

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

December 2011

www.calhounisd.org

Student Service Connecting Points

Skyward is recommended as new Student Information System

As you probably already know, Zangle (our Student Information System for the last 11 years) is being replaced with Skyward's Student Information System. We are currently ramping up for four local schools (Coldwater, Lakeview, Quincy and Calhoun Community High School) to pilot the system in the 2012-2013 school year. This will provide the opportunity to streamline/finalize processes such as conversion, training, rollout schedules, etc. before going live with all districts in the 2013-2014 school year. We are extremely excited about this system and all of the enhanced features (Integrated Standards Grade Book, Lesson Planning, Response to Intervention, and Course Planning just to name a few) that it will bring to our participating districts.



A team from Calhoun and Branch ISD as well as a representative from each of the pilot districts attended the Skyward Users Conference last month. They learned many exciting features currently used as well as being implemented.

SIS New Year

It seems hardly possible already, but it is time to start thinking about scheduling for the next school year 2012-2013. When you are ready please contact the help desk, helpdesk@calhounisd.org, and we will initialize the new school year in Zangle. This will provide staff the opportunity to begin working on the schedule and planning for the upcoming year.

Did You Know?

Skyward has

- 341 employees
- 30 years experience, 16 in Michigan
- 95 employees across the country working on product development
- 2 employees in Michigan
- 98 School Districts in Michigan

Technology Services Connecting Points

Technical Assistance

The CISD Department of Technology continues to provide technical leadership and support to our local districts. The CISD has taken on the role of providing all technology services to 4 local districts and continues to provide consulting services to more than 14 other local school districts. If you have technology projects or require technical assistance please feel free to contact Sam Lutgring.

Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

MACUL

A great of the resources of MACUL is the MACUL Journal. This quarterly journal has great information about current and upcoming trends in educational technology. You can find it at www.macul.org and click on the link to the MACUL Journal. This quarter's topic is iPads in Learning; last month's was Mobile Learning. Be sure to sign up now for the MACUL 2012 conference – the largest education conference in Michigan!

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Connected Superintendent

Last quarter's Connected Superintendent newsletter from REMC Association is included. Highlighted this quarter is blended learning. Calhoun ISD, as part of REMC 12 East, is supporting blended learning through several professional development opportunities that Melinda Waffle, Educational Technology Consultant, is offering. In addition, we are partnering with Ottawa ISD (REMC 7) to create an online course for teachers from around the state to take. The outcome of the course is that they will have a better understanding of and be able to model blended learning in their instructional practice. The partnership, if approved, is funded through REMC Association of Michigan and will help offset funds for Melinda's time.

Moodle 2 Themes Update

As most of you know, major updates occurred with Moodle 2! One of the updates that have not been so friendly to us was the re-writing of the Moodle themes. All the themes have been undergoing changes since September; some coming out with updates on a near daily basis. As a result, many of the bugs that existed in them have been worked out, corrected or otherwise removed.

For those of you with your Moodle site hosted at the CISD, the most stable theme updates will be loaded on your Moodle sites right before the holiday break. Many of these will replace the old ones currently on there. If you host your own Moodle site and would like to know which themes we have found to work well, look for the email telling that this update has occurred as it will include a list of which themes we are using.

Remember that at the January Ed Tech Meeting much of the Moodle time at the beginning of the meeting will be hands-on as we will be exploring how to customize themes in the web browser!

Upcoming Moodle Trainings for Teachers

There will be Moodle trainings offered for Moodle using teachers from 4:00 - 5:30 pm most Tuesdays from January 10 to March 27. These will be 90 minutes in length, covering a variety of topics and include the opportunity for participants to ask questions that are answered during the session.

These sessions will be offered virtually again this year. Adobe Connect will be used for these sessions so teachers may attend wherever they are if they do not wish to drive to the CISD. Like last year, it would be nice to offer locations - or "satellite location" - within the two counties that teachers can attend within a group setting and technical support, if needed. If you would like to offer to be a "satellite location" for any of these dates please let contact Melinda Waffle at wafflem@calhounisd.org and she will add that information to those individual days.

Teachers that are interested should sign up at: <http://pdreg.calhounisd.org>.

iPad Offerings

iPads are being implemented into many of our local schools during the month of December. Look for upcoming professional development offerings during the months of January and February to help support all our teachers that will be using this device as a teaching tool in their classrooms. If you are interested in hosting one or more of these sessions locally, please contact Melinda Waffle at wafflem@calhounisd.org to coordinate a date.

