

OME-RESA INSIGHT

Issue 2

March 2008

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

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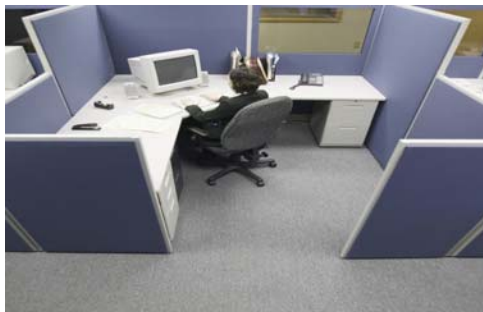
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New Environment for Educators

By Angela Underwood, ITC Director

"What our students understand (and that we, as teachers, seem blind to) is that the very nature of information has changed. It's changed in what it looks like, what we look at to view it, where we find it, what we can do with it, and how we communicate it. We live in a brand new, and dynamically rich information environment, and if we are going to reach our students in a way that is relevant to their world and their future (and ours), then we must teach them from this new information environment." -David Warlick -30 year educator

We are in the Information Technology age. Our children see this all around them - at play, at home and at school. Disagree or agree with it, the fact is, technology will play a large role in the development of children as they grow to become college students and then on to be successful career seeking individuals. It is up to us as educators to provide them with the basic foundation to build their future in this ever changing world. The only way to accomplish this is to grab technology, to understand and use it to enhance student learning. It is our goal as an Information Technology Center to make sure all entities that we serve have the tools and training needed to accomplish the common goal of Student Achievement and Excellence!



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STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

SIS E-newsletter

OME-RESA's Student Services department publishes a monthly E-newsletter on our website. These E-newsletters contain information, updates, and tips and tricks in each edition. To view the most current release or archived releases please visit:



<http://www.omeresa.net/e-newsletter.htm>

Student Data Topics

Congratulations to all of our districts! **ALL** have completed the SIS to DASL conversion!!!

The current DASL count—536 districts across 16 ITCs—758,283 total ADM—7 ITCs completely converted—66 districts yet to convert.

These OME-RESA school districts converted to DASL in February...congratulations!

Barnesville Bellaire Bridgeport Edison
Shadyside Switzerland of Ohio Union Local

Updates to DASL

All updates to the DASL software are posted to the DASL portal page following the installation. This message also points the DASL user to the latest documentation regarding the release or hotfix as well as known issues with the software. Please refer to this documentation for important information.

DASL Security

For districts who converted prior to this year—DASL district DSL/DASL account administrators have been trained to handle their district's security. The districts are responsible for creating/maintaining all DASL user accounts. Additionally, the district has the ability to create its own security model if desired or continue to use what's already in place.

For districts that converted this school year—DASL district DSL/DASL account administrators will be trained late in the school year to handle their district's security. We will announce the training later in the school year when the dates become available.

Update: Some changes to the software have had some impact on when we will provide these trainings. A change recently made to DASL security "broke" other things that must be in place for us to be able to hand over the security. The fix for this issue has not yet been scheduled for upcoming DASL releases. Once it is available, we will then be able to schedule the security trainings. In the meantime, we will continue to maintain the security for the districts that are converting in this school year.

Progress Book

The implementation of Progress book has helped prepare districts with the streamlining of their scheduling and grade/attendance entry. This preparedness will help to make a smoother transition to DASL. For those buildings/districts not using Progress Book, keep in mind, with scanning no longer being an option, grade and attendance entry would have to be entered into DASL manually. All buildings using Progress Book are now using it via method A. Method A refers to using Progress Book exclusively as the method for grade entry. Method B is no longer available.

Documentation for Progress Book is available from our website at:

<http://www.omeresa.net/manuals/htm#Progress Book Documentation>

SSEM

ProgressBook has a Special Services module built directly into the software called SSEM. Some districts have already chosen to do their IEPs using this application being that the cost is already included in your ProgressBook fees.

