

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

Web Connecting Points

Calhoun ISD doubles the K-12 connection to the Internet at no additional cost to districts!

Effective March 1, 2009, K-12 access to the Internet will go from a garden hose to a fire hose. Before then, our connection size (bandwidth) was 55 megabytes (M) with allowances to go to 110M for connecting to others also using Merit (our Internet provider). Starting March 1, that connection will be a total of 200M no matter the location of the website being visited. This was done primarily because of the increase in reliance on web based resources for educational purposes by our K-12 consortium. Calhoun ISD was able to avoid increasing the district fees for this increased connection because of a recent sale of excess bandwidth that provided some revenue. That revenue is being used to offset the increase in cost to Merit.

Please continue to monitor appropriate use of bandwidth (limit streaming audio for non-educational use, for example) while you enjoy less slowness issues during peak usage times due to this increase to 200M!

Business Office Connecting Points

Attendance Report for Staff

Calhoun ISD and Wayne RESA have been working jointly to develop a reference site for employees to be able to access their absence records. eAttendance will allow employees to see their sick, vacation, or personal leave taken for the current fiscal year. eAttendance will be available for employee use July 1, 2009. This will be accessed in the same way as eVoucher. This supports one of the strategies in this region's 2020 Vision, "empower educators with ample and reliable access to resources that is easily and readily accessible through multiple means."

SMART Requisition/Purchase Order Module

We currently have 10 of our 16 districts using the Electronic Requisition/PO Module of SMART which prepares purchase orders. The Requisition/PO module streamlines and automates the requisition/PO process in many ways.

- A user creates a requisition identifying what is to be purchased and what account(s) to charge.
- The requisition goes through an electronic approval process complete with email notifications
- If approved, a purchase order will be created, and sent to the vendor. If denied, it goes back to the requestor for adjustment or deletion.

From an accounting perspective, the creation of the requisition removes funds from the available balance in the charged accounts and places the funds in "requisition reserve." When the requisition becomes a purchase order, the funds are moved from "requisition reserve" to "encumbered." If your district is not yet utilizing this module of SMART, please contact Finance Consultant Joy Sommers.

Connection to Merit: Did You Know?

- In 2001, we increased our connection to 4.5M
- In 2003, we increased our connection to 20M
- In 2005, we increased our connection to 35M
- In 2006, we increased our connection to 55M
- In 2009, at 200M, our connection is nearly 4500% bigger than in 2002
- This increase supports our regional 2020 Vision that has "Empower educators with ample and reliable access" at the core of many of its strategies

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

Cyborg Job Libraries

The Calhoun ISD has been working with districts to clean up their TSO Cyborg Libraries. The goal is twofold; to eliminate unnecessary jobs that clutter up everyone's libraries and to highlight potentially helpful jobs that districts may not be aware of. Towards this last goal, we will be categorizing and defining all Cyborg jobs. Once this process is complete, by July, the results will be communicated to all districts. This process will also be necessary for the migration of the TSO jobs to the new SMART finance system.

SMART Security Module

Wayne RESA has released a new version of the Security Module for the SMART Program.

The Security Module provides a process to allow users secured access to the various modules within the SMART System. Using this Security Module, user application access can be limited or expanded to meet the security needs within each district.

The latest features added include:

- Password Policy – length of password, special characters in passwords, password expiration rules, and number of entry attempts can be tailored to the needs of a district;
- Reports – Log-in history and module access information is available in report format.

Calhoun ISD is the first and only district in our region to implement the new Security Module. These new features should be put to use by each of our districts in order to be in compliance with auditing requirements. Please contact Finance Consultant Joy Sommers at sommersj@calhounisd.org for more information.

SMART 1099 Module

Fifteen of our 16 districts used the SMART AP1099 Module to prepare their Federal Form 1099-MISC for 2008. Most districts did them on their own, while others preferred to work with our Finance Consultant to get them done. The grand total of 1099's generated by the 15 districts was 552. The benefits of using the SMART AP1099 Module include automatic electronic filing of the 1099 File to the Federal & State governments.