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Business Office Connecting Points

REMC \$ave Bid Project – the ticket to savings and cooperative purchasing!!

Below are the first six months of 2011 savings by district in Calhoun and Branch counties (REMC 12 East). In 2010, the districts in our two counties saved on average 42%, which represented **\$1.27M in savings!!** We continually remind districts to be sure to take advantage of this project not only for the savings, but for the bidding process having already been completed for them through Ingham ISD and REMC. Schools are able to look through the items at www.remcbid.org.

REMC 12E	Quantity	Education List	REMC \$AVE Sales	REMC Savings Amount and Percent	
Albion Public Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	753	\$58,347	\$52,635	\$5,713	9%
Arbor Academy District Totals Jan-June 2011	683	\$16,745	\$11,530	\$5,215	31%
Athens Area Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	221	\$14,057	\$10,072	\$3,986	28%
Battle Creek Area Learning Center District Totals Jan-June 2011	32	\$529	\$360	\$168	31%
Battle Creek Public Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	11,433	\$117,844	\$87,733	\$30,111	25%
Bellevue Community Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	82	\$940	\$501	\$439	46%
Branch ISD District Totals Jan-June 2011	1,547	\$52,178	\$37,441	\$14,737	28%
Bronson Community School District District Totals Jan-June 2011	4,786	\$33,323	\$16,802	\$16,521	49%
Calhoun ISD District Totals Jan-June 2011	6,495	\$346,443	\$240,305	\$106,139	30%
Coldwater Community Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	5,188	\$99,185	\$60,036	\$39,150	39%
Harper Creek Community Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	1,253	\$58,504	\$49,690	\$8,813	15%
Homer Community Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	268	\$6,697	\$5,492	\$1,205	17%
Lakeview Sch. District (Calhoun) District Totals Jan-June 2011	4,082	\$115,186	\$80,631	\$34,556	30%
Mar Lee School District District Totals Jan-June 2011	537	\$10,514	\$7,743	\$2,771	26%
Marshall Public Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	2,056	\$46,706	\$28,983	\$17,722	37%
Olivet Community Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	602	\$20,399	\$12,850	\$7,549	37%
Pansophia Academy District Totals Jan-June 2011	20	\$671	\$353	\$318	47%
Pennfield Schools District Totals Jan-June 2011	3,199	\$72,621	\$57,244	\$15,377	21%

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REMC 12E	Quantity	www.calhounisd.org Education List	REMC \$AVE Sales	REMC Savings Amount and Percent	
Quincy Community School District					
District Totals Jan-June 2011	4,727	\$50,847	\$29,593	\$21,254	41%
Tekonsha Community Schools					
District Totals Jan-June 2011	214	\$52,483	\$43,424	\$9,059	17%
Union City Community Schools					
District Totals Jan-June 2011	127	\$6,335	\$4,277	\$2,058	32%
REMC 12E Totals	48,305	\$1,180,554	\$837,691	\$342,863	29%

CEPI-FID:

November 15th was not only the start of deer hunting season, it was also the deadline for districts to submit their 2010-2011 financial information to CEPI. Finance Consultant Joy Sommers assisted several districts in extracting their financial information from the SMART finance system, and uploading it to CEPI-FID. Most districts were done before the due date! Joy provided one-on-one assistance to finance personnel either at their district or at CDOT offices at CACC (so as not to be interrupted). FID was due 11/15/2011; if not submitted, districts don't get their December State Aid Payment! Contact Joy Sommers for more information on this topic.

1099:

January 2012 is fast approaching, and your Finance staff will be issuing 1099's to various vendors as determined by IRS Regulations. Finance Consultant Joy Sommers is available to help your staff with this process. Recipient copies must be postmarked by January 31, 2011. Federal & State copies of the 1099's will be transmitted electronically for all our districts that use the SMART 1099 Module. Districts are responsible for any city copies that may be necessary. Districts are provided a list of what cities require copies of 1099's. Districts are NOT charged for the 1099 Forms – this is included in the consortium fees you pay. If a district does 1099's on their own without using the SMART 1099 Module, there may be additional expense to purchase the necessary forms. Also, the district would be responsible for all taxing authority submissions.

