

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

June 2010

www.calhounisd.org

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Student Service Connecting Points

New Zangle Release

As we shared at our June Zangle Planning Meeting, C Innovation has released the new Zangle 2010 version. We are working feverishly to implement this new release. We are working closely with C Innovations to ensure this is a smooth implementation. This release is packed with patches, new features, and some exciting enhancements. Just a few highlights are:

- Added ability in Requirements for an Eligibility to be comprised of other Eligibilities.
- Added functionality to Master Schedule Editor.
- Added State ID and field order preference to Student Find forms.
- Added locking mechanism to Student Schedule Editor.
- Added Enter Standards by Student Option into Web Gradebook and TeacherConnect
- Food Services re-engineered and added Household Eligibility application.

Did You Know?

- The Calhoun Department of Technology continues to work with local school districts that are considering moving their server infrastructure from Novell to Microsoft. If you would like further information please email helpdesk@calhounisd.org

Business Office Connecting Points

Changes coming to W-2s

IRS changes to 2011 W-2 reporting will require the incorporation of benefit information on an employee's W-2. This reporting and printing of employee benefit information will be facilitated by the use of the Benefits Program built into Cyborg. Once benefits are stored in the Cyborg Benefit Program the information can be easily printed on all W-2s to meet the new IRS requirements. The CISD will be working with districts to incorporate benefits in the year end process migrating districts to the Benefits Program in Cyborg.

Assisting the Districts in Payroll Training

Employee turnover is something every district faces. With all the changes happening in school districts due to the budget and changing retirement requirements, now is a good time to review your payroll support so you won't be left in the dark come payday. If you don't already have a backup person using Cyborg for payroll, the payroll consultants at the CISD are ready to help train your payroll backup person. You don't have to take the burden all on yourself. Call Carole or Sherry for training help.

Did You Know?

- Cyborg Upgrade is coming!!
- We are already anticipating the roll-out of Cyborg 6.2 in 2011. In order to get ready for this upgrade, it will be necessary for all of our districts to have a new time entry program. We are in the process of adding this function to all districts and will start training over the summer months. Our plan is to have this up and running by the end of this calendar year for all districts.

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SMART Release

Coming Soon! By the time of the Finance Meeting on June 17th, the following releases should be available:

- New version of the Reports Module which will now have an icon to click on to make it easier to get to the LOGI Reports. With the new Reports Module, on the Fund Selection screen, you can select multiple funds and then check the 'combine selected accounts' for a combined report – this will be used if you need to show your Athletic Fund under the General Fund, etc.
- Vendor Module new version will have the ability to do a 'Mass Update' to delete multiple vendors at once!
- Electronic Requisition Module new version will have new way to handle blanket purchase orders using "Parent/Child" – details at the Finance Meeting on June 17th! Thank you to Branch ISD for their help in getting this feature available to all districts! Will also have ability to have a signature on the Purchase Orders rather than the typed name of the top approver.
- Security Module new version will allow special characters in passwords (numbers can be special characters). Also, we will be able to change a User ID (ie, if marry/divorce, can now create new ID instead of setting up new user ID and deleting the old one).

Did You Know?

- Be sure to attend the Finance Meeting on June 17th at 1:30 pm in the NE All Purpose Room at Calhoun Area Career Center where additional information on SMART improvements, as well as important information for the [Fiscal Close process](#) will be covered.

Are you using accurate finance reports?

After the finance system moved from WISE to SMART, Host/TSO was no longer the 'king' of the finance information. TSO Reports went from being 'real time' to being a day behind. SMART has the current data. If you are still running Finance Reports out of TSO, they are NOT ACCURATE. Wayne RESA is not refreshing the finance data in Host/TSO. The only 'update' that is done is the Ledger Updates as needed for Cyborg. If your district is still running Finance reports in TSO, please contact Joy Sommers to learn how to pull the information from SMART Reports or LOGI Reports.

The Following Reports are available in SMART Reports:

- Open Purchase Order Report
- Open Invoice Report
- Trial Balance for Prior Year or Current Year
- GL300 Budget/Responsibility Report
- GL450 Financial Statements
- Several additional reports are available in LOGI Reporting

eEmployee

We are proud to announce two new modules to eEmployee which will further assist employees in maintaining their own information for payroll and benefits. One tab will be for emergency contact information which will automatically update in Cyborg (the payroll system) when entered by the employee. The other tab will contain demographic information such as address, phone number, etc. This will not automatically update Cyborg, but will send an email to notify Payroll and Benefits that changes have been made to an employee's record. The Payroll and Benefits staff will then follow up on the changes.

Did You Know?

- Your HR/Payroll system, Cyborg, is ready to handle the new changes in the retirement withholding come July 1st. Come July 1st your payroll personnel can feel confident that their Cyborg payroll system will automatically adjust for the new retirement deduction changes for your staff.