Finance and HR: Did You Know?

- Many of the improvements that have been made to the various modules of the SMART program over this past year have been suggestions from CDOT districts. Keep those ideas coming in!
- CDOT printed approximately 8,300 W-2's for 16 school districts? By working together, we were able to reduce the normally labor intensive process of creating and printing W-2s to approximately 1 ½ hours per district.
- By accessing the 09-SCR in Cyborg, you can get a complete Employee Status History from date of hire to current employment status?

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

MS Office for \$75 for Students and Faculty

The REMC \$AVE Project has worked with Microsoft and CDW-G to provide students and faculty an opportunity to purchase full versions of Microsoft Office and other MS software at discounted prices. Orders are made directly through CDW-G through their MS Student and Faculty Select Program. Proof may be required to demonstrate orders are being placed by a student or faculty member. The school has no involvement in the process. Examples of the discounts: MS Office Professional Plus (2007) for Windows is \$75.60 and includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, Publisher, and Communicator. MS Office 08 for the Macintosh is \$73.80. To place an order start at: www.cdwg.com/remc and select the link for "Student/Faculty Select." If you have questions, contact Erin Lupo from CDW-G: erinlup@cdwg.com 866-924- 7362.

Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

Learning how to Teach and Learn Online

Educators from Pennfield, Calhoun ISD, Tekonsha, Battle Creek, Bronson, Union City and Homer Schools are currently attending the course 'Teaching and Learning Online.' This course is offered through Calhoun ISD and is funded by the REMC Michigan Schools Online grant. Attendees will learn strategies of how to teach effectively online and how to promote learning by first attending a face to face session, then taking the class online for four weeks. As a result of this course, educators will be equipped to begin applying their learning in their classroom or with professional development.



This course supports the Regional 2020 Vision strategy of 'empower educators with ample and reliable access to collaborative opportunities and professional development that is easily and readily accessible through multiple means.'

If you have staff attending Macul (www.macul.org), this course will be offered there as well as a pre-conference (SIGPL 4). Macul is a great opportunity to gather information on anything related to educational technology from the classroom to the board room. If a district sends a staff person, their superintendent attends for free! March 18 – 20, 2009 in Detroit. www.macul.org

Blackboard Supports Professional Learning Communities

NCREL states, "The term *professional learning community* describes a collegial group of administrators and school staff who are united in their commitment to student learning." The research concludes, "...the professional learning community is seen as a powerful staff-development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement." Nearly every district and administrator is involved with a professional learning community of one form or another. Shared challenges for any professional learning community are communications and finding time to meet and discuss topics. There are also issues to be worked out around how to share information, documents, and websites. Blackboard, the popular learning management system provided by Calhoun ISD, is the perfect solution.

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/currclum/cu3lk22.htm>

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

In a recent workshops Albion administrators and Branch ISD consultants learned to customize their own PLC organization in Blackboard by creating areas for discussions, video clips, web links, and documents. They learned how to organize their information using folders and utilize a discussion board subscription option so users can receive an email when something new is posted. The PLC sites they created can be left private, requiring a user login and password, made public, or have some sections public while other sections are left private. Members of their PLC may include more than just school staff and may include students, community members, or those outside the district.

If you would like to learn more about how to use Blackboard to support your professional learning community contact Andy Mann, CISD Educational Technology Consultant, at manna@calhounisd.org.

Kids get Connected – 2009 Read Around the Planet

Calhoun ISD once again hosted several video conferences for the annual Read Around the Planet event. The program, in its eighth year, supports the national Read Around the Planet event promoting reading in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 2. Local schools bring their students to the Calhoun ISD where they are provided conference room space as well as the video conferencing technology. While the use of video conferencing is exciting for the students and their teachers, the purpose of the event is to have students read to each other. On the day of their 45 minute connection, each class of students will take turns reading to each other as well as asking about each other's community and school.



During the last week of February and the first week of March, six classrooms from Marshall and Albion School Districts will visit the ISD to connect to other classrooms in the country. Those visiting Calhoun ISD this year will connect to classrooms in: Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, Michigan and Texas. Paul Moore, CISD Technician, coordinated the connections. Pennfield Schools hosted their own Read Around the Planet event this year with newly purchased video conferencing equipment. Congratulations!

