

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2010

www.calhounisd.org

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www.twitter.com/calhounisd

Student Service Connecting Points

School Messenger

Calhoun ISD offered to fund school messenger this year for any Zangle district that is interested in implementing a notification system. This system can be used to make phone calls to parents, students, or community members to communicate any information. This information may include; emergency information, school closings, attendance, upcoming events, meeting reminders, or announcements. Albion, Bronson, Homer, Mar Lee, and Pennfield have implemented the system with Quincy joining soon.

MSDS

MSDS is fully functional in Zangle. You can download the file for the state and utilize the State website to upload the required data. Calhoun Department of Technology, Pupil Accounting and Special Education staff partnered together to offer a pre-audit workshop in March for districts in the counties served by our Pupil Accounting staff. The purpose of the workshop was to review the



MSDS process and related data requirements in order to help districts prepare for a clean audit.

Business Office Connecting Points

Electronic Requisition Program:

We make the purchase order process efficient! The SMART Requisition/Purchasing Module prepares and prints purchase orders. Typically, a user of this module would create a requisition identifying what is to be purchased and what account(s) to charge. Once completed, the requisition goes through an approval process resulting in an approved requisition. The final step is to turn the approved requisition into a purchase order and print the vendor and other copies of the purchase order.

From an accounting perspective, the creation of the requisition removes funds from the available balance in the charged accounts and places the funds in "req reserve." When the requisition becomes a purchase order, the funds are moved from "req reserve" to "encumbered." Many of our districts are currently using this; contact Joy if your district is interested.

Did You Know?

Connecting with Parents:

- The Calhoun Area Career Center is utilizing Zangle to send out a custom e-mail notification at the end of each day notifying parental contacts of any un-excused absence or tardy. This is a means to help with attendance and ensure that students are showing up for class.
- 1,206 parent accounts have been utilized using Parent Connect this school year in Calhoun and Branch counties. However, only 705 parents have logged in since January 2010. Encourage teachers to promote the use of Parent Connect for parents to stay up to date. Some parents may rather receive email notifications. Encourage parents to receive automated emails from Parent Connect that highlight behavior, food service balance, attendance, news, assignments, and grades.

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SMART Transaction Analysis out to the school building level:

The Transaction Analysis Module of SMART allows a person to look at the status of the accounts that are under their responsibility. Instead of having to call the business office and ask how they are doing with their budgets, staff can look for themselves on their own computer. This saves the business office staff the time of looking information up and sending it to other staff. The information is always up to date (as current as what information has been keyed into the finance system).

SMART Advanced Security Module: Overview

This module provides the security level auditors have been demanding. The Security Module provides a process to allow users secured access to the various modules within the SMART System. Using this Security Module, user application access can be limited or expanded to meet the needs of individual users within the district. The Security Module has the following functions:

- Create a User – Enter a new user and give that person a user id and a password
- Give a User Access - Once a user is created, that person can be given access to applications within SMART
- Give a User Coordinator Rights – A user can be given the authority to create new users and give users access to various applications
- Provide Reports – Login history and module access information is available in report format
- Define Password Policy – The password policy of a district including length of password, special characters in passwords, password expiration rules, and number of entry attempts can be tailored to the needs of a district. (This capability was made available to districts in order to meet AUDIT REQUIREMENTS!)

Be sure to contact Joy to set up your users, set user roles (users, coordinators, system administrators) and functionality today!

1099 Webinar:

If your district issues 1099's then there is a free webinar coming up that would be beneficial to watch! The Internal Revenue Service is offering a webinar for 1099 MISC Filing Requirements for State & Local Governments on March 30th at 2:00 pm ET. Items that will be addressed include:

- Who is required to file?
- What type of entities do I send a 1099-MISC to?
- How do I secure their tax identifying number?
- What type of payments are subject to 1099-MISC reporting?
- What is Backup Withholding?
- How do I deposit Backup Withholding?

If you'd like to watch this webinar, go to this link, and sign up today!

<http://www.visualwebcaster.com/IRS/65909/reg.asp?id=65909>

Did You Know?

- By using the Voucher on the eEmployee website, staff has their check stubs at their fingertips for not only current but prior periods? They can even view W2s!
- You can use the 05-SCR to record jobs held, salary schedules and levels for employees – this can be used for budgeting purposes!
- The 2009/10 FID Submission now requires districts to send account numbers through the third digit of 'state codes.' Please attend the March 23 Finance meeting at 1:30 at CACC to discuss this issue and develop your plan for ledger compliance for 2010 FID Submission.

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Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

Social Media for Schools: Best Practices compiled by Andy Mann, Educational Technology Consultant

School districts are beginning to realize the potential of using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube for communications and marketing. I talked with social media consultants and school districts across the country and created a collection of best practices listed below.

1. **Learn from the best.** Business understands the potential of social media. Kodak's [Social Media Tips](#) is a good foundation for getting started.
2. **Commit the time.** There must be a person who can commit a minimum of 5 – 10 minutes a day to post new content and review replies.
3. **Select the right social media.** Start with one and add others as you learn. [Grandville Public Schools](#) and [Zeeland Public Schools](#) currently use only Twitter for communications. Some schools find success in creating a Facebook "fan" page.
4. **Block for students at school.** Social media sites such as Facebook have the potential to consume huge amounts of time and not support learning. Most schools block social media sites for students. Some open these sites for staff.
5. **Add users.** [Evergreen Public Schools](#) in Washington provides links on their school website's front page to the district Facebook and Twitter page.
6. **Create Facebook fan page.** A Facebook fan page is the best Facebook tool for communicating and marketing. It may be created and not made "live". This reserves your preferred page name.
7. **Create a distinct marketing Facebook user.** Since a Facebook fan page is linked to a specific Facebook user's account, create a fan page under a distinct user account. Note: Facebook doesn't officially approve this.
8. **Guide staff.** Schools have acceptable use policies for Internet use. However, they typically have no written guidelines about how teachers should use social media. For example, how does a district reply when a teacher asks, "Should I *friend* my students on Facebook? I'm developing a draft of guidelines which I will share.
9. **Drive users to district page.** Facebook posts and Twitter tweets should include links to your district webpage for more detailed information and images.
10. **Post 3 – 5 times a week.** Make a commitment to post regularly. If you don't have something to share, share a useful website or retweet a tip or link to a resource.
11. **Monitor what is being said.** Tools such as [SocialMonitor](#), [Google Alerts](#), and [HootSuite](#) allow you to monitor when your school or staff are mentioned online.
12. **Be prepared for negative comments.** While you won't tolerate profanity, the best social media sites allow open two way communications. However, how do you reply when criticized or something negative is said? Plan a reply strategy in advance. *Note: sometimes you decide it's best to ignore it, or a parent replies representing the school's view.*

Discovery Contract for 2010/11

Discovery (United Streaming) has submitted a bid to be part of the REMC \$ave project. Unfortunately, Discovery has not finalized the contract. Progress is being made, but finalized amounts aren't anticipated until May. We are being told by the \$ave project that the items being finalized relate to terms and not to pricing. The pricing that they put in their bid is \$575 per building for the 2010/11 school year. You can use this cost for budget planning purposes, with finalized details coming in May.

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Free Online Classes

Michigan Schools Online – a MDE funded initiative coordinated by Genesee ISD – has purchased over 30 online courses from Florida Virtual University. The intent is to provide teachers with online learning experiences that they can incorporate into their face to face classes. This is an outstanding opportunity for students to experience 21st century learning environments! These courses are available in Blackboard and Moodle. It is very important for teacher to first have taken professional development on how to teach online. Contact Andy Mann for information regarding when the professional development is being offered and how to access these courses.

Data for Student Success

Data Director User Conference: April 20 – 21

Be sure to sign up for the second annual Midwest Data Director User conference being held in Lansing, MI on April 20 – 21. Consider even presenting! Those that present have their registration fee waived. Please see the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more information.

Regional Data Initiative Grant

Calhoun ISD was awarded a grant to help expand the use of data to inform school improvement and student success! Professional development is key to ensuring data is used correctly. August 17 – 18 Calhoun ISD is hosting a FREE professional development event for middle school and high school staff. Be sure to register now – information is provided at the end of this newsletter. These two days count towards the four that all superintendents in Barry, Branch and Calhoun have committed to supporting.

CNA and PA25 Assistance

We have implemented two new reporting tools in the Data for Student Success Inquiry Tool: CNA and PA25 reporting. These reports contain data for your district that you need in filling out these reports for the state. In addition, we worked with Macomb ISD who has created a Data Profile manual that helps school leaders identify where to find data for CNA and PA25 in the Data 4SS Inquiry tool and in Data Director. You can find this at www.data4ss.org on the Resources tab. For more information, contact Beth Brophy at brophye@calhounisd.org.

Did You Know?

- In Barry, Branch and Calhoun counties, between October 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009, 1,373 users logged in to Data Director a total of 12,464 times!

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Calhoun ISD Connecting Points

The Calhoun ISD provides this "Connecting Points" newsletter to provide the districts we serve relevant and timely information about technology-related topics within school district functions. We call the cross section of technology-related topics and school district functions 'connecting points.'

