

# Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

May 2008

[www.calhounisd.org](http://www.calhounisd.org)

## Business Office Connecting Points

### REMC \$ave Program – 2007 Savings for REMC 12 East

School districts in Calhoun and Branch counties saved **\$845,487.14** by using the REMC \$ave program to purchase equipment and supplies – that’s approximately **\$25 per student** in the two county region that can be used by the district for supporting other educational opportunities! The savings for each district are:

REMC 12E REMC Bid Usage Jan-Dec 2007					
	Quantity	Educational List Price	Total REMC Price	Savings	Percent Savings
Albion Public Schools	4,246	74,741.90	50,512.64	24,229.26	32.4%
Arbor Academy	16	602.75	109.90	492.85	81.8%
Athens Area Schools	5,931	33,027.73	20,134.73	12,893.00	39.0%
Battle Creek Area Learning Center	62	307.20	201.74	105.46	34.3%
Battle Creek Public Schools	29,815	529,265.36	358,630.92	170,634.44	32.2%
Bellevue Community Schools	2,514	21,237.82	14,859.83	6,377.99	30.0%
Branch ISD	7,676	137,197.29	90,048.27	47,149.02	34.4%
Bronson Community Schl District	7,811	105,912.51	68,860.66	37,051.85	35.0%
Calhoun ISD	14,035	311,900.42	180,960.84	130,939.58	42.0%
Coldwater Community Schools	10,592	162,666.75	95,572.73	67,094.02	41.2%
Endeavor Charter Academy	24	664.80	79.32	585.48	88.1%
Harper Creek Community Schools	20,749	123,647.94	74,663.12	48,984.82	39.6%
Homer Community Schools	8,306	57,532.14	33,099.06	24,433.08	42.5%
Lakeview Sch. District (Calhoun)	26,039	397,464.62	324,763.77	72,700.85	18.3%
Mar Lee School District	2,129	19,590.24	13,171.05	6,419.19	32.8%
Marshall Public Schools	11,023	143,525.36	98,149.87	45,375.49	31.6%
Olivet Community Schools	1,875	63,514.46	42,950.42	20,564.04	32.4%
Pennfield School District	11,199	250,289.22	184,865.08	65,724.14	26.3%
Quincy Community Schl District	14,816	119,507.82	79,735.84	39,771.98	33.3%
Tekonsha Community Schools	2,098	15,519.06	10,089.15	5,429.91	35.0%
Union City Community Schools	6,914	56,593.77	38,063.08	18,530.69	32.7%
REMC 12 East 2007 Totals	187,870	2,624,709.16	1,779,522.02	845,487.14	32.2%

### Fiscal Year End

Fiscal Year End is fast approaching. Joy Sommers, Calhoun ISD Finance consultant will be assisting, as in prior years, with the fiscal close by providing instructions and offering consulting.

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## **Finance: Did You Know?**

- If you are using the SMART Electronic Requisition Module, you can have two years of Requisitions open. These districts can enter Requisitions/Create Purchase Orders for both 2007/08 and 2008/09.
- Tired of having all that extra work to do after the Fiscal Close? With SMART Finance, districts can key Cash Receipt batches for the new Fiscal Year, and they don't have to be posted until the old Fiscal Year is closed out. Prepaid Check runs can be done and processed for 2008/09 before the 2007/08 fiscal year is closed out, and they won't hit the General Ledger until the new fiscal year.
- Does your district use Purchase Cards? We can easily export data from your Purchase Card program and import it into the SMART Program.

## **2008 REP**

The month of May and June is REP preparation time. The Calhoun ISD HR/Payroll consultants assist districts each year, as part of the normal consulting services provided, in the preparation and verification of REP submissions. REP reports are due to the state by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Changes in Retirement System Reporting**

ORS (Office of Retirement Services) has issued new regulations related to new MIP rates for the 2008-2009 school year. These regulations will take effect on July 1, 2008. The Calhoun ISD HR/Payroll consultants stand ready to provide assistance as needed to ensure you have updated your systems correctly.

## **HR/Payroll: Did you know?**

- Eight districts have moved to or are on the verge to moving to E-Voucher. Elimination of printed check vouchers is an easy cost cutting measure that can save a district both direct (in paper and printing supplies) and indirect (labor to manage and distribute) costs at no effort on the part of the district.
- Each district has the opportunity to save prior year tax information through the use of fiche. RESA has microfiche for the 2006 and 2007 W-2's for each district at no cost to the district in an effort to get districts to use this method of retention. We want to remind districts that this can be done with most payroll reports.

