OME-RESA INSIGHT

Issue 6

Spring 2010

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

Welcoming in the OME-RESA ITC COG!
By Angela Underwood, ITC Director

As of July 1st, 2010, OME-RESA ITC will begin operations as a Council of Governments. I want to take some time to explain what the conversion means and how it affects our member districts. ITCs can operate in two different methods, one being a consortia and the other being a COG. Some of the reasons why ITCs are converting from consortia to COGs are:

- Allows the ITC to expand services beyond K-12 to help defray costs to the districts we serve utilizing excess capacity.

- Provides an equal distribution of ownership across the entire membership.

- Will be our own legal entity.

- Assets will be held in the name of the COG rather than the fiscal agent.

- Provides greater flexibility to enter into contracts/leases with other vendors/ services—for example, hardware, software, Internet Services.

- Will allow OME-RESA to provide additional personnel services with contracts with districts.

One main question that I have heard from districts is "Will this negatively affect the services we receive now from OME-RESA?" and the answer is NO, it will not! OME-RESA's primary focus is to our member districts—always has been and always will be. If anything, this conversion will help us expand our excellent, cost effective services to our member school districts!

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ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

The Importance of Disaster Planning

Wednesday, December 9, 2009 started out as a typical winter day – cold and blustery. By Noon the wind had really started to howl. Around 1 PM the lights in the OME-RESA office in Steubenville flickered. They flickered twice and then the office was plunged in total darkness.

This is how easy a disaster can occur and why disaster planning is needed. By 3 PM we found out that four school districts had not finished their payroll for the week. Payroll processing is the most critical of OME-RESA applications. By 7 PM we found out that American Electric Power (AEP) was not expecting to have our power restored until early Friday morning – not in time for the payrolls to be completed on time.

We declared a disaster, contacted the State Disaster Recovery Site (in Columbus) and made arrangements to bring up our Alpha system there so the 4 districts could complete their payrolls on time. The districts involved were able to log on Thursday morning (to the DR site) and were able to complete their payrolls. Since OME-RESA's network was still down due to no power...most district staff went to their home and logged in to the DR Site using their PC at home! All payrolls were completed on time, and OME-RESA's power was restored early Thursday evening – a little ahead of schedule.

That day we learned how valuable our plan was, how necessary off-site storage of our data is and how we can improve our plan and make it even better! Since OME-RESA was the first ITC in Ohio to successfully access the State DR Site in the event of a disaster, it proved how valuable the site can be for all ITCs and their member districts.

Is your district ready for such a disaster? Are all the data/applications that your district uses backed up and stored off-site on a regular basis? Remember, OME-RESA only plans for applications/data that we have control and access to. Your district data/applications are your district's responsibility.

OME-RESA can help by first providing districts with the resources to develop a district disaster plan. A few years ago we provided training for this purpose. We plan to offer "refresher" courses on disaster planning again this fall. Exact dates/times will be sent out to district personnel once they are scheduled. OME-RESA also provides an optional off-site backup and data storage service which allows critical district data to be backed up at our site on a nightly basis. If you are interested in this service, please contact Adam Truex or Angie Underwood.

Remember, disasters can easily happen. How you plan for them can make all the difference!

STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

DASL

Here is some information that would be important as a reminder to the districts of changes for registering students in DASL for 10/11:

FY11 (10/11) Changes for Race/Ethnicity Reporting

For students enrolled on or after July 1, 2010 the race/ethnicity data must be collected in the new two part format required by USDOE. Also, any student with a change to their district of residence for 10/11 would also need to have this data collected in the new format.

Two new questions have been added to the Registration Defaults for capturing this data.

A new "Hispanic/Latino field has been added as a drop-down list with options of *Y/N.*

A group of check boxes corresponding to the allowable race options has been added with the following labels:

A-Asian; B-Black or African American; I-American Indian or Alaska Native; P-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; W-White
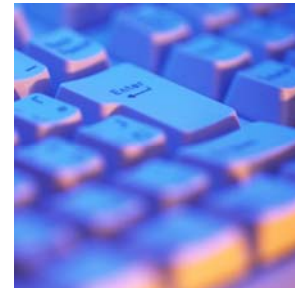
The race/ethnicity of students enrolled up to June 30, 2010 is *not* required to be updated.

Please refer to the DASL Version 10.3.0.16150 Release notes dated March 18, 2010 for details.

