

# Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

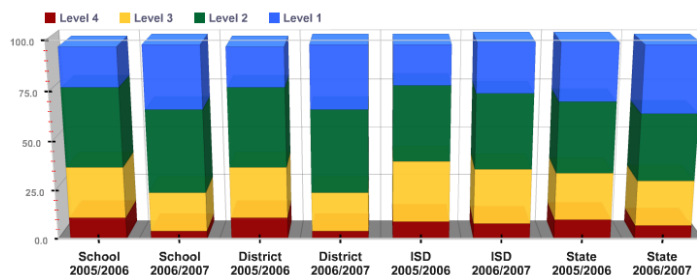
December 2007

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## Data for Student Success

### Data for Student Success

Calhoun ISD has received a continuation grant for funding the second year of the Data for Student Success project in the amount of \$1.5 million. This project is in partnership with Shiawassee and Macomb ISDs. During this funding year, we are also working with Barry, Branch, Clinton, Eastern UP, Gratiot Isabella, and Jackson ISDs. The goal is for the professional development model and tools around the use of data to inform school improvement planning to be available statewide during the project's third year, which will begin next summer. Though not as powerful as a data warehouse, this is a benefit for your school leaders as a historical tool to get access to MEAP data tied to SRSD, as well as historical MEAP and demographic state data on new students entering your district that can be loaded into Zangle/PowerSchool (rather than hand keying that data). Keep in mind, this is not meant to replace a data warehouse due to its inability to load local assessment data and special program data. But it is a beneficial historical inquiry tool.



Demographic Level	School		District		ISD		State	
	2005/2006	2006/2007	2005/2006	2006/2007	2005/2006	2006/2007	2005/2006	2006/2007
Year								
Level 1	40 (20.7%)	63 (32.3%)	40 (20.7%)	63 (32.3%)	395 (20.4%)	465 (25.0%)	36086 (29.0%)	41530 (34.2%)
Level 2	79 (40.9%)	83 (42.6%)	79 (40.9%)	83 (42.6%)	740 (38.2%)	721 (38.7%)	44798 (36.0%)	42358 (34.9%)
Level 3	51 (26.4%)	40 (20.5%)	51 (26.4%)	40 (20.5%)	612 (31.6%)	527 (28.3%)	30779 (24.8%)	28291 (23.3%)
Level 4	23 (11.9%)	9 (4.6%)	23 (11.9%)	9 (4.6%)	191 (9.9%)	149 (8.0%)	12634 (10.2%)	9327 (7.7%)
Percent Met	61.7	74.9	61.7	74.9	58.6	63.7	65.1	69.0
Percent not Met	38.3	25.1	38.3	25.1	41.4	36.3	34.9	31
Number of Students Assessed	193	195	193	195	1938	1862	124297	121506
Mean Scale Score	604.7	612.5	604.7	612.5	605	608.1	609.7	613.1

Here is an example of the inquiry tool showing a MEAP report with data across the school, district, ISD and state (see picture). This tool is being made available to our districts this school year, with statewide roll out next summer.

### DATA Director - Did you know?

- Rostering now occurs daily between Zangle and Data Director.
- The *become another user* function is available for key contacts to login as a user in their district.
- MME data is loaded and ready for custom reporting. The CISD is working with Achieve on a blueprint for pre-built reports with the MME data.
- Dibels assessments are available in Data Director. These assessments are linked to some powerful pre-built reports.
- Did you know that there are 3,052 questions in the item bank spread across all core content areas that are already linked to Michigan standards? Use these item bank questions to build powerful exams that link questions to Michigan standards.
- Online testing feature in Data Director will be available in March

**Data Director Key Contacts meetings** are at Calhoun ISD from 1:30 – 4:30 on January 15 and 1:30 – 3:30 on March 11, and May 13

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## Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

### **Online Learning – Blackboard**

Andy Mann, Educational Technology Consultant, has been working with many districts offering trainings in-district and at the ISD on the use of Blackboard as an online learning tool (in district training has been held at Olivet, Marshall, Coldwater, CACC, Albion). As of now, several hundred ‘courses’ (aka the online environment) have been created for and by teachers and staff to use in Blackboard. Some are using them to post classroom information; many others are incorporating the use of Blackboard to extend the learning beyond the classroom.

Blackboard software is hosted at Genesee ISD through a partnership agreement. The software itself is at significant savings through REMC pricing negotiations at \$4.50 per active user (staff and students). Calhoun ISD (REMC 12 East) is paying this cost this year and intends to for the next two years, unless active user counts go higher than expected (they are being closely monitored). Branch ISD is helping to pay a portion of the hosting costs to Genesee. This is a great collaborative project!

### **Blackboard –Did you Know?**

Instead of uploading a United Streaming movie to the Blackboard server, an instructor can just link to the movie. When a student clicks on the movie link, the movie is opened in Windows Media Player – no United Streaming login is required to play the movie. For an instructor to find this link, login to United Streaming, find the movie clip, play the movie in the browser window. Right click and go to Properties. Highlight and copy the movie location. This movie location link can be used just like a link to a web site, pasted into the body of an assignment or used as an external link.

### **Online Courses**

Credit recovery, advanced placement, and extended learning opportunities are abundant – online! Information on the wide variety of options available for students to take online courses has been presented to various groups, including high school principals and counselors. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact [oswaltm@calhounisd.org](mailto:oswaltm@calhounisd.org).

- Michigan Virtual High School, [www.mivhs.org](http://www.mivhs.org), Bob Currie, (800) 393-6052
- REMC Online Learning through Genesee ISD, [www.gennet.us](http://www.gennet.us), Mike Oswalt (269) 789-2439
- NovaNet, <http://www.pearsondigital.com/novanet/>

### **MediaNet – Your Online Video Registration System**

We have over 3,000 videos in our video library that we can deliver to you using our REMC delivery vans. Go to <http://media2.calhounisd.org/> to browse our catalog and make a reservation. Only online reservations are accepted. If you have questions, please contact Julie Halder at [halderj@calhounisd.org](mailto:halderj@calhounisd.org)

### **Did you know? Free/Open Source Applications - ZoomIt**

ZoomIt is a free Windows application that provides three different tools which can be accessed by pressing the CTRL key and either the 1, 2, or 3 keys. Ctrl + 1 zooms in on a portion of the screen. The mouse scroll wheel increases the zoom. This is perfect for showing a web address to a class. Ctrl + 2 changes the mouse into a highlighter with options to change pen color and automatically create rectangles, arrows, and squares. Ctrl + 3 changes the screen to a convenient countdown timer, defaulted to 10 minutes but easy to change. <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/sysinternals/utilities/zoomit.mspx>

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## **MySpace Safety to share**

Sharing information on MySpace or Facebook is a normal part of life for many teens. However, teens are often posting too much information – putting them at a potential risk. When working with teens, have them ask three questions when deciding if something should be posted:

- Could I share this with my parents or teachers?
- Would I want a college recruiter or job interviewer to see this?
- Could this allow someone to find me and put me in danger?

Other tips to share with teens:

- Do not fill in all the blanks on the profile page.
- Do not post photos of yourself or your friends.
- Do use a site's safety features to restrict access to your MySpace site to only invited friends.
- Finally – if you receive an e-mail invitation to be a friend from someone you do not know, delete it without opening it.

More practical tips on social networking safety can be found at: <http://onguardonline.gov/socialnetworking.html>

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology Literacy**

All districts are required, as part of NCLB, to report what percent of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are technologically literate. The Regional Instructional Technology Committee (RITC) met in November on a variety of topics, including reviewing the last two years of results from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade technology literacy exam. This committee consists of technology directors and educational technology staff from Barry, Calhoun and Branch counties.

Data Director was used to administer the tests in most of the districts in Calhoun and Branch counties. The test was collaboratively created by the REMC Association of Michigan and reviewed by RITC prior to administering it each of the last two springs to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The results from the last two years are:

	2006	2007
<i>Number Tested</i>	1179	1591
<i>Number Proficient</i>	625	617
<i>Number Not Proficient</i>	554	974
<i>Percent Proficient</i>	53.0%	38.8%

Proficiency level was determined to be scoring 69.1% or higher on the test. RITC discussed the results and have made plans for this school year's test as well as surmised why the results were lower last school year. Here is a summary of the conversation:

Reasons why the results were lower:

- The test
  - Upon review, four or five of the questions could have been worded differently
  - 2006 test had 72 questions, 2007 had 43 – it was a different test
  - Need to deliver first and second semester in order to administer during a class that has technology as a focus rather than as an add on to a class at the end of the year
- Curriculum
  - Technical vocabulary knowledge was a big part of the test – many shared that their teachers don't teach the vocabulary of technology, but the use of technology (though the technology standards have a section around vocabulary)

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- Many felt that the middle schools thought that elementary was teaching the technology basics and so didn't address them at middle school
- Teachers are not modeling the use of the terminology/vocabulary ('hardware', 'USB drive', etc.)

Now what?

- Curriculum
  - RITC to work together to share best practice in how districts are incorporating technology literacy into the core content areas rather than just a stand alone curriculum; this supports MDE's online learning requirement which includes having technology woven into all curricular areas.
- Test
  - Need to add performance based component to the test
- Professional Development
  - Provide more skill awareness to all staff through self help sites such as Atomic Learning, face to face training, and informational resources so that they can model technological literacy for students
  - Consider the value of having educational technology endorsements for teachers, which some universities offer

## ***Gerda Weissmann Klein Video Conference***

Monday evening, November 13 we were one of 13 sites around the country (universities and colleges) connecting students (college) to hear from and ask questions of Gerda Weissmann Klein – a Holocaust survivor. It was a very moving and powerful message and opportunity. Lakeview (specifically Gigi Lincoln, Media Specialist, and Scott Durham, social studies teacher) partnered with KCC so that they could bring 18 LHS student and 3 KCC students here to the Gifford Schultz Center to use our video conferencing unit to participate in the event. All sites listened to Gerda for 45 minutes and then each site was able to ask one question directly to Gerda. Here's an excerpt from the web site about the event and a picture from the event:



“Gerda Weissmann Klein, renowned motivational speaker and Holocaust survivor, teaches each one of us about tolerance, understanding and making a difference. Gerda Klein's spirit helped her survive six years under Nazi rule; through her story, and her unique perspective, she continues to help each one of us to understand the dangers of hate and extremism.” <http://www.magpi.net/programs/onesurvivor.html>

**Technology Leadership Council (TLC):** TLC meetings are at Calhoun ISD from 12 – 1:30 on January 15, March 11 and May 13

**Regional Instructional Technology Committee (RITC):** RITC meetings are at Calhoun ISD from 10 – 12 on January 15, March 11 and May 13

# Connecting Points Newsletter

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December 2007

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## *Business Office Connecting Points*

### **REMC Bid Book Process Change**

The most visible project of the REMC Association is the \$ave project (aka 'Bid Book'). When this project started back in the 1990s, ordering wasn't as easy as it is today, and turn around was more than 'next day.' As a result, we at Calhoun provided a 'warehouse' of commonly purchased items, and items that required a minimum spending for ordering. That way, if a district wanted just one three ring binder tomorrow or the next day through the REMC delivery, the order was filled and billed through Calhoun ISD rather than through the vendor directly.

Times have changed. Most vendors have lowered their minimum spending requirements and include one to two day shipping, making the order process much easier through the vendor. Also, districts in Michigan are no longer required to 'stamp' invoices as REMC endorsed. As a result, the purchase of the warehoused items at Calhoun ISD has dropped significantly. Also, as has always been the case, there is a 5% up charge to use the Calhoun ISD warehouse of supplies. Because the order processing with the vendors is significantly improved, next day or two shipping is available, and the purchasing from the warehouse is reduced, we will be discontinuing the REMC 12 East warehouse *effective December 14, 2007*. This is timed with the new bid book coming out January 1 when all ordering will be coordinated between the vendor and the district (as occurs now). We will be communicating this with the business offices in the next week, and will offer a sale on left over inventory items after the first of the year.

