a particular purchasing program? Contact us. We have numerous purchasing programs through local, state, and nationwide cooperatives. If the program does not exist, we can explore opportunities to add products to existing programs or create new programs to meet our members' needs.

E-RATE UPDATE

Lorrie Germann, State E-rate Coordinator, has announced upcoming Fall E-rate Workshop for Funding Year 2016. The day will focus on upcoming changes to the program, USAC's EPC Portal, and new Form 470 application. Whether you are a new comer to E-rate, have filed for many years, or use the service of a consultant, it is recommended you attend in order to understand the program changes and how they will impact you. There are two opportunities to attend this workshop in our region. The first workshop is on November 4, 2015, at Muskingum Valley ESC in Zanesville. The second workshop is on November 5, 2015, at Eastern Gateway Community College in Steubenville.

STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

Report Cards

With the summer 15.0.0 release, a big change occurred with Report Cards in GradeBook. When you run report cards, you can now choose a new electronic format that parents and students can view in ParentAccess. This gives districts the option to publish the report cards instead of mailing out hard copies. This new format generates individual files for each student (in addition to a file that includes all students) and allows you to view each run before finalizing and publishing the report cards to permanent storage. This is a big change, so if your district is not ready to use the new electronic format, there is still an option to run them as you have in the past.

Student Averages

Having issues with a question mark showing for the student's average in GradeBook? This happens when there are multiple grading scales for a district and the system does not know which grading scale to use. Teachers should go into Grading Scales from their dashboard and select the Custom Setup 1 option. They will then want to select the correct grading scale used for the class. Once they follow the steps, the teacher should no longer have the question mark show for the student's averages.

Student Search

Teachers now have a new student search feature available. The Student Search screen displays a grid that lists students who match the search criteria. By default, the results display only the students from the teacher's own classes. However, point of contacts can update the setting on this to allow teachers to display other students from the school or district. Also, student pictures can also now display in GradeBook if the point of contact has set this feature up. These pictures are the same pictures that are used in StudentInformation.

We recently had a Data Load and Training for DataMap at our OME-RESA Training Center on September 22nd. If your district is using DataMap and you were not able to attend, please submit a ticket if you need assistance on loading your data.

STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE - CONTINUED

Teachers can now create discussion activities for your students to join online. You create and add these discussions to your library in a similar manner as other VirtualClassroom activities. You can move them from your workspace into an eCourse or eCollection that you can then share with others in your district by publishing to the District Library. You determine how many entries and replies each student must post during a specified period of time, and you can require approval of student entries before they are visible to other students. A new link to View Active Discussions displays on both your home page and class dashboard. Upon clicking that link, the Active Discussions screen displays a list of active discussions, and you can click the name of a discussion to view student entries, comment on them, or grade them.

PARENT ACCESS

Report Cards

If your district decides to publish report cards to ParentAccess, View Paper Report Card will display on the Report Card screen as an active link if there is an official report card for the current school year available to view. Clicking this link allows users to open or save the report card in PDF format. If no current year report card is available, the link is disabled. Also, on the Report Card screen, parents and students can click the new View Paper History link to open the new Report Card History screen. On the Report Card History screen, report cards from previous grading periods and school years display.

Linking Students

If parents are having trouble accessing the page to link students, points of contact should go into PA Admin > Page Level Security and check the Parent checkbox for Manage Students. Once that is selected, the parent should be able to link students under My Account > My Students.

STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE - CONTINUED

With the start of the 2015-2016 school year, StudentInformation trainings were conducted regionally for the following modules:

Student Attendance
Student Fees
Student Discipline
Report Card Processing

We have posted some additional StudentInformation trainings coming up in November:

Graduation Verification Trainings:

November 3rd from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at MVESC—MLC lab
November 4th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at OME-RESA's training center
November 5th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at ECOESC's computer lab
November 6th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Grade Ver Adobe session

StudentInformation Software Enhancements for this year include:

Edit Student Profile – A new Requires Paper Copy of Report Card check box displays on the Additional tab of the Edit Student Profile screen. Select this check box if you want the student/parents to receive a paper copy of the student's report card. (You must also select the option to print a paper copy of report cards when running the Report Card Formatter (R700).

Student Profile Bulk Update – A new Requires Paper Copy of Report Card option is available on the student record tab of the Student Profile Bulk Update screen to bulk update the same value on student profiles.

Report Card Formatter (R700) – A new Print for Students Requesting Hard copies check box displays on the selection criteria tab of the report card formatter (R700) screen. Select this check box to print a paper copy of the report card for students whose profile indicates this preference.

STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE - CONTINUED

A new edit option on the Load Settings tab of the Report Card Formatter (R700) screen gives you access to new options to let you finalize report cards and schedule an electronic copy to be saved in the system under the Term and Archive Date you choose.   Once the batch job has been run, parents can view the report card in ParentAccess as of your selected Archive Date.