PROGRESS BOOK

With all the changes to the school year calendars this year please remember to check entry start and end dates of the last reporting periods. This includes quarter, exam, average, and final reporting periods. Get to these dates by clicking the edit link next to the reporting periods that need checked or changed. Entry windows close midnight of the dates that are entered unless specific times are entered.

Tickets to Progress Book dealing with report card entry problems should include the building, teacher, class, and section number. Omitting this information could increase the time it takes in getting your problem solved. Please try to include all information in the initial ticket.

SPECIAL SERVICES (SpS)

Please be sure to always read the SpS Updates and distribute them to the appropriate staff members. Current bugs, workarounds, and other valuable information are in these update and it is imperative that the people that are working with SpS receive them.

With the most recent installation there were a few of the "perks" that we have been talking about and wanting for some time. That is just a preview of some of the enhancements that are to come. As always please be sure to share your feedback with the developers by clicking on the CONTACT US link within the software. As you can see, it does make a difference.

EMIS UPDATE

EMIS

October FY10K EMIS reporting closed on April 23rd, 2010. Don't forget to print and fax to ODE the EMIS Accountability Sign-Off Form that can be found on the ODE web site under "Resources and Tools".

Year end FY10N reporting will begin the week of May 7th, 2010 and close on July 16th, 2010. This reporting period focuses on your data accountability for the current school year and will be reflected in your District's Local Report Card due out in August.

Graduate FY10G Reporting will begin the week of May 28th, 2010 and close November 12th, 2010. This information is used to calculate your graduation rate, graduation eligibility, and certain CTE performance measures.
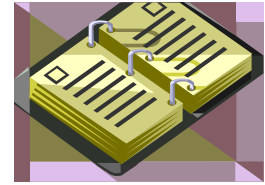
The EMIS Rewrite performance period is scheduled to begin in mid May. The ODE EMIS Newsflash dated 4/19/10 outlined the progress that has been made with getting the data collector up and running. At this time Yearend and Graduate reporting for FY10 will be submitted the same as 10K was. The first reporting using the Data Collector is to begin with October FY11 submissions.

FISCAL SERVICES UPDATE

Fiscal Year-End Inservices Scheduled

The annual fiscal year-end treasurer inservice dates have been scheduled for the second week in June. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 9th, 2010 at the Eastern Gateway Community College in Steubenville. The second meeting will be held on Thursday, June 10th, 2010 at the Buckeye J.V.S. in New Philadelphia. Both meetings will have refreshments available at 9:00, with the meeting starting promptly at 9:30.

Topics will include all budgetary fiscal year-end procedures, all payroll fiscal year-end procedures, equipment inventory close-out procedures, and a review of the capital asset reporting for EMIS.

If you have not already done so, please register via the Event Scheduler on the OME-RESA website.

Capital Asset Reporting for EMIS Reporting Period H

As of the printing of this newsletter, the capital asset reporting for FY10 for non-EIS users is going to be via the EMISFF, affectionately known as the EMIS Flat File Editor. For those utilizing the state software equipment inventory package, you will be able to export your data into a file which will in turn be loaded into the EMISFFE. Specific instructions have not been provided as to how this will be done. As soon as OME-RESA staff receives the instructions, we will pas them on to you. Indication at this time is that this should be ready by July 1.

WebGAAP Application—Changes by AOS and the SSDT

Effective April 2010, the AOS WebGAAP application has had some changes made to give a higher level of security to your data. All access granted from April 20th, 2010 forward will be granted read only or update only, depending on how you fill out the User Authorization Form, per fiscal year. After nine months, anyone with update access for the current fiscal year will revert to read only.

FISCAL SERVICES UPDATE - CONTINUED

Each fiscal year's privilege is granted individually. For example, if you have an LGS auditor who has had UPDATE access to your WebGAAP for the past 2 years, they will automatically have read only access for the oldest fiscal year and update for the most recent fiscal year. Nine months from April 2010, that fiscal year privilege will be reset to read only.

Before the start of a new fiscal year, the preparer of the GAAP statements should go out to the WebGAAP and open up the new year in order for information needed from a previous year to carry forward. Once that step is taken, the old fiscal year will revert to read only access and update access will carry forward to the next fiscal year.

The GAAP Wiki page has been updated to explain these changes for the user of the system. The url to the GAAP Wiki is as follows: http://gaapwiki.oecn.k12.oh.us/index.php?title=Main Page.

INFOHIO UPDATE

Ohio Senate Recognizes INFOhio for Service to Classroom Instruction

March 12, 2010 – Columbus, Ohio – The Ohio Senate has recognized INFOhio, the Information Network for Ohio Schools, 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).

INFOhio provides a range of services to Ohio's K-12 community that foster information literacy and media literacy through the use of technology:

- INFOhio's Core Collection of Electronic Resources is available from any Internet-connected computer in the school library, classroom and computer lab. INFOhio also provides use from home for students, their parents and teachers who have access to the Internet after school hours. The Core Collection is available without charge 24/7/365 to all students in public, private, parochial, charter and home-school environments. The collection includes a range of encyclopedias, dictionaries and databases that provide library resources, educational videos and primary source materials.

- INFOhio has automated almost 2,500 Ohio K-12 schools, providing online catalogs of school library resources searchable from any Internet-connected computer and a circulation management system for check in/out, overdues, inventory and reports. This integrated software package is used by more than 1.1 million students in almost 500 school districts.

- To ensure that electronic resources and online tools improve learning in Ohio, INFOhio provides instructional development resources and training so educators can better use our Core Collection of Electronic Resources, the World Wide Web and other instructional materials schools acquire.

In her remarks to the Senate Education Committee, Fredericka expressed appreciation for "recognizing the efforts of everyone in the INFOhio community to improve instruction and learning in our state. The past two decades have been exciting and rewarding, especially the expressions of thanks we have received from students, parents and educators. INFOhio strives to make the right resource available to the right learner at the right time. We have been assisted by other agencies and organizations, but nothing has been more critical to our success than the bi-partisan support we have received from the Ohio Senate and Ohio House of Representatives. I know everyone in the INFOhio community will be deeply grateful for the recognition this Senate committee has exemplified today," she said.

INFOHIO UPDATE - CONTINUED

"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," Fredericka added.

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).

INFOhio Learning Commons

All Ohio educators are encouraged to join INFOhio's 21st Century Learning Commons, a place to learn and share 21st century teaching and learning resources and practice ides. *The Learning Commons* components include a self-paced online course, 21 Essential Things for 21st Century Success, Information on 21st century learning skills; a discussion forum; glossary of Web 2.0 terms and more.

Everyone in the INFOhio community can be proud that *The Learning Commons* and its *21 Essential Things* result from the efforts of our Ohio colleagues. Melissa Higgs-Horwell and Jennifer Schwelik, the lead authors, had help

INFOHIO UPDATE - CONTINUED

from their writing team, the editorial review team, and INFOhio staff. Gayle Geitgey compiled the Glossary and Learning Skills sections. INFOhio Governing Board member Roger Minier, NWOET/Bowling Green State University, is coordinating the CEU/graduate credit opportunities available to participants.

Registration is free at http://learningcommons.infohio.org/   Take a look around and join *The Learning Commons* community, our exciting and valuable learning environment.

Job & Career Accelerator is the most comprehensive and easy-to-use job search application on the market. It integrates everything a patron needs to conduct a successful job search. Interactive wizards guide patrons through each step of the search process in a personalized manner, from recommending occupations to fetching up-to-the-minute job postings that are based on each user's career preferences.

Job & Career Accelerator is fully integrated with the LearningExpress Library platform, allowing it to provide users with recommended skills improvement courses and occupational practice tests that are based on an individual's work preferences and goals.

Included in Job & Career Accelerator:

- Detailed information on over 1,000 different occupations
- Over five million up-to-the-minute local and national job postings
- Tips on resumes, cover letters, interviewing skills
- Occupation matcher assessment that best meet personal backgrounds and interest

    Check it out at http://www.infohio.org/ER/secure/LearningExpress.asp

INFOHIO UPDATE - CONTINUED

New SirsiDynix Symphony Workflows Coming – Summer 2010

INFOhio Tech Support is currently testing the beta version of the new SirsiDynix Symphony Workflows client that will be released this summer to all INFOhio K-12 libraries. This new client contains many new updates and enhancements.

Stay tuned for additional information as it becomes available.

LSTA Full Grant – Switzerland of Ohio Local School District

OME-RESA is currently assisting the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District (Monroe County) in submitting an LSTA Full Grant for 2010-2011. The grant "Strengthening 21st Century Skills" will enable the district to provide enhanced library services to their 2,583 students and 350 certified and classified staff members.

The LSTA Full grant will include the following:

- Enable students and staff to acquire 21st Century Skills
- Provide students/staff the ability to achieve new technology skills
- Integrate technology to enhance all areas of the curriculum
- Provide adequate infrastructure for district technology needs
- Provide students and school personnel access to appropriate technology

The LSTA Full grant will provide the district with seed monies to fully automate their new and renovated 8 library/ media centers, which are part of the district-wide building project currently being developed under the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC). The grant is due by April 16th, 2010. Once received it will then be reviewed by the State Library of Ohio and, if successful, the grant will be awarded at the August State Library Board meeting. The grant will then run from October 1, 2010 to September 31, 2011.

