

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

December 2009

www.calhounisd.org

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www.twitter.com/calhounisd

Student Service Connecting Points

School Messenger

Calhoun ISD is funding 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. We feel this will be a great benefit to the schools for providing information to the communities they serve.

MSDS

The new State pupil accounting system is in place with one submission behind us. As with all new systems there were a few issues along the way, but all districts were able to submit their file through the new process. We will continue to work with our districts and the State to simplify this process.

Business Office Connecting Points

eEmployee

The CISD has been working diligently with Wayne RESA to make Self Service a viable part of our Payroll System. In the past we introduced eVoucher. This allows an employee to review their direct deposit voucher on line. As a result, several districts do not send out vouchers to employees at all, saving time and paper costs. Earlier this year we introduced eAttendance which allows employees to view their attendance activity. We also have Professional Development which gives employees the ability to enter their own professional development online as they receive it.

We are now working on a new addition to our Self Service program: eEmployee. eEmployee will give employees the ability to update demographic information such as emergency contact, physician information, emergency medical information and have the payroll system automatically updated with this information. We hope to have this in place by the first of the New Year.

Cyborg 6

In September we successfully completed our conversion to Cyborg 5.2.1. This upgrade provided new features and was a necessary stepping stone in the march to the latest version of Cyborg, version 6. Cyborg 6 provides many new features. In the coming months we will share these new features along with our plans for upgrading come this next summer.

Did You Know?

MSDS Exports currently implemented in Zangle:

- Request for UIC
- General Collection
- Supplemental Nutrition Eligibility
- Early Roster
- Student Record Maintenance
- Early Childhood

Did You Know?

- 15 out of our 16 districts now use direct deposit.
- By using the eVoucher system you can eliminate the printing and distribution of vouchers – saving approximately 18 hours of work annually!

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LOGI Reports

LOGI is the Reporting Tool for the SMART Finance package provided by Wayne RESA. It permits the creation of custom reports outside of the canned reports that come with SMART. Several districts have been working on creation of these custom reports. Because LOGI is a powerful tool, it offers a great deal of possibilities and with that capability comes a degree of complexity. Please contact Joy Sommers for training or to discuss custom reports. Joy will ask for volunteers to show some of their custom reports at the next Finance User's Meeting which will be held Thursday, December 10th at 1:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 180 at the Calhoun Area Career Center on Roosevelt Avenue in Battle Creek. This will also be the 1099 Processing Meeting.

Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

Collaboration on identifying PD needs in the area of Educational Technology

The REMC Association of Michigan's Instructional Technology Specialists committee has created a self reporting tool for staff to complete regarding their use of technology. Though the survey is focused on uses of technology in the classroom, it is a very helpful tool to identify areas of professional development needs in using technology not only the classroom but in the workplace. The survey is self reporting and the results can be used to report to the state the technical skills of staff (a requirement this year in reporting in Registry of Educational Personnel (REP)).

More importantly, many of the districts in our tri-county area have decided to use the same survey tool. This will allow for collecting common data about the use of technology in the region and identify areas where we could collaborate on continuing to provide professional development opportunities. The scale used in the survey responses range from 1 to 5, representing: 'not familiar,' 'beginning,' 'developing,' 'proficient,' and 'transformative.'

Nearly 500 educators in the tri county area completed the survey. On average, all respondents, regardless of position, indicated they were 'proficient' in email and word processing and 'developing' in the areas of Zangle/Power School, PowerPoint, digital and document cameras. Areas identified as not familiar or 'beginning' included online productivity tools. Overall, respondents rated themselves as 'beginning' and 'developing' while teachers overall indicated 'developing.'

Did You Know?

- You can get Finance help almost ANY time you need it! Need help setting up another Fund in your General Ledger? Need to convert some account numbers? Need a special report created? Want a refresher on one or more of the SMART Finance Modules? Just contact Joy at sommersj@calhounisd.org to setup an appointment. You can go to the CDOT computer lab or Joy can come to your district.
- When you have an improvement suggestion for the Finance Package, Joy lets Wayne RESA know about it. Several of the improvements that have been made over the past year have come from CDOT districts! Keep those suggestions coming! It's 'your' finance program, so help us make it work for you!