For more information on either of these, please give Carole McNamara or Sherry Williams a call and they will be able to assist you.

## **Annual Summer Picnic**

The second annual end-of-year summer picnic for both the Finance and HR/Payroll End User Groups will be held on June 18<sup>th</sup> at CACC. This is a great finale to the year's collaboration at end user meetings. More information will be forth coming.

**Following Annual Year-End Picnic @CACC, Cyborg Users Meetings** June 18 from 2 – 4 p.m. @ CACC in All-Purpose room and **Finance Users Meeting** is at CACC at 1:30 on June 18 in All-Purpose Rooms.

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## Data for Student Success

### Data for Student Success

A seven minute Data for Student Success overview video has been created. The purpose of this video is to highlight the project and its intent to provide data and a professional development model that together has the potential to greatly influence student achievement. Those of you with Cohorts in the project will also receive additional videos:

- 19 minute video – this video builds on the 7 minute video and showcases the importance of professional learning communities and their access to timely data in order to directly impact school improvement planning.
- Presentation video – each of the Cohort 1 groups did a presentation on March 6 to the Cohort 2 groups where they highlighted their work for the past year. These presentations were videotaped.

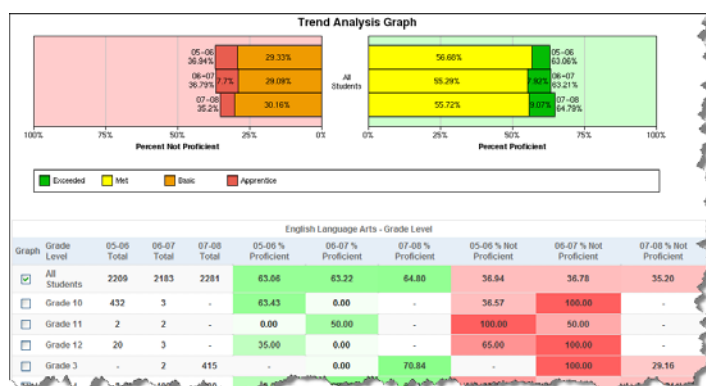
Your cohorts will most likely use these videos to not only inform their building staff of the work that has been occurring, but to help raise awareness district wide through curriculum/principal meetings as well as board meetings. You can also view the seven minute video at [www.data4ss.org](http://www.data4ss.org) in the overview section.

### Data Director: Did you know? Three new pre-built reports!

#### MEAP Percent Proficient Trend Analysis

which provides users with a Multi-tiered analysis of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) results with dynamic charts and graphs.

Results on the trend analysis reports will vary based on the group of students you select to compare. The different groups are below:



- Cohort Report: Students from a selected academic year and their scores for the selected test years (i.e. 2007-2008 students and their scores from 2007, 2006 and 2005)
- Limited Cohort Report: Students from a selected academic year that have results from the selected test years (i.e. 2007-2008 students who have scores in 2007 and 2006 and 2005).
- Year to Year comparison: Compares students and their results from one academic year to others (i.e. 2007-2008 students and their scores from test year 2007-2008 compared to 2006-2007 students and their scores from test year 2006-2007).

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**MME Percent Proficient Report** which provides proficiency results from the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) disaggregated by sub-groups. This report is similar to the MEAP Percent Proficient Report in that the graphing is stacked bar by optional selected sub groups.

**MME Percent Proficient Trend Analysis** which provides users with a Multi-tiered analysis of the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) results with dynamic charts and graphs. This will be beneficially in when the second round MME data is available.

**The last Data Director Key Contacts meeting of the school year is at Calhoun ISD from 1:30 – 3:30 on May 13**

## *Teaching and Learning Connecting Points*

### ***Writing your Technology Plan – it isn't just about technology!***

Why do districts have to write technology plans? Common answer: funding. To qualify for some grants, and particularly for USF reimbursements, districts must have an up-to-date technology plan on file. But how can districts use the technology planning process for more than just meeting a funding requirement? Best answer: proactive planning between technology and other departments.

MDE created a check list of essential items for writing a technology plan ([www.techplan.org](http://www.techplan.org)) several years ago, and it still is applicable today. When a district follows this check list they will not only meet the necessary 'technical' elements of the plan (such as describing district infrastructure) but also elements such as how technology is being incorporated in student learning and staff professional development.