NETWORK/SYSTEM UPDATE

OME-RESA Increases Internet Access Speed

OME-RESA increased the speed of the main Internet connection effective Thursday, April 1st by 20Mbit from 180Mbit to 200Mbit. On Friday, April 23rd we again increased the speed of the main Internet connection by 30Mbit from 200Mbit to 230Mbit to insure proper Internet speed and response. OME-RESA continues to maintain the 20Mbit Comcast Internet connection.

OME-RESA Continues to Expand Broadband Network Capabilities for Member Schools

Currently, a total of 41 sites are connected directly to OME-RESA using Fiber Optic Circuits. Two of our Fiber sites upgraded main connections to OME-RESA from 10Mbit to 100Mbit and several more schools will upgrade from 10Mbit to 100Mbit later this year. Seven schools will convert from T1 circuit connections to Fiber this summer.

OME-RESA is working with vendors as well as federal and state governmental agencies to secure broadband connections for schools outside the territory covered by AT&T and Time Warner.

The Fiber connections offer cost-efficient, locally managed, fiber-based broadband Ethernet services and continue to support the high volume of voice, video, data and Internet services. The converged network enables application consolidation, allowing for quick and reliable voice, video and data transfer as well as improving capabilities for disaster-recovery services, security and redundancy.

Blue Coat Packeteer PacketShaper

OME-RESA utilizes a Blue Coat PacketShaper ISP class device to identify applications on the network and monitor response times and utilization at the application level. single appliance. The traffic shaping policies are reviewed by the OME-RESA Technology Advisory Committee.

Network Staff optimize application performance by controls to regulate traffic and increase WAN capacity through application-specific classifications. PacketShaper is a scalable, flexible platform providing control and compression capabilities in a single appliance. The traffic shaping policies are reviewed by the OME-RESA Technology Advisory Committee.

Virus Activity:
Please ensure that your district's clients and or servers are updated daily with the latest operating system and virus/malware software updates.

Spam Statistics

The following stats illustrate what the Sophos filters have blocked over their lifetime:
Blocked Connections: 22,689,673,341
Spam: 319,177,946
Viruses: 1,373,024

District Network Class Configurations for Packateer:

We have configured classes for several districts and the information proved to be very useful in determining "top talkers" and network traffic on that particular district's network.
If you are interested in observing the utilized protocols and "top talkers" of your network please notify
wanstaff@omeresa.net.

NETWORK/SYSTEM UPDATE - CONTINUED

<u>Storserver Service:</u>

OME-RESA is providing offsite backup to 4 districts. If you currently have no offsite backup solution in place, please contact us at lanstaff@omeresa.net   and we can work with you to provide a reliable offsite backup solution.

<u>Mail Archival:</u>

OME-RESA has purchased the ARCmail 3120 appliance. This solution will allow us to archive all "omeresa.net" accounts. The ARCmail appliance can also be configured to archive your district's e-mail system if you currently have no archiving solution in place.

Please contact lanstaff@omeresa.net if you're interested in this service.

<u>Exchange 2010 Upgrade:</u>

OME-RESA staff is scheduling an upgrade maintenance window to migrate the existing Exchange 2003 system to Exchange 2010. The new software and hardware will increase the overall performance of the e-mail system and provide a richer Web interface for all web users. Additionally, this deployment will provide all "smart phone" functionality to the end user. Procurement of all necessary software and hardware is complete and once the maintenance window is established notifications will be sent immediately.

<u>DNS Requests for Google and Microsoft Live Cloud Migrations:</u>

If you are planning to utilize any type of cloud computing solution (Google \ Microsoft Live) please contact lanstaff@omeresa.net and provide the pertinent DNS records. These records need to be added to the designated DNS zone to ensure proper activation and use.