Transaction Analysis

Are you aware of all the SMART Finance System has to offer your district? Transaction Analysis allows a user to look up their budget information – what the budget is, what the year-to-date actual is, remaining budget balance, last year's actual. The information for several fiscal years is available in Transaction Analysis so you can compare prior years. Other modules of the SMART program are: Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable/Billing/Cash Receipts, Budget Load, Employee Analysis, Journal Entries, Ledger Maintenance, Payroll Encumbrance, Requisition/Electronic Purchase Order, PO Maintenance, PO Receiver/Invoice, Salary Schedule, Vendor Maintenance, and Security.

If you would like an overview of these, please contact Joy Sommers.

Did You Know?

The fee you pay for consortium services includes virtually unlimited technical support from the Department of Technology Consultants? Joy Sommers is available to come to your district for one-on-one support when needed, or your staff may go to CDOT/CISD for one-on-one assistance. Joy also offers refresher training whenever requested. If one of your finance staff is having difficulty in SMART, have them contact Joy for assistance. Many districts seek assistance both for SMART and for business process procedures throughout the year. We are pleased to provide this as part of consortium membership.

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2011 Year End:

We are in year-end mode which means it is time to make sure that district files are “error free” in order to proceed to the year-end process. At this time of the year, we check the master file status of all of our districts and alert them of any problems that would prevent the processing of W-2’s. We work with any district that has payroll issues to insure that the year-end process will be error free. We like to make any corrections prior to year-end so that we can run them through a payroll to prevent additional maintenance runs at the end of the year. By doing this, when the last pay run in December is processed, all errors have been corrected.

If you have questions regarding any of the information provided in this message, please contact Sherry Williams or Carole McNamara.

W2 Workshops:

The CISD HR/Payroll consultants will be offering W-2 Workshops again this year in our CDOT lab at CACC. Districts can come into our lab with their balanced year to date worksheets. Your payroll consultants will work with you to balance your worksheets to the information in the payroll system. When you leave it will be with W-2’s in hand. Each year CDOT revisits the steps in the process looking for ways to simplify the process. The process now only takes around 2 hours from start to finish. Contact us for more information!

Fringe Benefits Module:

Effective with the 2012 tax session the IRS has mandated that all employers must disclose fringe benefit information on W2s. To meet this mandate all CISD consortium districts have been set up to utilize the Fringe Benefit module in Cyborg. By January 1, 2012 all CISD consortium districts will be fully utilizing the Fringe Benefit module.

Data for Student Success

DD Training Opportunities

Are you looking to shore up your DataDirector skills this winter? Mitch Fowler, Calhoun ISD School Data Consultant, will be offering several regionally DataDirector training opportunities between December and February. Sessions geared towards administrators and teachers will be offered at the beginner and intermediate level. In addition, Mitch will be training on topics such as mobile devices and DataDirector, using DataDirector as a formative assessment tool, and DataDirector for the technology leader. For more information on these trainings, please visit: www.pdreg.calhounisd.org and search keyword DATA.

Did You Know?

- If you have a payroll emergency, and your payroll person is not in the office and you need assistance, you can call our office and we will be happy to work you through the emergency? This not only helps you, but in turn, prevents miscalculations and errors that have to be fixed later. (269) 789-2474
- Did you know that there is a new law relating to electronic payment of payroll? Check it out at [here](#).

Did You Know?

- DataDirector usage is up nearly 25%! Since school has started, over 1,900 users have logged in to DataDirector over 20,000 times! At this time last year, there were 1,500 users logging in roughly 15,000 times.
- DataDirector will go offline on December 22nd and return as DataDirector 4.0 on January 2nd! We are eagerly awaiting the many enhancements that DataDirector 4.0 will bring.

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DataDirector for Mobile Devices

Are you maximizing DataDirector with your district's mobile technology? There are several features of DataDirector that play nicely with a smart phone, iPod touch, or Android tablet.

Checkboxes

Users who create an assessment using checkbox question types will find collecting data easy. Whether monitoring notes during a math lesson or an administrator observing a teacher, checkboxes on DataDirector are an easy way to collect data.

Displaying 1 - 50 of 11,704 teachers

	Save	Save and return to results	Locked	Discussed math concepts	Interacted with peers
+ ,Jeni				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
+ ,STAFF/ENG				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
+ ,STAFF1				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussed math concepts	Interacted with peers	Date Observed	Save	Save and return to results
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

November 2011

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Calendars

Looking to quickly record the date of a recent writing conference? Try adding a date field to any assessment to quickly collect today's date.