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Mike Oswalt Assistant Superintendent	Regional Technology Services (REMC, Educational Technology, Data Director/Data for Student Success)	oswaltm@calhounisd.org 269.789.2439
Sam Lutgring Director	Informational Technology Services (Zangle, Fiber, Technology Support)	lutgrins@calhounisd.org 269.789.2433
Doug Smith, Director	Organizational Technology Services (Cyborg, SMART, CISD Technologies)	smithde@calhounisd.org 269.789.2424
Help Desk		helpdesk@calhounisd.org

2009/10 Meeting Dates

March 18, May 20 at CISD

For each of the above dates, the schedule is:

8:30 – 9:30 Blackboard Key Contacts

9:30 – 12:00 Regional Instructional Technology Committee (RITC, TLC, Media Council)

12 – 12:45 Lunch and Learn (all welcome)

12:45 – 1:30 Technology Leadership Council (TLC)

June 10 at CISD

Zangle Planning 8:30 – 11:30

May 13 at CISD

Data Director Key Contacts, 12 – 3 (with lunch served at 11:30)

March, April, May at CACC

Cyborg user meetings are third Wednesdays at 2:00 for the months above

March 23, June 10 at CACC

Finance meetings at 1:30 for the dates above

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER SUMMIT

A REGIONAL DATA INITIATIVE (RDI)

SAVE THE DATES!!!!

The Regional Data Initiative (RDI) is a grant to provide Michigan teachers real time access to student data at the classroom level, as well as professional development in order to inform instructional decisions and improve student achievement.

Calhoun ISD has been awarded a Regional Data Initiative Grant that provides funding for this type of professional development. All superintendents in Barry, Branch and Calhoun, who utilize Data Director, have assured that their districts will send staff to professional development designed for this purpose. These two FREE days are part of that commitment.

- AUDIENCE:** District Middle and High School Teams consisting of principals and teachers (both general and special educators). Elementary participation will be determined if space is available.
- DATES:** August 17-18, 2010
- TIME:** 8:00am-3:00pm
- LOCATION:** TBD
- COST:** FREE! (\$15 for SB-CEUs, cash or checks made out to CISD)
- SB-CEUs:** 1.2 SB-CEUs, pending approval. (possibility of 1 Graduate Credit or 3.0 SB-CEUs, if syllabus approved by Spring Arbor University)
- WEB REGISTRATION:** **MSHS SUMMIT—SECTION 3 (SUMMIT 501)**
- Go to calhounisd.org and click on **Professional Development** to take you to the PD website
 - Registration will open March 3, 2010
 - Registration Deadline: May 30, 2010
 - Each team member must register separately

2010 Midwest *DataDirector*TM User Conference



Tuesday, April 20 and Wednesday, April 21, 2010

Details

Approximately 50+ sessions have been designed for district and site level administrators, district data personnel, and teacher leaders in new and established *DataDirector* districts.

Location/Registration Information:

The Lexington
925 South Creyts Road
Lansing, MI 48917
877-322-5544

Registration Cost:
\$195

Deadline to Register:
April 5, 2010

Register Today! Space is limited.

www.riversidepublishing.com/ddmwconf

We are looking for teachers, administrators and district personnel to share their *DataDirector* stories. Help other districts learn from your successes and challenges by sharing your best practices with the *DataDirector* community.

Deadline to submit a proposal is March 26, 2010.

To submit a presentation, please click the following link,
www.riversidepublishing.com/ddmwpresentations

Lodging Information:

The Lexington
925 South Creyts Road
Lansing, MI 48917
877-322-5544

Book your rooms now! We have a limited number of rooms reserved at a discounted rate.

Room Type	Single or Double Occupancy Rooms Reserved by March 20	Single or Double Occupancy Rooms Reserved after March 20
2 Double Beds	\$89	\$102
Executive King	\$94	\$107
Signature Level	\$109	\$122

Reference Riverside Publishing when calling.
The hotel is a full-service hotel.

Approximately 50+ Presentations to Choose from—Breakfast & Lunch included

- **DataDirector for Beginners:** New users will learn the basics to get started using *DataDirector*
- **Reporting:** Hands-on sessions covering custom and pre-built reports
- **Scanning Options and Exam Creation:** Hands-on exam help and scanning sessions
- **Implementation:** District personnel and trainers share their implementation strategies
- **DataDirector to Support Instruction:** Best practices for professional learning communities and advice for using data in the classroom
- **Technical Insight:** Sessions covering everything from permissions management, to data importing and automating uploads, to data troubleshooting
- **Assessments Reporting:** Everything from K-12 Benchmarks, to DIBELS, to daily quizzes and formative assessments
- **And much much more...**



DataDirectorTM
Understanding data for student success

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