Data for Student Success

Did you know CISD been leveling the data playing field?

A commonly unseen service provided for consortium districts is the ability for CDOT staff to move data between software systems without intervention by local school district staff. Examples include transfers between Cyborg and Zangle for teacher data, Zangle and Food Service, Zangle and payments for fees/fines, FOCUS and SRSD/Dec 1, SMART and Cyborg for payroll data, Career Center grades and attendance to districts, and Zangle and Data Director. We also work with district staff to help them easily move data between Zangle and district specific programs such as library catalogs.

This supports this region's 2020 Vision in the strategy designed to "empower leaders with ample and reliable access to data that is easily and readily accessible through multiple means."

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

CISD will fully fund Data Director for districts in Calhoun and Branch through the 2009/10 school year

This is a change from what was previously reported where CISD and Locals were going to share the expense beginning in 2009/10. Thanks to the review of the auditor's report, the amount available in the technology consortium fund was slightly higher than anticipated. Recall that superintendents in 2004 approved using that fund to pay for a data warehouse. As a result, the funding plan for Data Director is as follows:

- CISD funds the data warehouse January 2005 – June 2010 and provides consultation and technical support at no additional cost
- CISD pays \$1.90 per student for the 2010/11 School Year and provides consultation and technical support at no additional cost
- Local Districts pay \$4 per student for the 2010/11 School Year
- CISD provides consultation and technical support at no additional cost
- Local Districts pay \$5.90 per student for the 2011/12 School Year and each school year thereafter

Data for Student Success goes Statewide!

Calhoun ISD continues to lead the Data for Student Success project, in partnership with Michigan Department of Education and Center for Educational Performance Information (CEPI). Our model is to train ISDs/RESAs so that they in turn can use the professional development modules and materials, along with the data inquiry tool, with their local school districts. As of March 1, 30 ISDs/RESAs have attended events conducted by CISD staff. There are also over 1,200 user accounts in the D4SS Inquiry Tool. www.data4ss.org.



Online Testing – the future is here!

At no additional cost, Data Director now provides teachers with the ability to administer online testing. This valuable tool provides the ability for immediate analysis of assessment data through Data Director. Online tests can be taken at specified items throughout the school day, or after school from any computer with Internet access. Tests are created from the Item Bank. This supports this region's 2020 Vision where a strategy is to "empower a culture of quality data and continuous improvement for student success through assessing 21st century learners using quality data mining tools and professional development resources."

Districts that have attended the required training are: Albion, Battle Creek Catholic, Bellevue, Bronson, Coldwater, Harper Creek, Hastings, Homer, Lakeview, Marshall, Olivet, Pennfield, Quincy, and Tekonsha. For more information, contact Tim Hall at hallt@calhounisd.org.

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

What is the technology leader's role in helping to create a culture of collaboration?

At January's regional technology meeting, technology leaders reviewed two articles from January's ASCD Educational Leadership journal. One article was called *The Collaborative Advantage* and talked about the importance of collaboration in exploring data. The activity from reading that article was to answer the question "What is the technology leader's role in helping to create a culture of collaboration?" Below is a summary of their responses:

- Support efforts toward collaboration by attendance and participation.
- Be a part of that culture. The trust factor is critical for the tech leader to be an effective resource. The tech director needs to be seen and trusted as an educator.
- The technology leader's role is to act as an active member of the school's leadership team that models collaboration and creates an environment that supports collaboration for all stakeholders.
- Model and promote means to improve collaboration, communication, data access, analysis, and reporting.

"Schools that explore data and take action *collaboratively* provide the most fertile soil in which a culture of improvement can take root and flourish."

"The Collaborative Advantage."
Educational Leadership Dec/Jan
(2009)

Collaboration is also supported as part of this region's 2020 Vision through a strategy to "empower educators with resources and collaborative opportunities designed to promote increased innovation through creation and use of quality resources."