Online Assessments

If you have multiple choice exams AND mobile devices, you should be using online assessments. By providing students with an easily generated access code, students can use their iPod touches or Android tablet devices to record their answers into DataDirector. Once the student is complete, he or she submits their responses and DataDirector offers immediate results.



Please enter your test key here:

Communicating Cut Score Information with Parents

With many local schools searching for ways to deal with the newly adopted MDE cut scores for MME and MEAP, some find comfort in a communication toolkit provided by the Ottawa ISD. These resources include an informational PowerPoint, quick facts, and customizable newsletter article all geared towards parents. For information on the communication toolkit, visit

<http://www.oaisd.org/oaisd/departments/instructionalservices/meapmme/>

MI School Data



In early November, the MDE went public with the MI School Data portal. The aim of this new data source from the MDE is to provide the public with achievement, financial, staffing, and geographic data. Included in the site are links to a school district's percent proficiency on MEAP, MME, MI Access, and ACT. These scores have been back mapped to reflect the new cut scores established by the MDE during early August. In addition, the MDE has provided principal effectiveness ratings that were submitted by all local school districts during the 2010/2011 school year. Visit www.mischooldata.org.

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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:

Help Desk	Main Contact for Calhoun Department of Technology	helpdesk@calhounisd.org 269.789.2474
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, Skyward, 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

2011/12 Meeting Dates

Skyward Planning (formerly Zangle Planning), 8:30 – 11:30, Calhoun ISD

- January 10, 2012, March 14, June 6

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

- January 10, 2012, March 14, June 6

Educational Technology Meeting, 8:30 – 3 (with lunch), Calhoun ISD

- January 18, 2012, March 21, May 17

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

- April 12, 2012

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

- 3rd Wednesday of Month

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

- February 29, 2012, June 7



President's Message

The REMC Association of Michigan continues to focus on and support online learning. The Michigan Learns Online Portal, supported by the REMC Association, makes available professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators, shares online and blended learning instructional materials and provides access to free online high school courses for teachers who want to teach online or in a blended environment. Lower aggregate pricing for Learning Management Systems used to teach online is available through the REMC \$AVE Bid Project

This year the Association will center its online learning focus on expanding support for blended learning. This year's quarterly issues of *Connected Superintendent* will provide you with

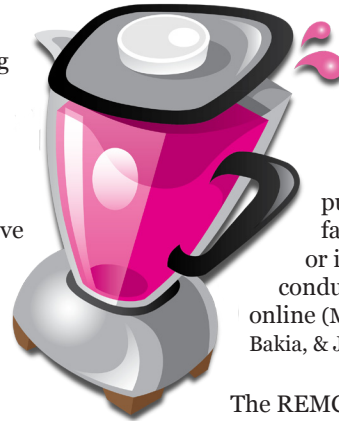
(Continued on back)

Blended Learning – What Is It?

“Blended learning means many things to many people. It is referred to as both blended and hybrid learning, with little or no difference in the meaning of the terms among most educators. In general terms, blended learning combines online delivery of educational content with the best features of classroom interaction and live instruction to personalize learning, allow thoughtful reflection, and differentiate instruction from student to student across a diverse group of learners.” (iNACOL)

A growing number of schools in Michigan are moving to a combination of face-to-face classroom instruction and online instruction. Whether they call it

blended or hybrid research has shown that this combination of effective instruction, social learning and technology-enhanced online materials had a larger advantage relative to purely face to face instruction or instruction conducted wholly online (Means, Toyama, Bakia, & Jones, 2009).