Family Groups Wizard – The Family Groups Wizard now creates family groups with a new Student Address column showing the family group courier's address. The wizard no longer includes the address information in the description column of the family group.

Family Groups - A new Student Address column now displays in the grid on the Family Groups screen and shows family group courier's address. The address information no longer displays in the description column.   When editing contacts on the Family Groups screen Contacts tab, you can now link non—professional family group contacts to ParentAccess accounts. If you have multiple ParentAccess accounts that you want to link to family groups, you can more easily accomplish this on the new ParentAccess Account screen.

Discipline - Discipline Incidents– On the Add/Edit Discipline Incident screen, you can now search for offenders, victims, and witnesses by entering a student ID in the search box on the related tab. Also, a new Show History link displays on the Offenders tab. When you click this link, a new Letter History window opens, showing a history of the discipline letters generated for the offender regarding the incident.

EMIS UPDATE

Last year was such a big year for EMIS! There were so many changes - from how the data was reported to the redesign of the report periods! FY16 will hopefully be much calmer than FY15!

Open Collections for FY15:

- March (15D) Follow-Up – closes October 30th

- Calendar Collection Final – closes November 24th

- End of Year Student Collection – closes November 24th

- Fall 3rd Gr Reading – closes November 24th

- Spring 3rd Gr Reading – closes November 24th

- Student Cross Reference – closes November 24th

Other Assessment collections will be opening for FY15 as well as the Final Staff/Course 'L' collection. Please pay attention to the closing dates of the collections and the Fiscal Year. If you are working with FY15 remember that you are still working with the 14/15 school year!

Open Collections for FY16:

- Initial Calendar Collection – closes October 30th

- Student Cross Reference – closes July 30th, 2016

Assessment Collections for FY16 are supposed to be opening soon. That means the same assessment collection will be open at the same time but for different Fiscal years. Please make sure you are in the correction collection/fiscal year when processing data. It can be confusing when working with the same collection, but in two different fiscal years!

**We have just been informed that Software Answers is in the process of working on the import of assessments. The software changes will be included in the 15.2 software release.

Once the Initial Calendar Collection closes on October 30th, the next Calendar collection that will be open for the entire year will be open.

EMIS UPDATE - CONTINUED

ODE/ITC Trainings:

These trainings started back up for FY16 in September. Our next training is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28th. Registration is open. An agenda will be posted as soon as it is received by ODE. Please feel free to bring other district personnel if you feel they would benefit from the training. Space is limited!

Data Collector:

Changes have been made to the data collector over the past few months. Some of the changes are:

- Addition of Level 2 validation reports to certain collections. For example, FTE Payment reports for "S" collection and CTE reports for "L" collection.

- New filter options are now available to display collections by: collection requests, data set, last activity within, and school year.

All EMIS Coordinators should sign up on ODE's website for update alerts, especially updates to the EMIS manual. To subscribe click on the envelope at the top of ODE's website and check the areas you would like to receive alerts for.

EMIS UPDATE - CONTINUED

Upcoming EMIS Open Labs:

November 2nd – MVESC

November 12th – OME-RESA

November 19th – ECOESC

December 1st – MVESC

December 9th – OME-RESA

December 17th – ECOESC

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Upcoming Trainings:

October 28th – ODE/ITC training – 9:00 – 11:30

First "S" and "L" training – 12:30 – 4:00
This training will be held at ECOESC – boardroom

October – dates TBA – Calendar Training

FISCAL SERVICES UPDATE

Calendar Year End Treasurers' In-Service Scheduled

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!

The calendar year end treasurers' in-service has been scheduled for Thursday, December 10th at Buckeye JVS in New Philly, and Friday, December 11th at Eastern Gateway Community College in Steubenville. Both meetings are set to being at 9:30 a.m., with refreshments being available at 9:00. The meeting should last until approximately 12:00. Please register from our homepage. Click on all upcoming events and arrow over to the December calendar. Choose the date you wish to attend and follow the registration prompts. CEU's will only be provided to those who register prior to the meeting date.

Please plan to attend, if at all possible, so that you can hear all the information we have in order to assist you in doing a more timely close out and having records in place, if need be, to comply with state and federal mandates.

SERS Per Pay File Submission

In the spring newsletter, we informed districts of the required upload for SERS per pay tape file to the ESERS portal just as they do for their SERS new hires. The requirement was to begin July 1st, 2015. The SSDT has created the file and is waiting for SERS to approve it. However, SERS has not responded. A date when this will be required has yet to be announced. This means that the districts should continue to report their SERS monthly file as usual. We will send out an email when the file has been approved and ready for use.

Helpful Links for Fiscal Users

Users, did you know that you can access links to websites that may be helpful in your position from the OME-RESA homepage? From our homepage click on **Departments - Fiscal Services – Helpful Links.** For example, these links will take you to the IRS, Ohio Auditor of State, ODE and many other sites that have important information. If you have a helpful site that you use that you feel will be of benefit to other districts, let us know so we may add it to our list.

FISCAL SERVICES UPDATE—CONTINUED

YouTube Videos

Did you know the SSDT has a YouTube channel? There are over 30 fiscal related videos out there for your viewing. The videos are based on results received from a training survey. They are continuing to add videos all the time. The link is http://www.youtube.com/user/ssdtohio.

Time to Start Checking Those W2 Totals and 1099 Vendor IDs

This is a great time, before the December rush is upon us all, to run your QRTRPT, ERNREG and W2PROC and begin the task of balancing your books. Any errors that you find now will take the pressure off during the holiday timeframe and allow us to help you, when needed, to track down and correct any errors you find.

While there aren't as many 1099s to worry about, it is still quite a task to ensure you have the right vendors flagged for 1099 or no 1099, as well as ensure you have their tax ID on the vendor record before the end of December. Not having the ID on the vendor record will hold up your December close out.

USAS/USPS Redesign

On September 16th ITC staff had a special meeting, prior to the OEDSA conference, to update us on the status of the USAS/USPS redesign. The SSDT told ITC staff that at the beginning of 2015 a new software tool was found that would allow them to be more productive in their programming and allow additional flexibility for future enhancements. Part of the problem in the past was the slowness of the third party software tools used in the redesign. The new software, Vaadin, has allowed them to completely rewrite the redesign with flash speeds and tremendously expedited them to the point they are today. As of that meeting, the SSDT announced that their parallel payrolls on the redesign, compared to the same run of payroll on the current Reflections software, balanced to the penny. They are now in the process of writing some of the canned reports as well as trying to incorporate the remainder of the abilities of the current software and hope to put out a version of the software for ITCs to test approximately January 2016.

INFOHIO UPDATE

INFOhio Budget for FY16-17

UPDATE--August 11, 2015

INFOhio funding was reduced by 42 percent in the biennium budget that began July 1, 2015.

For this year we have been able to make up much of the loss through a digital grant. Therefore, many of the programs and services that our users rely on the most--BookFlix and Storia for early literacy, ICoach services for professional development--are available at no charge again this year.

However, the budget cut forced us to reduce our contribution to the Libraries Connect Ohio partnership. As a result, the partnership made the difficult decision to cut LearningExpress Library from its product mix. However, the content in LearningExpress Library that our users rely on most--practice tests--is available through OhioMeansJobs.

Summer Enhancements/Changes to INFOhio Resources

BookFlix New Titles Released 9-21-2015

BookFlix is an online literacy resource which pairs Fiction and Non-Fiction Titles from Weston Woods, Scholastic and Children's Press and helps to develop a love of reading. Created for PreK-Grade 3, BookFlix features read-aloud features to support early literacy, supports literacy development and helps students and teachers meet Ohio's New Learning Standards. Along with the 118 fiction/nonfiction pairs, Scholastic introduced 5 new pairs on September 21st, 2015:

- One Zillion Valentines/Valentine's Day
- Emily's First 100 Days of School/100th Day of School
- John, Paul, George & Ben/Benjamin Franklin
- Fletcher and the Falling Leaves/How Do You Know It's Fall?
- How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?/Back-to-School Safety

INFOHIO UPDATE - CONTINUED

EBSCO Interface Changes — Fall 2015

Interfaces Retiring as of Sept. 1, 2015

- Kids Search
- Searchasaurus
- Student Research Center
- Searchasaurus, Kids Search changed to Explora PreK-5
- Student Research Center 6-8 changed to Explora 6-8
- Student Research Center 9-12 changed to Explora 9-12

   All Explora interfaces include:

- 60,000 AP videos
- Topic overview as guide for further research
- Personal folder to save searches and articles
- Multiple enhancements including social media, translate, not taking, audio download

Science Online – New Interface 2015

- Read aloud and translate features
- eLearning Modules include Lesson Plans
- Interactive experiments
- Videos will be embeddable
- Topic Centers (research starters) include curated articles, videos, diagrams, experiments, timeline.
- Folders to save articles and searches
- Live Chat Help

INFOHIO UPDATE - CONTINUED

Learning Express Library – Discontinued as of August 9th, 2015

Since INFOhio was unable to secure additional funding, Learning Express Library had to be cut from the current operating budget. It was replaced by OhioMeansJobs,k12 and includes some LEL (Learning Express Library) content.