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One of the most underutilized tabs in eEmployee is Professional Development. This tab allows employees who are required to do additional professional development to enter their own information. By utilizing this process, you are sure that it is entered immediately. For those districts interested in the process, again, please contact us.

Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

Summer Professional Development Offerings

Last fall we surveyed staff using the REMC online survey for technology skills. Based on this survey, one area that many indicated they were 'not familiar' or 'beginning' level was online productivity tools. As a result, Andy Mann will be offering the following courses this summer. Be sure to register soon at <http://pdreg.calhounisd.org> – be sure to share this information with your staff!

Google Earth Academy 2010 – June 29 – 30

Pennfield Middle School

This two day series will teach Google Earth navigating skills and explore the abundance of lessons supporting nearly any curricula - across all grade levels. Teachers will learn to develop their own Google Earth lessons. \$35 includes lunch. \$15 fee for SB-CEUs.

Moodle Boot Camp – August 5

Pennfield High School

Beginners will start with the basics and create their first course using Moodle. Explore best practices and learn basic Moodle tools. Small group sizes and step-by-step instructions will help the new learner. Cost: \$20 includes lunch. \$15 fee for SB-CEUs.

Moodle Academy – August 6

Pennfield High School

For experienced Moodle users and those who have completed the Moodle Boot Camp. Select from a number of different hands-on sessions will help users to integrate intermediate and advanced tools. Cost: \$20 includes lunch. \$15 fee for SB-CEUs.

Facebook & Twitter for Marketing & Communications – August 17 PM

CISD

Explore how your school district can begin to use Facebook and Twitter to connect to parents, students and your community. Create a sample fan page and Twitter account. \$20 includes lunch. \$15 fee for SB-CEUs.

Marshall Technology Academy 2010 – August 23, 25, 26, 27 noon

Marshall HS

Learn to use Google Documents, wikis and Twitter for collaboration. Explore time-saving technology tools such as Delicious and Quizlet. Develop projects integrating technology resources into your curriculum. Cost: \$60 includes lunches.. \$15 fee for SB-CEUs.

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Transition to Blended Instruction

Blended Instruction Basics

Blended or hybrid instruction is a term used for instruction which includes both face-to-face instruction and online instruction, typically with the use of a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Moodle. On the other hand, with the fully online model of instruction all instruction, interaction with the teacher and other students, is completed entirely online. The fully online model is becoming more popular for university courses.

Blended Instruction Benefits

Blended instruction provides many advantages of fully online or fully face-to-face instruction. Blended instruction allows conversations begun in the classroom to continue online using a course discussion board. Teachers report when sharing on a discussion board, students who may not speak up in class, will find their voice and post well written responses. And with a discussion board, students have time to read and comment on what others have shared. Students like the ability to take a quiz and have it instantly graded or turn assignments in online. The blended instructional model supports individualized learning, gives students a wide number of different course resources at the click of a mouse such as the amazing Hippocampus www.hippocampus.org content repository.

Importance of Access

Blended instruction requires that students can access the Internet from outside of school. This may be from home, a public or school library or even a fast food restaurant with Internet access. And when a computer is not easily accessible, students connect using their cell phone. They find a way to get online so they can communicate within the course and access course resources, anytime/anyplace.

Online Learning Requirement

Michigan understands the importance of online instruction. Michigan students are required to have an experience in a combined 20 hours of online learning between grades 6-12 of their schooling career. For more information look at the requirements and the companion document created by the REMC Association of Michigan at: [MDE Online Learning Requirements](#)

New Skills

This new model requires some new skills both by the learner and the instructor. For a teacher, the creation of a blended course can take many hours of development – before the first student is enrolled. For students, they must master new skills to be successful – including organization, self discipline, and a variety of new communications skills.

Did You Know?

- Training is being offered this summer to help teachers begin to use Moodle to create blended courses.
- On August 5th, a [Moodle Boot Camp](#) is being created to support teachers new to blended instruction. The first area Moodle Academy will be held August 6th to meet the needs of educators with some blended teaching experience. Both of these events are being organized through a combination effort of Calhoun ISD, Pennfield, and Union City Schools and hosted at Pennfield High School. Bronson High School used a different model and arranged for two days of blended instruction training for their teachers the end of June (open to everyone.)
- For more information or to register, visit: <http://pdreg.calhounisd.org>
- For more information on blended instruction, contact Andy Mann, CISD Educational Technology Consultant manna@calhounisd.org 789-2421.

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Blended Instruction Support

REMC 12 East supports blended instruction by providing a Learning Management System, training, and ongoing support for districts in Calhoun and Branch counties. Over the last three years, a commercial LMS called Blackboard was used to support thousands of students in hundreds of courses across the multi-county region. To better support blended instruction into the future, a decision was made to transition to the open source Moodle LMS beginning July, 2010. District leaders have been attending Moodle administrator training. Nearly all districts in the region are now using Moodle!