A new feature currently added to SSEM is the SSEM to EMIS functionality. The application allows the information that is keyed onto the IEP to automatically populate onto an EMIS data collection form. In the near future, you will be able to use this application to transfer data from the EMIS data collection form into DASL and then to EMIS for submission. This process enables districts to report more accurate data and lessen the possibility for clerical errors.

Currently, we are piloting two districts for June reporting with this new feature. Once we have confirmed the functionality of the application, we plan to open it up to all districts.

If you find that this is a tool that you would like your district to be using, please contact Cindy Alban at (740) 283-2050 Ext. 150 or email her at cindy.alban@omeresa.net. There are steps that can be taken now to get your district ready to use this application for fall reporting.

We plan to start meeting with Special Education Directors on a bi-monthly basis in order to keep them up-to-date with the software. We will also work with EMIS Coordinators on a limited basis to assist them in retrieving this data.

EMIS Updates

TIMELINE: DO NOT MISS DEADLINES!!!

Please keep the ODE Processing Schedule on your desktop! Accountability Timeline: (From the ODE processing schedule) located at:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=367&Content=15375>

EMIS SITUATION HISTORY:

Make sure that you check the student EMIS situation History for any students that have had a change to their EMIS situation since the beginning of the school year. Each time a change is made to a student's 1) District of Residence, 2) Residency Status, 3) FTE percent of time, 4) Attending IRN, or 5) Att. IRN Indicator a new EMIS situation history record will be added. If you have made changes that were incorrect, these records may have to be deleted from the EMIS situation screen for the individual student. [Home](#) >> [SIS](#) >> [Student](#) >> [EMIS Situation History](#)

Beginning in FY09, the EMIS situation will be reportable to ODE. Please make sure the EMIS situation reflects what the situation(s) of the student are for the current school year.

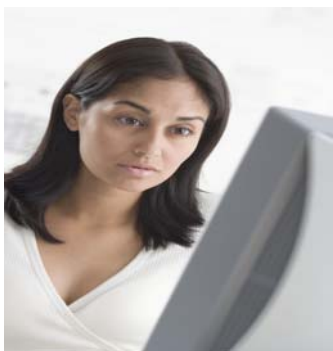
UNCLEMIS ERROR RESOLUTION GUIDE

A guide to Unclemis Situations has been posted in the knowledge books can be found in the DASL EMIS documentation.

DASL EMIS SITUATIONS GUIDE

A guide to understanding EMIS situations has been posted in knowledge books . .

<https://helpdesk.omeresa.net/index.php?pg=kb.page&id=7.3>



QUESTIONS:

EMIS coordinators - When contacting ESTAFF with a building question please let us know which building you are referring to. Use the building Bunny codes.

Be sure to check the ODE web site for the status of your sign-off completeness:

http://www.ode.state.oh.us/EMIS/accountability/SignOff_Forms.asp

Do not sign off on data prior to the close of the reporting period.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Print and file ALL final reports regarding the FY08 reporting. These may be needed in an audit. You should also keep a copy of your final aggregation 5, 6 and 7 reports and also the December Disability Child Counts report (found in the ODE look alikes for M database).

FISCAL SERVICES UPDATE

2007 Tax Forms

For the first time in OME-RESA's history, we took on the responsibility of printing tax forms for districts. Thirty-eight of our 45 districts chose to let us print their W-2 forms. We purchased equipment, along with the Edge Document Solutions YES Enterprise version tax form printing software. This particular version of the software gave us two additional capabilities for processing the tax form file. First, it allowed us the ability to produce individual PDF forms for every tax form printed. The purpose of this option is to be able to place these PDF files in a sub-directory for each district so that when the W-2 view option is written into the H.R. Kiosk package, we will have data to populate into these directories for you. Your employees will be able to view multiple years' W-2s, as we build on the calendar year W-2 data, but only if you choose to have us print the tax forms for you each year. They will also be able to print off a copy of the W-2 that will look exactly like their original W-2. At this time, it has not been suggested by the SSDT that this future Kiosk option EVER replace the hard copy you provide your employees, as not all employees have a computer and a printer that could print out these types of forms. However, with electronic filing becoming more popular, a printed copy from the H.R. Kiosk will give the employee what they need without having to request a reprint of the original form and they can use that form to do the online tax filing as needed.