<u>Please Attend your Local Tech Meetings:</u>

    <u>BGMN - Usually 2nd Thursday at 12:30 PM at Union Local Admin Bldg</u>
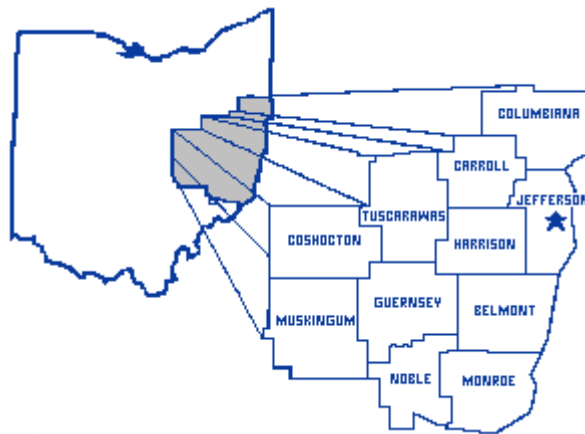   <u>ECOESC - Usually 3rd Tuesday at 9:00 AM at ECO ESC office</u>
    <u>JCH - Usually 3rd Friday at 9 AM at OME-RESA office</u>
    <u>MVESC - Usually 2nd Friday at 8:30 AM at MV ESC office</u>

** These meetings are a good place to network and share information with your peers.

OME-RESA

2023 Sunset Blvd.
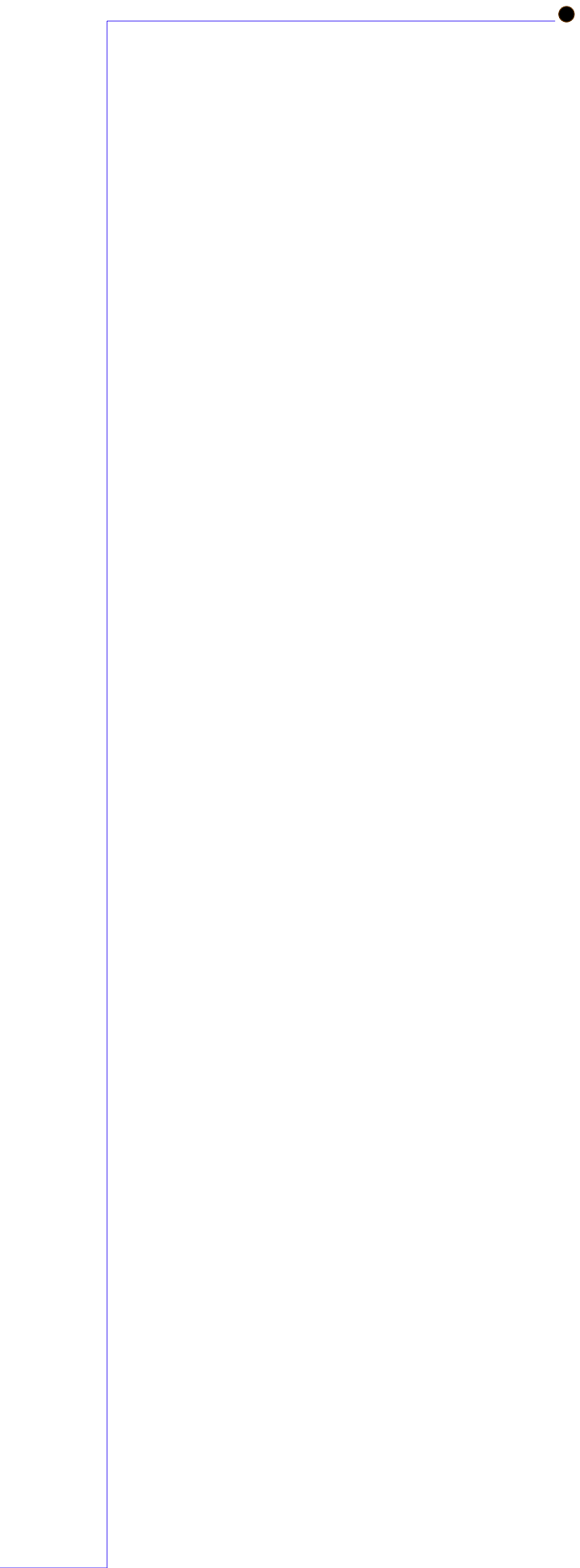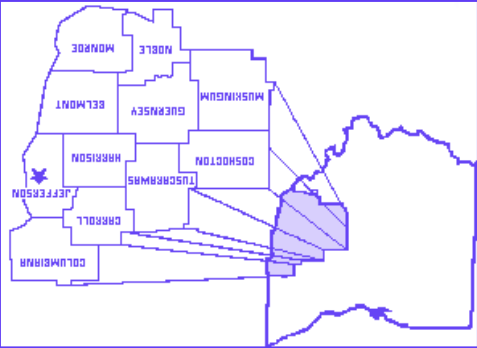**Steubenville, OH 43952**

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