Read Around the Planet

For the sixth year in a row, Calhoun ISD hosted connections for Read Around the Planet. Coordinated by Berrien RESA, Read Around the Planet is meant to promote reading for March is Reading Month as well as connect kids with others in the world. This year, Calhoun ISD hosted *Bellevue* Elementary who connected with Locust Valley, New York and Sonoma Elementary and Wattles Park Elementary from *Harper Creek* who each connected with schools in Dallas, Texas. One of the Harper Creek Elementary connections was done in Spanish!



For the entire project this year (its eighth year) there were 1,950 classrooms that connected, representing 45,000 students from six countries and five languages. Read Around the Planet is one of many programs coordinated by Berrien ISD through their TWICE project. REMC 12 East (Calhoun and Branch) pays the TWICE membership fee on our districts' behalf. Projects at reduced TWICE membership rates (many are free) are listed at <http://www.twice.cc>

Data for Student Success

Regional Data Initiative Grant

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.

Middle School High School Summit: August 17 – 18, 2010. These two FREE days are part of that commitment. Keynote speaker: Doug Reeves! Breakout sessions will focus on assessments, creating conditions for success, leadership and Data Director. See the flyer at the end of this newsletter for registration information.

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Common Assessments

In the five year journey of working with DataDirector at CISD, one of the most important steps forward has been the recent movement toward the use of more common assessments. The advantage to looking at data from multiple districts on the same set of criteria is an important element in analyzing how students are performing and judging the quality of items being written. These benefits of using common assessments have driven the need for more work being done in this area in the past few years and plans for even more impact in this area.

It all began with using DataDirector to give the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Exam to test for proficiency in the technology curriculum. Use of this common assessment has become routine for most districts and beginning last year many districts began to utilize online testing to administer the exam. This year, thirteen districts and over 1,400 students participated. The data that is collected from this exam allows districts to determine the number of students proficient on the required technology standards. In addition, student performance can be compared to the curriculum taught to search for gaps in instruction or areas of teaching that need to be examined for improvement.

In addition to the 8th Grade Technology Literacy Exam, there have been many more common assessments added to DataDirector for use by any CISD district that chooses to use them. Districts can enter their DIBELS scores into DataDirector and retrieve a number of prebuilt reports using that data. This year, there are twenty-one buildings that are inputting DIBELS data into DataDirector. Also in the area of literacy, through a series of workshops held throughout the school year, a number of additional assessments were created so that districts could store their data in a common fashion in DataDirector. Writing Prompts, MLPP, and Running Records are just a few examples of the common assessments that were built to house this data.

Because of the work done over the past two years in the area of social studies, there are not only common units of instruction for grades K-12, but there are also common assessments for those units. These units and assessments have been constructed by teams of teachers from a number of districts throughout the Calhoun service area. The data collected from these exams have been used to analyze the quality of the questions that were created as well as the quality of the lessons that were written by the teams.

Add to this list the Battle Creek Math and Science Center Science Kit Summative Unit Assessments and the list of common assessments available to CISD educators continues to grow. Coupled with the power of DataDirector, districts have the ability to administer and deeply analyze a high number of quality common assessments. This list looks to grow in the near future and will give districts even more options for common assessments to utilize. This powerful resource continues to give teachers and administrators more data and language when they have conversations about curriculum. For more information and support, contact Tim Hall, School Data Consultant, hallt@calhounisd.org.

Did You Know?

Of the 1,410 8th grade students who completed the assessment:

- 93% have a computer at home
- 90% have access to the Internet at home
- 88% have an email account outside of school
- 81% have a social networking page (up from 75% in 2009)
- 90% have an MP3 player
- 24% spend three or more hours per day on the Internet outside of school
- 93% have a computer class in middle school

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Use of the REMC \$ave Project has saved Branch and Calhoun districts \$1.3 MILLION in 2009 over education pricing

Below is a break down by district showing the savings realized by utilizing the \$ave Project. Remember to go first to www.rembid.org for your purchasing needs. It saves you time and money!