When this option becomes available, and we start to train districts on how to set up and use the Kiosk, more details will be provided.

The second reason for our taking on this responsibility is for those districts that are using our Onbase Document Management System. By us printing the forms for them, we are able to create a file that can be loaded into the Onbase system on their behalf. For these districts, we will also be placing their 1099 forms into Onbase for them.

H.R. Kiosk

The H.R. Kiosk implementation has been pushed back a few months for several reasons. They include: 1) not all districts implementing the employee ID **OME-RESA will not set up any district for the Kiosk that hasn't implemented the employee ID. It's for yours and your staffs' privacy/protection.** 2) some of the top features of the Kiosk are not 100% complete. While they are definitely usable, I don't want to train any of our districts until it is 100% complete to every ITC's satisfaction based on their district's needs. 3) other projects requiring the fiscal department's time have caused us not to be able to meet the scheduled implementation as we had previously stated.

To make sure your district is able to implement the H.R. Kiosk when the training begins, please make sure you are converted to the use of employee IDs AND that you are keeping up with new staff, issuing them an employee ID when they are added into the USPSCN program.



Fiscal Training Dates

There have been dates reserved in our training facility, at the OME-RESA Steubenville Office, for multiple fiscal trainings including New Payroll User, New Budgetary User, New/Intermediate Equipment Inventory User, USASWEB and USPSWEB. While the exact date to be used for each training type has not been set, we will be posting these trainings out in the TRAINING menu, so PLEASE watch your email for the announcement that they have been posted and you may begin registering as needed.

INFOHIO UPDATE

Tidying UP Your School District's Web Site-Update from INFOhio Tech Services

INFOhio has learned that there are a number of school districts that have the username and password to access the *INFOhio Core Collection of Electronic Resources* included on the school district's Web site. In some cases it might be a student handbook containing the username and password that had been put online. In other cases, the person posting the Web site did not realize it would be publicly accessible.

INFOhio appreciates that schools want to promote the use of the INFOhio Electronic Resources, but the username and password should NOT be made available to the general public.

Please review your district's Web site not only for the INFOhio username and password, but also the username and password you might be using to access other resources to which your school district subscribes. You might have a search feature available specifically for your school district's Web site, but if you do not, please be aware that the advanced search feature of many search engines allow the user to specify the domain that they want to search.

If you find any documents on your school district's Web site that have the username and password, please work with the appropriate school staff to address the situation. It is recommended that you replace the username and password with a statement similar to the following:

A username and password to access the INFOhio Core Collection of Electronic Resources is available from the school library media center.

NOTE: OME-RESA only located one district that mistakenly included the username and password to the INFOhio Electronic Resources on a district newsletter that was posted on their web page. Since that time, it has been removed.



SchoolRooms Basic now Available from INFOhio

SchoolRooms Basic is now LIVE on the INFOhio home page! Thanks to the efforts of many Ohio educators, INFOhio staff, and the cooperation of SirsiDynix Corp., the entire Ohio PreK-12 community has access to this abridged version through the 2007-2008 school year **without fees**, including home access.

For now, ALL users will need to use the INFOhio's Core Collection username and password (available from your media center) to enter *SchoolRooms Basic*.

SchoolRooms Basic is a discovery tool for high quality Web sites. More than 22,000 sites have been selected by Ohio educators to support Academic Content Standards. In addition, the SRB portal leads to more than 3 million related sites. Over the next few months, INFOhio Tech Support plans to add federated searching for the Core Collection for everyone and OPAC searching for INFOhio automated schools.

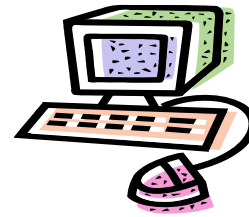
INFOHIO UPDATE (CONT.)



SchoolRooms Basic provides:

- K-12 multi-media online discovery portal
- Combines educator-selected, standards based content with student-friendly software
- Facilitates interdisciplinary exploration
- Content Consists of:
 - 71 "Rooms" or "Subject Guides" of content correlating to standards
 - 1,750 web page views of content
 - 22,500 hand-selected websites
 - Approx. 3 million Best of Web sites
 - Assorted 3rd part multi-media content

NETWORK UPDATE



The following article was posted on the website: <http://government.hp.com>:

Seven Deadly Sins of PC Users

They're not greed, sloth or gluttony, but they're just as deadly: some common user mistakes can be poisonous to your PC. Read on to find out what they are and how to avoid them.

From ignoring anti-virus protection to neglecting to back up data, even the most seasoned PC user may be guilty of risky or irresponsible usage habits. Here are the seven most common - and most dangerous - of those mistakes.

1. Failing to keep anti-virus protection updated

Almost all PC users know they need to have anti-virus protection. But that's not enough: You have to keep the program up to date for it to be effective.

Most anti-virus packages include one year of free updates, but after that you'll need to purchase a subscription or uninstall the software and install next year's version. Anti-viral software that automatically renews your subscription is one no-hassle way to keep your computer protected from the latest internet threats.

2. Downloading unsafe material

Think twice before downloading music and movies from websites like Kazaa or Limewire — many of these peer-to-peer programs contain worms and viruses.

Also exercise caution with free utilities, screensavers, games, etc. These often are guilty of depositing spyware or malware on your PC. To prevent this, do some background research on any program you want to install, and make certain you have updated anti-spyware software.

3. Forgetting power protection

A single brief power surge or spike of electricity can seriously damage or even permanently destroy your PC. A surge protector protects your equipment by channeling the extra voltage into the outlet's grounding wire, preventing it from flowing into the electronic device.

However, even the best surge protectors can't protect your PC from the millions of volts that a lightning strike can cause. The best way to prevent lightning storm damage is to simply unplug your computer.

For businesses, a UPS (uninterruptible power supply) provides protection from all sorts of power disruptions, from a complete failure to voltage spikes.

4. Neglecting to back up data

This is probably the most potentially damaging, and most often overlooked, mistake made by PC users. So how can you avoid this popular pitfall?

***CD-R/CD-RW:** Most PCs have CD writers, the stored data is easily accessible and you can back up 700MB at a time.

Both types of media are available at less than 10 cents a gigabyte.

***Flash Drives:** Also known as memory sticks, these small, portable devices plug into any computer with a USB port and are perfect for storing small amounts of data (capacity ranges from 64MB to upwards of 1GB).

***External hard drives:** As prices continue to drop, many users and businesses are turning to external hard drives as a backup solution. The cost per gigabyte can be 50 cents or less.

***FTP:** Uploading data to a secure server in a protected environment via FTP (file transfer protocol) is an easy option. Various data farms exist online, and some even small and medium sized businesses should consider a more advanced automated backup system.

5. Ignoring Windows® updates

If you use Microsoft® Windows, you need the latest security patches and service packs to keep your PC safe from security threats and support optimal functionality. Be sure to turn on Automatic Updates, or obtain updates manually.

6. Misusing e-mail attachments

Attempting to send mammoth files (like videos or photos) can affect mail server performance and consume large amounts of bandwidth and storage. One easy solution: For larger files, compressed or "zipped" data allows much faster transfer times, increased bandwidth and disk space.

Also, when opening e-mail attachments, don't forget to scan them first to make sure they are safe and don't contain a virus.