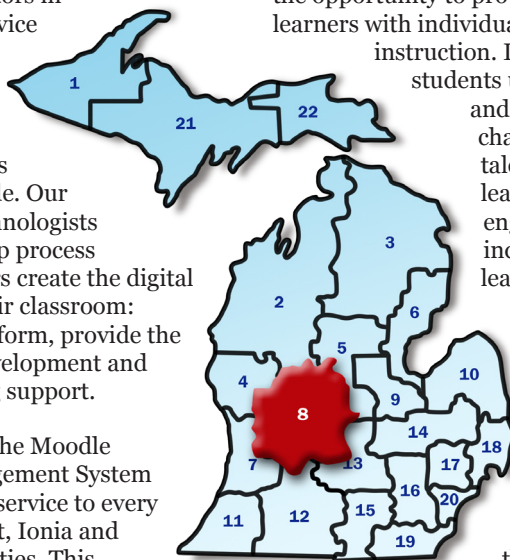
The REMC Association has committed to further supporting educators in blended learning through the development of a *Teaching and Learning in a Blended Environment* course during this school year. The content of

(Continued on back)

FOCUS ON... REMC 8 – Kent, Ionia and Montcalm Counties

Helping educators in the REMC 8 service area create high quality learning experiences for their learners is a point of pride. Our educational technologists have a three-step process to help educators create the digital extension of their classroom: Provide the platform, provide the professional development and provide ongoing support.

REMC 8 offers the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) as a free service to every educator in Kent, Ionia and Montcalm Counties. This LMS provides learners with courses that wouldn't otherwise be available; teachers get near-instant learner assessments and



the opportunity to provide their learners with individualized instruction. It gets students up to speed and on track, challenging talented learners and engaging individual learners.

Beyond the platform, we help our educators learn how to create a course that is more than just a digital version of their classroom work. We spend a great deal of time helping educators understand how to incorporate the principals

of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into their courses. This PD helps them understand how to create compelling and engaging learning experiences for all learners, from students with disabilities to the gifted and talented.

Finally, we provide ongoing support for educators on a daily basis, helping with troubleshooting, user account management and how-to questions. This layer of localized support is an essential success factor for blended learning to function in our schools.

We strongly believe that blended learning is what will define good schools in the future and are here to provide expert support to our constituent districts.

Ron Houtman, REMC 8,
rhoutman@kentisd.org

Blended Learning Models and 21Things4 Students

There isn't a right or a wrong way to incorporate blended learning within instruction. Schools are implementing this instructional approach because they believe it is helping their students, and, they are implementing it in a variety of ways.

The Innosight report, *The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning*, identifies six blended learning models or clusters.

- 1 The "face-to-face driver" model, in which a teacher in a traditional classroom instructional setting employs online learning for remediation or supplemental instruction;
- 2 The "rotation: model", in which students move back and forth between online and classroom instruction;
- 3 "Flex," a model in which the curriculum is delivered primarily through an online platform, with teachers providing onsite support;
- 4 The "online lab" approach, wherein an online course is delivered in a physical classroom or computer lab;
- 5 "Self-blend," a model in which students choose on their own which courses they take online to supplement their schools' offerings; and
- 6 The "online driver" model, where the courses are primarily online and physical facilities are used only for extracurricular activities, required check-ins, or similar functions.

These models/clusters will change and evolve as new versions of blended learning develop and are implemented within K-12.

The recently launched REMC 21Things4Students (21things4students.net) supports the shift from face-to-face instruction toward the blended learning environment. It is aligned to the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S), the Michigan Educational Technology Standards for Students (METS) and the Framework for 21st Century Learning (Partnership for 21st Century Skills).



In the 21Things4Students virtual classroom, students in grades 6-12 use web tools, instructional videos and online activities to create a digital portfolio of project based learning activities. The Teacher Resource pages provide course

administrators with supporting documents, materials, rubrics for evaluation and additional activities for enrichment and re-teaching.

The 21Things4Students course can be taught in ways that support many of the six blended learning models. It can be offered as a supplement to instruction (face-to-face model), through integration into current curriculum/content (rotation model) or by offering it as dedicated course (flex model). As 21Things4Students evolves it will support more of these blended learning models.

(PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued)

a better understanding of blended learning, why we believe blended learning is important and specific examples of efforts we will be engaged in this year that support blended teaching and learning.

*Tim Davis, REMCAM President
REMC 3/9, tdavis@sisd.cc*

(BLENDED LEARNING continued)

this online course will help Michigan teachers transition from face-to-face instruction to a blended learning instructional setting.

Watch for more information on this REMC developed course in future *Connected Superintendent* newsletters.

Coming Soon

REMC Connected Educator Series

- Twenty seven screencasts available over the course of the school year starting in December 2011
- Michigan teachers in action using technology in instruction
- Accessible through REMC MI Streamnet and MACUL MI Learning

75% of school districts had one or more students in a fully online or blended course

K-12 online learning student enrollments are growing 30% annually