The Bid Book will continue to be a valuable project, saving the schools millions annually, and is available online at [www.remcbid.org](http://www.remcbid.org). Julie Halder, Andy Mann, and I continue to be available to answer questions about any products supported by REMC. The REMC vans also continue to deliver hundreds of packages/envelopes between districts each week. And of course, there are the other REMC services such as United Streaming, Blackboard, video conferencing, etc. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me.

### **SMART Finance Migration**

We currently have three districts that are completely using the SMART Finance System, and no longer using WISE Finance. Quincy has been using it all year, Coldwater went live Oct. 8th and Athens went live Oct. 25th. Wayne RESA has migrated 18 of their districts, with the remaining districts committed to migrating by the end of March. RESA would like to have ALL districts done by the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2008.

As problems arise in WISE Finance, the cure is to migrate to SMART Finance. Resources are being spent on improving the new finance package, rather than making tweaks in the old finance system. With this in mind, now is the time to become fully SMART, rather than half-SMART, and half-WISE. Please contact Joy Sommers to schedule your migration and training! She can be reached via email at [sommersj@calhounisd.org](mailto:sommersj@calhounisd.org) or via phone at 269.968.9203 extension 6139.

### **Did you know?**

- You can get one-on-one training on the finance software applications? All you have to do is ask! Joy can come to your office, or you can go to CDOT for some hands-on personalized training!

# Connecting Points Newsletter

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- If you use the Budget Module of SMART to make budget amendments, there is a history tab that will show who made the budget changes, and on what date. It also shows what the previous dollar amounts were. The history for the fiscal year budget information is at your fingertips!

## **Payroll/HR**

With the arrival of the New Year comes W-2 season. Preparations have been made for the smooth processing of W-2s. Last year W-2 processing was completed with little time, only ½ day per district, and pain in most part due to the preparations developed by your Payroll/HR consultants.

## **Required Tax Code Changes being incorporated in Cyborg**

Payroll and HR consultants at the CISD will be working with Wayne RESA to implement the new tax codes in Cyborg. Cyborg will be down December 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> while these changes are implemented. Arrangements have been made by the CISD consultants to provide support over the Christmas vacation for your district business offices.

## **Did you know?**

- You can access your Cyborg Users Meeting information on the CISD web site? You can also download all documents passed out at the meetings (forms, calendars, procedures, etc.) at [www.calhounisd.org/departments/technologyremc/payrollhumanresources/usermeetings/](http://www.calhounisd.org/departments/technologyremc/payrollhumanresources/usermeetings/)
- You can access absences by type (sick, vacation, personal, etc.) on the 93TSCR.

**Cyborg Users Meetings** are the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 2 – 4 p.m. @ CACC in All-Purpose room

**Finance Users Meetings** are at CACC at 1:30 on December 13 in the Garden Place Room, March 7 in All-Purpose Rooms and June 18 in All-Purpose Rooms

## *Student Services Connecting Points*

### **Zangle - Did you know?**

- The 2007.2 upgrade is complete and delivered to all districts.
- Online payments are available for food service at no additional charge.
- The CISD has written a custom reporting interface. Available reports include faculty advisor and athletic eligibility.
- Parents can opt to receive e-mail updates about their child's schools activities; including behavior, grades, attendance, announcements, etc sent to them from Parent connect. Turn this feature on to help keep your parents involved in their child's education.

**Zangle Planning meetings** are at Calhoun ISD from 8 – 12 on January 24, April 3, June 12

### *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.'

Mike Oswalt  
Assistant Superintendent  
Sam Lutgring  
Director  
Doug Smith,  
Director  
Help Desk

Regional Technology Services (REMC, Educational  
Technology, Data Director/Data for Student Success)  
Informational Technology Services  
(Zangle, Fiber, Technology Support)  
Organizational Technology Services  
(Cyborg, SMART, CISD Technologies)

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