7. Friends and family using your PC

Allowing other users access to your computer increases the likelihood of contracting a virus, having unwanted files and programs downloaded to your PC, and experiencing changes to your personalized settings.

But you don't have to ban everyone or hide your notebook in the closet. If you use Windows 2000 or XP, turn on the Guest account for other users. This setting prevents new program installation and changes to system settings.

NETWORK UPDATE (CONT.)

District Disaster Recovery Plans

OME-RESA is in the final stage of completing the OME-RESA disaster recovery plan. The OME-RESA disaster recovery plan will detail recovery of OME-RESA based applications/services. Since our plan is near completion, we are turning now to the next step in the process...DISTRICT disaster recovery plans. School districts should consider how a disaster would affect non-OME-RESA applications/services that teachers/staff/students use throughout the district; and be prepared to get through the disaster and rebuild the affected applications and services.

Sandy Petrozzi has set up four two-hour training sessions to be held throughout the OME-RESA region to review what school districts need to know to develop their OWN disaster recovery plan. The trainings will include worksheets and a plan template that district personnel can use to customize to meet the needs of the district.

The meetings have been set up to coincide with a local technology coordinator meeting...but we are encouraging each district to send not just their technology coordinator, but other district personnel who would be assisting in developing the district disaster recovery plan. Due to space limitations, we ask that no more than 3 people per district attend.

The scheduled dated/places/times for this training include the following with the normal local tech counties listed:

Belmont/Guernsey/Monroe/Noble-April 17th-1 PM at Union Local HS

Jefferson/Columbiana/Harrison-March 28th-1 PM at Jefferson Community College

Muskingum/Coshocton-May 8th-1 PM at Muskingum Valley ESC

Tuscarawas/Carroll/Harrison-April 15th-1 PM at Tuscarawas Carroll Harrison ESC

Each session should conclude by 3 p.m. You are welcome to attend any of the four meetings...even if it is not in your normal region.

We request that the district tech coordinator please email sandy.petrozzi@omeresanet.net which event your district plans to attend so that materials can be prepared. Further details on room locations within the facilities will be emailed to the district technology coordinators when we get closer to the meeting dates.

We encourage all school districts to take this opportunity to learn more about disaster recovery preparedness. It is certainly a subject that we MUST prepare for in today's world of technology. Contact sandy.petrozzi@omeresanet.net with any questions.



Fiber Update

Beginning next school year, 23 additional buildings will be connected to OME-RESA via 10 Meg fiber. The 23 buildings represent 18 school districts and one non-public school. Once this second wave of OME-RESA's fiber project is completed, 35 school districts and one non-public school will have at least one 10 Meg fiber connection to their school district. Three school districts will have multiple 10 Meg fiber connections.

AT&T and Time Warner are the two primary vendors for the second wave project. OME-RESA staff will be meeting with these vendors in March to finalize project details. During the months of March and April, vendor personnel and OME-RESA staff will visit each school building where fiber will be installed to review the installation/configuration needs at the school building. School district personnel will be involved with these meetings so that the district is aware of the plans for the building so that the project runs smoothly.

We anticipate all the second wave school buildings will be connected via fiber by the fall.

OME-RESA'S NEW PREK-12 NOTIFICATION SERVICE

Improve Your Communications With Your Parents

Connect to Your Parents Quickly and Easily - 24/7/365

OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification allows you to make one phone call, record a detailed voice message, and send it immediately to all parents and/or staff at any time 24/7/365. It is quick, easy and effective!

Why OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification is a better way to Communicate Some Messages

Sometimes communicating with parents can be difficult. Letters mailed home are not read. Flyers sent home with the children are never delivered. Even emails are losing their effectiveness as junk mail gets confused with important emails. Many people only check their email once a week and others do not even have access to email. Nearly everyone has a telephone or cell phone and when you call they answer it or at least listen to any message that is left. OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification can't replace all the ways you communicate with your parents, but when the message is important and timely, in many cases it is the most effective method.

OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification can help.

Schools use the service for many reasons, including:

- **School Emergency Planning** - In today's world, every school must have a plan to contact parents quickly and effectively in an emergency. OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification can be the cornerstone of your emergency plan. Parents appreciate knowing their school takes student safety seriously, and that they will be the first to know, not the last to know, about all important school news. With OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification, parents receive urgent messages at up to four telephone numbers and four email addresses. Its speed and ease-of-use makes OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification a practical addition to your school crisis plan.
- **School Closings** - Announce school closings, cancellations, early dismissals and delays quickly and efficiently. No phone trees. No need to log onto a computer. Just dial the nearest phone and in five minutes the message is recorded, sent and received. When school schedules change, it can be disruptive to family transportation plans and childcare arrangements. That's why parents appreciate quick, personal notification that you can provide using OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification.
- **Non-Emergency Reminders and General School News** - For non-urgent school announcements, OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification will enhance existing communication strategies. It is the easiest way to quickly communicate parent meetings, fundraisers, rescheduled activities, field trips, and other school news. With up to 99 sub-lists you can target the message to its intended audience. One of the main reasons parent communication fails is because the messages are not targeted and people ignore them. OME-RESA's PreK-12 Notification sub-lists solve this problem and improve your communications.

Affordable for Any School Size

- Budget friendly annual fee based on number of students.
- No hardware, software, license or training expenses.
- No phone lines. No set-up fees.
- Unlimited use - 24/7/365.

Automatic Updates to Student and Staff Information through DASL

OME-RESA PreK-12 Notification is set up to pull student and staff information nightly. This eliminates the user from having to input new student or staff manually. Once information is loaded into DASL, you know the next day it will be available in OME-RESA PreK12 Notification system.

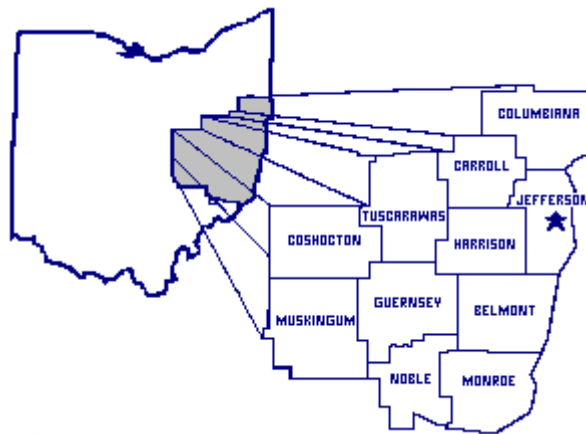
For More Information

Improve your school-to-parent communication plan today by calling OME-RESA at 1-740-283-2050 . Or, you can request additional information online at:

<http://omeresaprek12notification.com/schools/start.html>



Visit us at
www.omeresa.net



OME-RESA

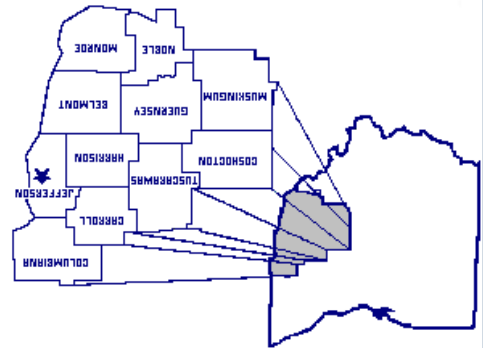
2023 Sunset Blvd.
Steubenville, OH 43952

Phone: (740)-283-2050 x116

Fax: (740)-283-1500

E-mail: angie.underwood@omeresa.net





Angela Underwood, ITC Director
angie.underwood@omeres.net

OME-RESA
2023 Sunset Blvd.
Stuebenville, OH 43952
(740) 283-2050

www.omeres.net