	Total Educational List Price	Total REMC Price	Savings	Percent Savings
REMC 12E				
Albion Public Schools	\$167,420.77	\$107,745.85	\$59,674.92	35.6
Arbor Academy	\$16,667.68	\$11,480.47	\$5,187.21	31.1
Athens Area Schools	\$16,847.25	\$10,036.94	\$6,810.31	40.4
Battle Creek Area Learning Center	\$5,050.36	\$2,877.46	\$2,172.90	43.0
Battle Creek Public Schools	\$473,535.50	\$234,772.85	\$238,762.65	50.4
Bellevue Community Schools	\$95,258.38	\$63,607.03	\$31,651.35	33.2
Branch ISD	\$131,418.52	\$87,135.85	\$44,282.67	33.7
Bronson Community School District	\$53,680.91	\$36,525.21	\$17,155.70	32.0
Calhoun ISD	\$256,684.87	\$165,383.31	\$91,301.56	35.6
Coldwater Community Schools	\$378,756.92	\$209,248.68	\$169,508.24	44.8
Endeavor Charter Academy	\$9,577.76	\$6,014.51	\$3,563.25	37.2
Harper Creek Community Schools	\$595,262.00	\$478,553.48	\$116,708.52	19.6
Homer Community Schools	\$53,792.11	\$32,663.78	\$21,128.33	39.3
Lakeview Sch. District (Calhoun)	\$165,671.88	\$108,025.40	\$57,646.48	34.8
Mar Lee School District	\$17,096.66	\$10,510.40	\$6,586.26	38.5
Marshall Academy	\$1,677.98	\$1,188.00	\$489.98	29.2
Marshall Public Schools	\$108,786.24	\$68,517.33	\$40,268.91	37.0
Olivet Community Schools	\$755,227.33	\$401,311.49	\$353,915.84	46.9
Pansophia Academy	\$1,907.49	\$826.75	\$1,080.74	56.7
Pennfield Schools	\$102,759.43	\$78,663.03	\$24,096.40	23.4
Quincy Community School District	\$30,491.84	\$19,385.24	\$11,106.60	36.4
Tekonsha Community Schools	\$36,871.00	\$23,666.36	\$13,204.64	35.8
Union City Community Schools	\$31,706.09	\$18,215.35	\$13,490.74	42.5
REMC Totals	\$3,506,148.97	\$2,176,354.77	\$1,329,794.20	38.0

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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:

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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

2010/11 Meeting Dates

Zangle Planning, 8:30 – 11:10, Calhoun ISD

September 15, 2010, November 29, 2010, January 13, 2011, March 25, 2011, June 9, 2011

Data Director Key Contacts, 11:30 – 3:00 (with lunch), Calhoun ISD

September 15, 2010, November 29, 2010, January 13, 2011, March 25, 2011, June 9, 2011

Online Learning Users Group (Moodle), 8:30 – 9:30, Calhoun ISD

November 24, 2010, January 4, 2011, March 9, 2011, May 19, 2011

Educational Technology Meeting (TLC, RITC, Media Council), 9:30 – 12, Calhoun ISD

Lunch and Learn (TLC, RITC, Media Council), 12 – 1:30, Calhoun ISD

Open Meeting to Discuss Educational Technology Topics, 1:30 – 2:30, Calhoun ISD

November 24, 2010, January 4, 2011, March 9, 2011, May 19, 2011

Annual Educational Technology Symposium, 8:30 – 3:00, Calhoun ISD

September 9, 2010

Fiber Policy Advisory Committee, 1:30 – 3:30, Calhoun ISD

October 18, 2010, April 14, 2011

Cyborg Users Group, 2:00, Calhoun Area Career Center

September 15, 2010, October 20, 2010, November 17, 2010, December 15, 2010,
February 16, 2011, March 16, 2011, April 20, 2011, May 18, 2011, June 15, 2011

Finance Users Group, 1:30, Calhoun Area Career Center

September 16, 2010, December 10, 2010, March 11, 2011, June 10, 2011

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER SUMMIT

A REGIONAL DATA INITIATIVE (RDI)

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.

“Facing unprecedented challenges, teachers, administrators, and board members are easily tempted to give up their commitment to students. Fortunately, new research on morale and motivation suggests there are practical answers to these challenges. While the prevailing hypothesis has been that in difficult times, administrators should hide the data or use only the data most removed from teachers—school and system averages—to avoid direct discussion of student data, the best evidence suggests effective data analysis can build teacher efficacy. The variable of teacher efficacy—the conviction that teachers personally influence the results for students—is most powerfully associated with reductions in stress, anxiety, and burnout. We will consider how to use data in a powerful, constructive, and encouraging way that helps teachers, students, and the entire system to improve achievement and build staff morale.”

- Doug Reeves

Dr. Douglas Reeves will be our featured presenter on August 18, 2010. This is a two-day event, you must attend both days.

- AUDIENCE:** District Middle and High School Teams consisting of principals and teachers (both general and special educators) and counselors. Elementary participation will be determined if space is available.
- DATES:** August 17-18, 2010
- TIME:** 8:00am-3:00pm
- LOCATION:** Olivet College
- 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: June 15, 2010 (Elementary may register after June 15)
 - Each team member must register separately

Questions or comments?

Please contact:

Julie McDonald

269-789-2495 or mcdonalj@calhounisd.org