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The End of the Printed Textbook

With students able to access up-to-date content using Internet connected computers, districts are reevaluating the purchase of traditional printed textbooks. The money saved by no longer purchasing textbooks can be repurposed to support curriculum in other ways. At the Union City Community Schools district printed textbooks are starting to be replaced by .pdf and online textbook alternatives.

Union City's CIO, Chris Katz, shared six benefits to electronic or online textbook alternative. 1) It saves the district money. 2) A .pdf version of the printed page can be carried as a file on a student's laptop, much lighter than a stack of textbooks. 3) A textbook can be lost or damaged, easily costing \$100 or more to replace. 4) An electronic version can be keyword searched. 5) A textbook is out-of-date the moment it is printed. An electronic version has the potential to be quickly updated (*e.g. does your printed textbook still include Pluto as a planet?*) 6) Electronic alternatives have the potential to better support differentiated instruction with audio, multimedia, and Flash based tutorials. A funny spoof on the limitations of a printed textbook can be found on Joe's Non-Netbook YouTube video:

<http://tinyurl.com/onlinetextbk>.

With the growth of learning management systems such as Blackboard and Moodle and the use of collaborative tools such as wikis, teachers may entirely bypass printed textbooks to provide rich up-to-date content to their students. The CISD sponsored social studies curriculum project is a perfect example. Area social studies teachers worked collaboratively to develop a textbook independent curriculum, including printed material and links to online resources

<http://cisdsocialstudies.wikispaces.com>

For the reasons listed above, there is a transition in both K12 and higher education to open source and online alternatives to expensive printed textbooks. Consider these sites as starting points: The Open Textbook site provides a registry of open source textbooks that anyone can access, reuse and redistribute: www.opentextbook.org Textbook Revolution – a student run site with the goal of increasing the use of free educational materials by teachers and students www.textbookrevolution.org For science and math textbooks check out Flexbook, where I recently downloaded an illustrated 950 page HS Biology textbook. <http://ck12.org/flexr> And finally, for links to a wealth of free online content from around the world visit the Open Educational Resources site <http://www.oercommons.org>

For more information about electronic and online alternatives to printed textbooks, please contact Andy Mann, CISD Educational Technology Consultant. manna@calhounisd.org 269-789-2421.

Read Around the Planet – Registration opens December 1!

It is that time of year – time to make your plans to connect students with others in the world for the purpose of supporting reading! Calhoun ISD once again is proud to offer space at the Gifford Schultz building in Marshall for your teachers to bring classes and utilize our video conferencing resources. Information can be found at www.twice.cc and is also attached at the end of this newsletter. While the event runs from February 22 – March 5, space is available at CISD on February 23, 26 and March 1, 3, 4 and 5. Please contact Mike Oswalt at oswaltm@calhounisd.org for more information and to begin the registration process.

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Operational Connecting Points

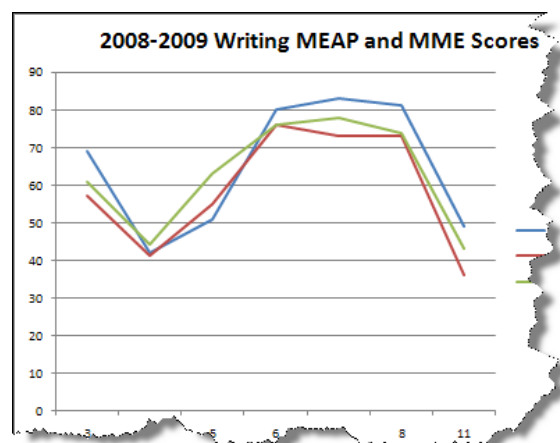
Efficient Technical support from Calhoun ISD

The Calhoun ISD Department of Technology continues to provide technology services to you. Each year we continue to work with many district technical leaders to plan, design and implement solutions from desktop to infrastructure, classroom to office. In the case of Mar Lee and Tekonsha, we are the technology department for those districts. For all districts, our consultation is at no cost and our implementation costs are very reasonable, especially considering the costs of some consulting companies. Don't forget to look first to Calhoun ISD for your informational, operational and educational technology needs before paying for the same service from high priced contractors. Service and collaboration is what Calhoun ISD is all about!

Data for Student Success

Data Available on CISD Web Site

Area superintendents asked us to give aggregate results for all districts so that we can share best practices. As districts continue to explore data in a variety of ways, CISD has responded by packaging data in various forms so that districts can better interpret their results. New is the addition of a comparison of MEAP and MME scores for all districts in each subject area. This is a direct comparison of overall district scores as they compare to other districts, the consortium average, and the state average.



In addition, a trend graph has been compiled so that districts can compare their MEAP and MME scores for last year across all grades. This trend data is broken down by subject area and is available for each district. It also shows a comparison between local districts, consortium average, and the state average. It is hoped that this new representation of data will enable districts to better analyze the quality of learning that is happening in their buildings. CISD is always happy to build new graphs that will be of interest to all districts with this public information.

Please contact us if you have suggestions for additional graphs you would like to see built. Current graphs can be viewed by navigating to the CISD homepage, then clicking on Departments>Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, then clicking on the DataDirector page. The Graphs are available on the right hand side of the DataDirector page.

Regional Data Initiative Grant

Calhoun ISD has been awarded a \$2.4M grant in partnership with 11 other ISDs to help teachers and leaders use data to inform instruction and practice. This will allow for expanded professional development opportunities and funding for Data Director. Other activities of this grant include developing professional development for staff on how to effectively use technology in the classroom and office as well as focusing on differentiated instruction.

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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

January 13, 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)

January 14, March 11, June 10 at CISD

Zangle Planning 8:30 – 11:30

January 14, March 11, May 13 at CISD

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

February, March, April, May at CACC

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

December 10, January 28, and June 10 at CACC

Finance meetings at 1:30 for the dates above

Read Around the Planet*

TWICE Video Conference Event

English & World Languages: February 22 - March 5



Celebrate Read Around the Planet!

Read Around the Planet is a celebration of NEA's Read Across America. Classrooms use interactive video to connect with other classrooms "around the planet" and read to each other. The activity is sponsored by [TWICE](#) and Polycom, in cooperation with NEA.

TWICE provides the **registration tool**, **matches classrooms** with partners, and provides **support documents**. Participating classrooms are responsible for their own video connection and developing their own reading activities for the event.

**Disclaimer. While we are using this name to be inclusive to our international friends, this name does NOT guarantee U.S. schools an international connection. They will be matched randomly as usual in this project.*



Participate in English or World Languages!

This activity is open to all K-12 students (ages 6-18) in public and private schools who have access to two-way interactive video equipment (IP H.323 or ISDN H.320). If you are unsure whether or not you have access to this type of equipment, check with your school's technology coordinator.

Your class will be matched with a class from a different location and each class will exchange reading activities.

World language classes will receive a match with the same language, but may not be the same grade level.

Classroom to classroom connections will take place **February 22 – March 5, 2010**.

Each connection is scheduled for an hour: 15 minutes for testing connections and introductions; 30 minutes for the reading activity (15 minutes per class); and 15 minutes for exchanging information about respective schools and communities. Activities can range from reading a favorite book passage, to a "battle of the books" format - see the box for other ideas.



Activity Timeline

September 2009 - January 8, 2010: Videoconference Equipment Verification.

December 1, 2009 - January 13, 2010: Teacher Registration

January 14-22, 2010: Leftover Registration

By January 29, 2010: Partner Class Information emailed out and available online.

Feb 22-Mar 4, 2010: Connections occur.



Registration and More Information

Register online at the TWICE website:

<http://projects.twice.cc>

Read Around the Planet Activity Ideas

- Skits - Plays
- Raps - Songs
- Illustrations (check the format of your document camera first!)
- Dramatizations
- Student-created books
- "Battle of the Books"

more ideas:

www.twice.cc/read

www.nea.org/readacross