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:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 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, 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 |

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

March 2009

www.calhounisd.org

2008/9 Meeting Dates

| | | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|--|
| | | May 13, 2009 | |
| | | 1 – 3 | Media Council |
| March 11, 2009 | | May 21, 2009 | |
| 8:30 – 11:30 | Zangle Planning | 8:30 – 9:30 | Blackboard User Group |
| 12 – 3 | Data Director Key Contacts | 9:30 – 12 | Regional Instructional Technology Committee |
| March 12, 2009 | | 12 – 1:30 | Technology Leadership Council Lunch and Learn |
| 8:30 – 9:30 | Blackboard User Group | 1:30 – 3:30 | Data Director Key Contacts |
| 9:30 – 12 | Regional Instructional Technology Committee | 3:30 – 4:30 | Open Meeting for Technology Discussions |
| 12 - 1:30 | Technology Leadership Council Lunch and Learn | | |
| 1:30 - 2:30 | Open Meeting for Technology Discussions | June 5, 2009 | |
| | | 8:30 – 11:30 | Zangle Planning |

2009/10 Meeting Dates

Because so many of the topics discussed at RITC involve many staff, Media Council will now be joining the RITC meetings beginning the 2009/10 school year. Welcome!

September 16 at CISD

8:30 – 2:00 Annual Ed Tech Symposium (TLC, RITC, Media Council)
2 – 3:30 REMC 12E Media Council Meeting

November 11, January 13, March 18, May 20 at CISD

For each of the above dates, the schedule is:

8:30 – 9:30 Blackboard Key Contacts
8:30 – 9:30 REMC 12E Media Council
9:30 – 12:00 Regional Instructional Technology Committee (RITC)
12 – 12:45 Lunch and Learn (RITC, Media Council, TLC welcome)
12:45 – 1:30 Technology Leadership Council (TLC)

September 10, November 12, January 14, March 11, June 10 at CISD

Zangle Planning 8:30 – 11:30

September 10, November 12, January 14, March 11, May 13 at CISD

Data Director Key Contacts, 12 – 3 (with lunch)

September, October, November, February, March, April, May at CACC

Cyborg user meetings are third Wednesdays at 2:00 for the months above

September, December, and June at CACC

Finance meetings are tentatively the second Fridays at 1:30 for the months above

2009 DataDirector™ User Conference

Monday, April 20–Tuesday, April 21



Space is limited, register today!

Visit www.datadirector.com to register, or call 877-993-2633.

Location & Registration Information

This year the DataDirector user conference will be held at the Lansing Center in Lansing, Michigan on April 20-21, 2009.

Over 60 sessions have been designed for district and site level administrators, district data personnel, and teacher leaders in new and established DataDirector Districts.

Register at www.datadirector.com

or call (877) 993-2633

Registration Cost: \$195

Deadline to Register: April 3, 2009

Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Lodging Information

Book your rooms now! We have a limited number of rooms reserved at a discounted rate of \$109 per night at the Radisson Hotel.

The hotel is a full-service hotel and is conveniently connected to the Lansing center via an enclosed pedway.

Please contact the hotel before March 20th and mention the DataDirector User Conference Promotional Code HMM09 to secure the \$109 per night discount.

Radisson Hotel Lansing
111 N. Grand Ave., Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 482-0188 or (800) 333-3333

You can also book online at
www.radisson.com/lansingmi

Over 60 Presentations to Choose from—Breakfast & Lunch Included

- Basic Overview
- Reporting
- Scanning Options & Exam Creation
- Using Item Banks
- Implementation and Using Data in the Classroom
- Technical Insight
- Assessments Reporting
- And much more...

Call for Presentations!

Teachers, administrators and district personnel...let other districts learn from your achievements and challenges by sharing your best practices with the DataDirector community. If selected, the lead presenter will receive a complimentary registration! Log in to your DataDirector site to download the presentation application or email info@achievedata.com. Deadline to submit: March 9, 2008.



DataDirector™
Understanding data for student success

877-993-2633
www.datadirector.com



RIVERSIDE PUBLISHING
a subsidiary of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt