

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

September 2007

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Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

Online Learning – Blackboard

As reported at the end of last school year, Calhoun ISD is providing access to Blackboard as an online learning tool for teachers/staff to use within your school districts. With Calhoun ISD paying the license and support costs, and Branch ISD helping with the maintenance costs, this tool is being provided free to the districts of Calhoun and Branch counties for up to 4,000 users. Andy Mann, Educational Technology Consultant at Calhoun ISD, is providing workshops for district staff on how to utilize this great online collaborative learning tool. Nearly all districts in Calhoun and Branch have expressed intent to utilize this new system. Each district has a point of contact for leading the implementation within their district.

One experience that will be added soon is Career Forward. Michigan Virtual Schools recently completed the version that we can load into our system. Please feel free to contact Andy Mann at mann@calhounisd.org with any questions.

Online Professional Development Portal – LearnPort

LearnPort has undergone a major upgrade. The Michigan LearnPort web based professional development delivery system was created in partnership with MVU and the Michigan Department of Education. School employees are provided up-to-date and flexible online professional development to help meet personal and district learning requirements. Michigan LearnPort provides high quality courses and content through a full set of web-based communication tools and offers full professional development record-keeping capabilities. One of those tools is free access to NetTrekker d.i. for teachers – an online portal of education focused web based resources. For more information, visit www.learnport.org.

2007 Macul/AT&T Student Showcase

K-12 schools from across Michigan are invited to participate in the seventh annual AT&T/MACUL Student Technology Showcase, held on Wednesday, September 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the State Capitol Building in Lansing. Student groups set up computers and other peripherals to show Michigan state legislators how technology is being used in the classroom to facilitate learning during one of two separate demonstration sessions in the morning and afternoon. To register for the event, or for further information, visit the MACUL website at www.macul.org.

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.

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

CACC Technology Enhancement Initiative

CACC will start the 2007-2008 school year with every student having access to a laptop or desktop computer. This is part of a bigger initiative to expand the use of technology throughout the center. The goal is to best leverage technology in support of the teaching of students. In the past many students had to share a computer. This limited how programs were able to utilize technology in their curriculum. Now

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students will have their own laptop or desktop while at the center so as to better provide for their education.

New technology in the form of projectors, more CPS units, sound enhancement and on-line learning courses in Blackboard are being integrated in many CACC programs. To assist in leveraging this new technology, our Educational Technology Consultant (Andy Mann) will assist the CACC staff in integration with their curriculum.

REMC \$ave Program

New to the \$ave program (new name for 'Cooperative Bid Program') is the ability to have a shopping list created online. Go to www.remcbid.org, choose the items you want, add them to the shopping list, and print your list at the end. This does not send the order to the vendor, but provides a print out by vendor that you can attach to your district's requisition/purchase order. This is a great tool to have your teachers identify the items they need and submit them to you for approval/purchase.

The REMC \$ave program saved the schools of Calhoun and Branch over \$1.1 million in 2006 and \$302K from January – June 2007. For questions regarding the products on the \$ave program, feel free to contact Andy Mann (manna@calhounisd.org) or Julie Halder (halderj@calhounisd.org).

Michigan Schools Online

The REMC Association has applied for the \$500K Michigan Schools Online grant. Through this grant, an online portal of online learning resources will be created as well as professional development resources identified. Much more information to come as the details unfold this school year. Andy Mann and Mike Oswalt are the contacts on this project for REMC 12East.

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 call (269) 781-5141.

United Streaming <http://remc.unitedstreaming.com>

57 school buildings in Calhoun and Branch counties have utilized United Streaming as an online video streaming tool for supporting curriculum. There are thousands of videos and clipart available for your use. If your building does not have access, REMC Association of Michigan has created a portal of 300 video titles (these are included in United Streaming if you have a paid subscription). To access the free site, visit the website and use the passcode of DBBA-D2EB. You do NOT need to do this if you already have a subscription. The subscription cost for 2007/8 for United Streaming is \$440 per building.

Technology Leadership Council (TLC): TLC meetings are at Calhoun ISD on September 11 from 2 – 3 p.m. and from 12 – 1:30 on November 13, January 15, March 11 and May 13

Regional Instructional Technology Committee (RITC): RITC meetings are at Calhoun ISD on September 11 from 1 – 2 p.m. and from 10 – 12 on November 13, January 15, March 11 and May 13

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Business Office Connecting Points

Finance

Districts now have the option to run their finance applications exclusively in the SMART package. Besides looking better, SMART has several advantages over the old terminal entry program of Wise. Some include:

- SMART is a real-time package. That means no more waiting for overnight refreshes of the data.
- SMART allows a user to see first how a journal entry will appear before posting the entry.
- SMART is easier to use because it offers features you are already familiar with in a Windows program, such as; menus, drop down lists and on-line help.
- New modules in SMART include the Budget module and an Accounts Receivable/Cash Receipts module. These are user friendly ways to enter data into the finance system.

Several districts have indicated a desire to move to SMART before year-end, they include; Coldwater, Athens, Olivet, Marshall and Pennfield. Quincy has been exclusively on SMART since last spring.

Finance – Did you know?

- SMART has a new budget module that allows a district to enter their original budget, amended budget and forecast budget via either an Excel spreadsheet or by direct entry in to SMART.
- The SMART financial program is not just for your business office. If your finance person at the building or department level needs to run financial reports for principals or administrators, they too can use the SMART financial package.

Human Resource – Did you know?

- Did you know that by mass loading attendance banks for a district the size of Battle Creek, you can save approximately 3 days of keying into individual files. Contact us at helpdesk@calhounisd.org to find out more!

Cyborg Users Meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 2 – 4 p.m. @ CACC in All-Purpose room (Sept 19 in Garden Room)

Finance Users Meetings are at CACC at 1:30 on September 14 in All-Purpose Rooms, December 13 in the Garden Place Room, March 7 in All-Purpose Rooms and June 18 in All-Purpose Rooms

Student Services Connecting Points

Student Service Highlights

- Career Center Model: Moves grades and attendance from CACC back into the Zangle schools. It also includes a variety of reports for counselors to identify schedule conflicts or attendance problems.
- Zangle: Parent Connect e-mail notifications – Parent can choose to receive email notifications about their students including food service balance, behavior, grades, announcements, and attendance.
- Zangle: Parent Connect On-line Payments for food service – Parent connect will connect with PayPal to allow the parent to make an on-line credit card payment for food service.
- Zangle: Linking standards to grade book assignments – Standards can now be calculated based on how a student performed on an assignment.

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- Zangle: Inventory management (textbooks) – Allows the scanning of barcodes to check in or check out inventoried items.
- Zangle: Mass e-mails from the front office – Allows you to send an e-mail to all contacts or a group defined in Zangle, like an athletic team.
- Zangle: LDAP – Allows the user to log into Zangle using their network log on credentials.

Student Service - Did you know?

- Zangle has the ability to use Light Weight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) for authentication? You can use LDAP to change the login screen for Zangle to accept your local network userid and password, this is what you use to log into your workstation every day. The big benefits of this are:
 - The end user only has to remember 1 user name and password.
 - You can implement your password rules on Zangle; ie. Password length and how often it must be changed. For information on this, contact helpdesk@calhounisd.org.

Zangle Planning meetings are at Calhoun ISD from 8 – 12 on September 20, November 29, January 24, April 3, June 12

Data Driven Connecting Points

Data for Student Success

This August 6 – 8 event brought community, district, regional and statewide leaders together to understand the importance of using data to focus school improvement efforts on student success. After the opening day key note speakers, district participants participated in sessions designed for their needs.

John Seita, PhD, Asst. Professor/MSU School of Social Work, challenged us to decide that “no odds are too great, no obstacles are too large, and no chasms are too wide to stop us from helping our youth to claim greatness.”

Mike Flanagan, State Superintendent, provided a video presentation. His point was that because the Michigan Merit Curriculum (Michigan’s new, rigorous high school standard curriculum) is the goal, this project provides a pilot model for using data to ensure that all students are successful.

Sue Carnell, Education Advisor to the Governor, spoke about the importance of this work for Michigan students; all of us working to help all students become successful productive members of Michigan’s workforce.

For the remaining three days, we had various group breakout topics. Our first professional development group (Cohort 1) continued their work with Calhoun ISD staff focusing on professional learning communities. Cohort 2 (the group who will start their professional development next month) and district key contacts for data warehousing had an overview of the Data 4SS grant and its first year activities, including the Data 4SS web based inquiry tool. In addition, Achieve Data Solutions provided an overview of the data warehousing tool Data Director used by nearly all the districts in Calhoun, Barry and Branch counties.



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For more information, see our web site under the DCIA department, or www.data4ss.org.

Year 2 of Data for Student Success

Calhoun ISD has been awarded a second year of funding for this grant (\$1.5 million). This is a great acknowledgement by the state for the work that Calhoun, Shiawassee and Macomb have spearheaded in the area of using data to help districts make informed school improvement decisions. Becky Rocho, Mary Gehrig and I have been planning year two activities. In order to build on the foundation established in the first year, focus areas have been identified for year two. The overall objectives of year two are:

1. Continue the **professional development** activities for the cohort of educators from year one's partner ISDs as well as identify a new cohort of educators
2. Enhance the data mining framework's **online dynamic inquiries** based on newly identified data sets and inquiries designed to inform school improvement planning, focus instructional interventions, and target resources to areas of need. This is a tool that will be provided by the state as a web based data mining tool (not a data warehouse).
3. **Expand the stakeholders** to include other educators in the Michigan (Jackson and Gratiot-Isabella ISDs)
4. Continue to **promote innovation of local data warehouse** initiatives in order to inform school improvement planning
5. Preliminary planning for the **expansion and sustainability** of the work into year three

We plan to continue our partnership with Shiawassee and Macomb ISDs in refining work done in year one and expanding the tools used for year two. In addition, we will work with up to two other ISDs who will take our model for data driven decision making and replicate what we have done for their regions (which was the one of the intents of the grant – to sustain and replicate the work).

Data Director Highlights – new features!!!

- MEAP Strand and GLCE Analysis - identify student performance on specific GLCEs.
- MEAP Percent Proficient Report - Quickly compare MEAP proficiency levels by content, year, district, school, and grade.
- MEAP Performance Summary Report - identify the percentage of students that scored within a given performance band from one year to the
- Data Entry Status Report - identifies students who do not have data in an assessment.
- Student Profile Report - report will allow you to mass generate student profiles for groups of students.
- Data Entry Status Report - identifies students who do not have data in an assessment.
- Student Profile Report -report will allow you to mass generate student profiles for groups of students.
- Dibels - Multiple reports can be derived from entering Dibels data directly into Data Director through the pre-built Dibels assessments
- Permissions- for reports, assessments, etc.. lists users only for the site you are logged into.
- Item Bank Search - Ability to search for a quoted string, including or excluding results, etc.

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| <p>Data Director Key Contacts meetings are and Calhoun ISD September 21 from 1 – 3 and 1:30 – 3:30 on November 13, January 15, March 11, and May 13</p> |
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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.'

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