Many districts' plans expire June 30, 2009. For a quality technology plan to be written, here are some milestones to consider:

- Summer 2008: District technology leadership reviews prior plan and identifies vision and initial goals for the next three years
- Summer 2008: District technology leadership meets with each district department leadership to identify key initiatives coming up in the next three to five years and collaboratively identifies if/how technology can support those initiatives through identifying goals/objectives
- Fall 2008: District technology committee is formed and reviews the goals/objectives (committee to include all stakeholders, including students and parents)
- Winter 2008: Draft of three year technology plan is written with review from each department leader
- April 1, 2009: Technology Plan is submitted to ISD through the MEGS system for recommendation for approval by MDE
- May 2009: Technology Plan is approved by district Board of Education

For more information, don't hesitate to contact Mike Oswalt at [oswaltm@calhounisd.org](mailto:oswaltm@calhounisd.org)

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## ***New Service from REMC 12 East: Supporting Internet Safety for Students, Parents and Staff***

As part of the REMC 12 East services, Calhoun ISD welcomes the opportunity to help districts design and implement their plan to address Internet Safety. In the initial meeting with the district technology and curriculum leaders, you will talk about your needs and develop a plan. Andy Mann, Educational Technology Consultant, is Calhoun's lead on this particular service. Andy's role is to assist and empower the district to take ownership of implementing the plan by building staff knowledge and expertise. Andy will help by first reviewing available resources and how these may be utilized to best address your district's needs. The goal is to help you feel comfortable so the ISDs services in Internet Safety are no longer needed (e.g. future student or parent presentations may be given by your principal, technology director, media specialist, etc.). All materials are referenced and available for you to use on the Calhoun ISD website (keyboard internet safety). Please contact Andy at [anna@calhounisd.org](mailto:anna@calhounisd.org) or 269.789.2421 to discuss your needs and discuss next steps.

## ***Web 2.0 Tools for Collaboration***

Educators continue to hear the term, "Web 2.0". What does Web 2.0 mean? Web 2.0 means that Internet users are now not just consumers of information but also contributors such as writing on a blog or creating a classroom wiki. Web 2.0 also means users now have the opportunity to work collaboratively on the same website or document (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2)). Web 2.0 tools are finding the way into the classroom in some exciting ways including wikis and shared documents. Wiki is Hawaiian for quick and it's the perfect name for online applications that allow teachers and/or students to work collaboratively to quickly create a website to support a class or project. [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com) and [www.pbwiki.com](http://www.pbwiki.com).

Another popular Web 2.0 application is represented by the group of applications which allow students to work collaboratively on the same online word processing document. Students may work on a group project from home or from school, simultaneously or at different times. Projects are designed so the teacher can view the project including what parts each student contributes and when. Popular collaboration tools include: <http://docs.google.com>, [www.buzzword.com](http://www.buzzword.com) and [www.zoho.com](http://www.zoho.com). These sites allow a teacher to upload a Word document as a template or start from scratch. When completed, the online collaborative document may be saved back to the desktop as a Word document. One issue schools must address to utilize these Web 2.0 applications is the need for student email accounts. Calhoun ISD Educational Technology Consultant, Andy Mann, is available to work with districts on utilizing these exciting Web 2.0 tools to support teaching and learning. Workshops are also being planned for this summer. Visit <http://pdreg.calhounisd.org> for more information.

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## **REMC A/V Repair**

Just a reminder that effective June 15, 2008, Calhoun ISD will no longer be providing audio/visual repair services. We still will repair overhead projectors that you deliver to use through the REMC delivery service by June 15, 2008. After that, we encourage you to explore other options. We understand, though cannot make an endorsement ourselves, that Bridges AV in Marcellus has been used by several schools in Kalamazoo county with success. Their contact is (800) 772-8228 or [bridgesav@aol.com](mailto:bridgesav@aol.com).

## **Pennfield Students Get Connected!**

Two groups of students from Dunlap Elementary came to Calhoun ISD to participate in the video conference "Mystery Quest" facilitated by Berrien ISDs TWICE (Two Way Interactive Connections in Education) program. Students prepared information in advance on their chosen city in the United States and presented clues about it via video conference to the listening classrooms around the country. Each classroom site had a different city to present. Then, each class used the Internet to search for answers to the clues to try to guess, based on their research, each classroom's presented city. If needed, they would ask the classrooms clarifying questions. It was a great interactive activity in support of research and collaboration. Connections were between each of these cities on these dates:



May 2:

Allendale Middle School, MI  
Floyd Elementary, Midland, MI  
Whitfield Elementary, West Lawn, PA  
Dunlap Elementary, Battle Creek, MI  
East Bradford Elementary, West Chester, PA  
Jefferson Elementary, Utica, NY

May 5:

Schmalz Elem, Houston TX  
Floyd Elem. Midland MI  
Whitfield Elementary, West Lawn, PA  
St. Clement School, Des Peres, MO  
Dunlap Elementary, Battle Creek, MI  
Western Hills, El Paso, TX

**The last Technology Leadership Council (TLC)** of the school year is at Calhoun ISD from 12 – 1:30 on May 13; **The last Regional Instructional Technology Committee (RITC)** of the school year is at Calhoun ISD from 10:15 – 12 on May 13

## *Student Services Connecting Points*

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

The 2008 Zangle National Users Group conference is May 13 – 15, 2008. Sam Lutgring, Tim Howard, Dave Reva and Mike Oswalt are attending. They look forward to giving you the latest information on enhancements for the 2008/9 school year at the June Zangle Planning meeting.

**The last Zangle Planning meeting of the school year is at Calhoun ISD from 8 – 12 on June 12**

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## **Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) – the new way to report data to the state**

Becky Rocho and I sent a memo in April that described, to the best of our current knowledge, the upcoming changes for reporting data to the state. While the data that is being reported isn't significantly changing, the manner and the frequency in which it is being submitted is drastically changing. Our intent is to not only provide your key data staff with relevant and timely information as we receive it, but for us both to raise concerns with our contacts at CEPI. Registration information is coming – hold the date for a workshop for Calhoun/Branch/Barry districts **at Calhoun ISD: Monday, August 18**, lunch (provided) through afternoon. Those responsible for handling data in your district should be in attendance (those who currently handle SRSD, REP, FID, etc.). MUCH more information to follow.

## **Connectivity Issue**

Our connection to Merit has been peaking during school days at 100+Megabytes (100M). That is outstanding! We definitely have a connected consortium! As a point of reference, when I started here in 2001, one of the first approvals I gave was to go from 1.5M to 4.5M – and was proud that we had tripled our bandwidth! You may be wondering how we are utilizing 100M of bandwidth when we only pay for 55M. Simply put, Merit has a 'friends and family' plan and only non-Merit bandwidth counts towards the 55M. But, we have been hindered by a simple fact – the interface between our fiber network and their fiber network was a slower interface card. That was upgraded May 12. However, we are not stopping there and are exploring opportunities to promote efficiencies; including bringing the SMART finance system to Calhoun ISD so that traffic associated with it only has to go on the connection to Wayne for nightly updates. We are working for you and will keep you updated throughout the summer.

Have a great summer!

Mike Oswalt  
Assistant Superintendent  
Regional Technology Services

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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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Help Desk		<a href="mailto:helpdesk@calhounisd.org">helpdesk@calhounisd.org</a>

## **2008/9 Meeting Dates**

		January 15, 2009	
		8:30 – 11:30	Zangle Planning
September 11, 2008		12 – 3	Data Director Key Contacts
8:30 – 11:30	Zangle Planning		
12 – 3	Data Director Key Contacts		
		February 11, 2009	
		1 – 3	Media Council
September 18, 2008		March 11, 2009	
8:30 – 1:30	Fourth Annual Educational Technology Symposium	8:30 – 11:30	Zangle Planning
1:30 – 3:30	Media Council	12 – 3	Data Director Key Contacts
		March 12, 2009	
November 13, 2008		8:30 – 9:30	Blackboard User Group
8:30 – 11:30	Zangle Planning	9:30 – 12	Regional Instructional Technology Committee
12 – 3	Data Director Key Contacts	12 - 1:30	Technology Leadership Council Lunch and Learn
November 20, 2008		1:30 - 2:30	Open Meeting for Technology Discussions
8:30 – 9:30	Blackboard User Group	May 13, 2009	
9:30 – 12	Regional Instructional Technology Committee	1 – 3	Media Council
12 – 1:30	Technology Leadership Council Lunch and Learn	May 21, 2009	
1:30 - 2:30	Open Meeting for Technology Discussions	8:30 – 9:30	Blackboard User Group
		9:30 – 12	Regional Instructional Technology Committee
December 10, 2008		12 – 1:30	Technology Leadership Council Lunch and Learn
1 – 3	Media Council	1:30 – 3:30	Data Director Key Contacts
January 8, 2009		3:30 – 4:30	Open Meeting for Technology Discussions
8:30 - 9:30	Blackboard User Group		
9:30 - 12	Regional Instructional Technology Committee	June 5, 2009	
12 - 1:30	Technology Leadership Council Lunch and Learn	8:30 – 11:30	Zangle Planning
1:30 - 2:30	Open Meeting for Technology Discussions		