World Book Announces New Interfaces

World Book released new interfaces for their products:

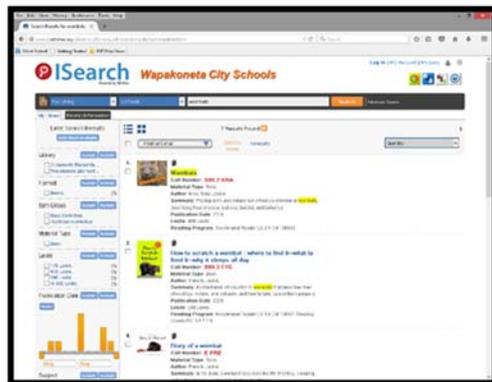- World Book Kids
- World Book Students
- World Book Advanced

Some of the new features include:

- Research Tools for quick research help
- Text to speech
- Lexiled articles
- WB Kids uses predictive search strategy
- WB Student and Advanced improved interface provides readability and additional graphics.

INFOHIO UPDATE - CONTINUED

ISearch Local Coming Soon!

Lima Tech Support is currently working with all ITCs to incorporate your card catalog with ISearch. This will enable your students to use ISearch to search your print and nonprint titles along with the INFOhio electronic resources. OME-RESA has sent 10 instances (district databases) to Lima Tech support to begin the customization to ISearch Local. I will keep you updated as to the actual "Launch date" for this fantastic improvement to ISearch.

TECHNICAL SERVICES UPDATE

Service Highlights:

- **Voice summary: Currently providing managed VOIP services to 8 districts (900 + phones)**
- **Wireless summary: Currently providing managed wireless services to 11 districts (800 + access points)**
- **Server hosting summary: Currently hosting 32 virtual server deployments for 15 districts (Point of Sale, Document Management and Transportation)**
- **DR backup summary: Currently providing offsite backup services to 7 school districts (38 TB of data being maintained at the State DR site)**
- **System application summary: Technical services installed 22 software releases and/or hot fixes to the Student, Fiscal and EMIS service applications**

WAN Update:

- **OME-RESA is maintaining over 90 high-speed direct connections that provide over 7Gbps of bandwidth capacity.**
- **Daily ITC internet utilization has begun to peak collectively over 1.9Gbps to OARnet.**
- **Commodity bandwidth provisioning to OARnet is 3.0 Gbps.**

Upcoming projects:

- **Server infrastructure upgrade (November—December)**
- **DDoS appliance install (TBD)**
- **ASA and web filter clustering**

TECHNICAL SERVICES UPDATE

10 Steps to Protect your Business from Cybersecurity Threats
(The Business Journals, Oct 16 2015)

Protect Yourself

According to the Online Trust Alliance, nearly 90 percent of cybersecurity breaches could have been avoided with simple controls and security best practices. Outlined below are 10 steps you can take to mitigate your risk.

1. **Identify what data is at risk.** Create an inventory checklist and understand what people, apps and devices have access to what data. Consider customer data, employee data, financial data and other data such as trade secrets or marketing plans.

2. **Back up automatically.** Regularly back up critical email and shared data on all computers and store using a secure cloud solution such as Office365.

3. **Keep clean machines.** Ensure the technology at your business has the latest versions of applications, web browsers, and operating systems. Modern hardware is the best defense against viruses, malware and other online threats.

4. **Secure your networks.** Make sure the operating system's firewall is enabled. If employees work from home, ensure that their home systems also are protected by a firewall.

5. **Implement a mobile-device management plan.** Mobile devices can create significant security challenges. Require users to password protect devices, encrypt data and install security apps. Set policies to manage the use of personal technology.

6. **Restrict user access.** Ensure each individual employee or vendor can access only the data they need. Make sure a separate user account is created for each employee and require strong passwords.

7. **Create a response and recovery plan.** Speak to your insurance agent about cyber-policies that might be right for you and create a plan for how to best respond if a cyberattack occurs.

8. **Educate employees on cyber-security best practices.** Create a training plan and keep records for each employee's participation.

TECHNICAL SERVICES UPDATE - CONTINUED

9.   **Employ best practices for business credit cards .** Make sure your card readers are using modern EMV-chip technology, which make transactions safer by creating unique transaction codes that can't be used again.

10.   **Enlist the help of a partner.** Use Pinpoint to find the right technology partner for your business and consider acquiring business cyber insurance to minimize the financial fallout from an actual cybersecurity attack and cover any gaps technology alone can't fill.

Regional Spring Technology Meeting:

Date: October 30th, 2015
Time: 9am – 12pm
Location: Quaker Dome, New Philadelphia
Agenda: TBA

- **ITC Update**
- **Student provisioning services (Keith Larson)**
- **Group discussion**

Visit us at
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OME-RESA

OHIO MID-EASTERN
REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY

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