

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

September 2011

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Student Service Connecting Points

Skyward is recommended as new Student Information System

As a result of the Request for Proposals responses, face to face sessions, testing of the system in a demo site, and talking with districts and/or ISDs who have used the product, the Student Information System committee has recommended Skyward to replace Zangle. At the August 26, 2011 ABCS meeting, superintendents approved the committee's recommendation. The recommendation now moves on to the Calhoun ISD Board of Education for action.



As reported last month, due to the makers of Zangle going out of business, we are replacing Zangle beginning with pilot districts this January for student scheduling for the 2012/13 school year and the remaining districts one year later. The goal of the SIS Review Process was to find a solution that supports:

- Collaborative efforts between districts including custom reporting and data exchange
- Meeting individual district needs
- Facilitating communication flow between the districts and its constituents

Here are details of activities that occurred through the SIS review process:

- The SIS Review Committee consisted of 17 members, representing 8 districts in Calhoun and Branch counties. These districts included: Calhoun ISD, Quincy, Union City, Branch ISD, Pennfield, Lakeview, Battle Creek, Marshall, and Albion.
- 518 stakeholders from the tri-county responded to a survey asking their input on the importance of a variety of features identified by the SIS review team. As a result, 35 features were added to the 'must have' feature list.
- The Request for Proposals asked vendors to identify out of 785 features (identified by the SIS Review Committee) which were available now, in the next six months, with third party support, with customization, or not available. In addition respondents had to create 14 videos highlighting core features of the system, such as grading and scheduling.
- As a result of that RFP review, three vendors (Illuminate, Pearson (PowerSchool), and Skyward) were invited to move forward in the process. That process included:
 - Give the committee and others access to a fully functional demo site of their product
 - Attend a showcase where they would provide those in attendance demonstrations of their products (about 40 people attended this)

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

Moving forward, districts may choose to only be part of the student data consortium (Skyward), the office data consortium (finance, payroll, human resource) or both. Regardless of district membership, we have to choose a new student information system as Zangle is no longer supported by a company and will be obsolete in the coming years. The Calhoun ISD is ready to lead the consortium districts through the conversion process over the coming months!

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www.calhounisd.org

Teaching and Learning Connecting Points

Superintendents focus on Mobile Learning

Because of so many new initiatives and tools arriving on the scene to support mobile and online learning, we coordinated a professional development event this summer for ten superintendents that was focused on mobile learning. The purpose of the event was to give them focused experience on how to use mobile learning in education. Mike Oswalt and Melinda Waffle facilitated a learning activity using iPads as part of the event. Though iPads were used, the focus was less on the product and more on mobile learning. Imagine ten superintendents given iPads with Internet access. They were assigned partners and had to go through eight activities that had them learn how to use the iPad, experience applications ('apps') that students and teachers use in the classroom, and discuss with their partner how these could be used in their districts.

This prepared them for the full day of professional development where they had intentional conversations about how we need to all work together on ensuring our students are given access to mobile learning opportunities. The best part of the two days was the level of engagement the superintendents had not only around educational technology, but on a variety of topics. The ten Superintendents in attendance were from Barry ISD, Hastings, Calhoun ISD, Battle Creek, Bellevue, Harper Creek, Lakeview, Marshall, Branch, and Coldwater

Mobile Learning and 21st Century Skills

Each year Calhoun ISD hosts a daylong session focused on a relevant educational technology topic. Over the years, we've discussed online video resources, online learning, Moodle, 2020 Vision, etc. This year we will be focusing on Mobile Learning and 21st Century Skills. The intended audience is those in our region who are Superintendents, Educational Technology Leaders, Media Specialists, Principals, or Curriculum Directors.



This year we have an outstanding guest Speaker. Matinga Ragatz will be here to share her insights and experiences in this area of 21st Century Skills and mobile learning. She is the 2010 Michigan Teacher of the Year. Read more about her at <http://matinga.com/>.

During this session, participants will leave with an understanding of the benefits and key components necessary to incorporate 21st Century skills into teaching, learning and leadership, particularly using mobile devices. In addition, we will work together to develop a tri county plan for implementing 21st Century Skills into teaching, learning and leading.

Registration is at (no cost): <http://tinyurl.com/3ddcpb6>

Connecting Points Newsletter

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September 2011

www.calhounisd.org

21 Things

Many of you have heard about the 21 Things for the 21st Century Educator course that has been offered across the state... did you know that there are now companion courses for students and administrators?

21 Things for Students

Beginning this fall, schools may begin implementing 21 Things for Students into their course curriculum(s). This material is designed so that if students complete the entire 21 Things for Students curriculum they will meet the technology literacy requirement for Eighth Grade. The curriculum has been designed for middle school students, yet with the flexibility that it can be taught in different ways:

- entirely within a single semester course
- divided into thirds and taught over three years
- taught within a technology course
- implemented within Core Curricular classes

For those interested in implementing the 21 Things for Students material into their school an informational meeting will be held in September. If you or a colleague might be interested in attending this informational meeting, please complete this form: <http://goo.gl/bO3LM>

21 Things for Teachers

It is highly recommended that teachers wishing to use the 21 Things for Students within their course first take the 21 Things for Teachers course. It will be offered this fall. Watch for upcoming information about this as we are currently putting together a four-county cohort!

21 Things for Administrators

Another opportunity that will be available this fall is 21 Things for Administrators. This course has been written solely with administrators in mind, with course assignments written so administrators can apply them into their current roles as they complete them. You might see information about 21 Things for Administrators being offered several places as it is being made available state-wide. There will be an offering right here locally beginning this fall for our local administrators. More information will be coming out to you about this in September. Superintendents will be going through a portion of this curriculum throughout this school year!

Kick the Mobile Tires!

Mobile Technology has been on the rise for several years, and with the Apple iPads and Android based Tablets hitting the market, their use in schools have greatly increased. As reported in the 2011 K-12 Horizon Report:

“With always-on Internet, mobiles embody the convergence of several technologies that lend themselves to educational use, including electronic book readers, annotation tools, applications for creating and composition, and social networking tools.....The portability of mobile devices and their ability to connect to the Internet almost anywhere makes them ideal as a store of reference materials and learning experiences, as well as general-use tools for fieldwork, where they can be used to record observations via voice, text, or multimedia, and access reference sources in real time.”

(Johnson, L., Adams, S., and Haywood, K., (2011). The NMC Horizon Report: 2011 K-12 Edition. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.)

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

September 2011

www.calhounisd.org

As our districts are trying to determine the best mobile solution, your REMC 12 East department has purchased 10 iPad2 WI-FI 32G mobile devices for check out. As an employee of one of our districts in Calhoun and Branch counties you are eligible to check out one of these devices for 'kicking the tires' or the entire set for purposes such as a training. If you are considering using the iPad2, there is a great deal of set up that we have documented and are very willing to share. As the Android Tablets are more prevalent this summer, we will also be purchasing 10 for check out this fall. Regardless of Android or Apple based, mobile learning is here to stay!



To reserve a mobile device, please contact our [help desk](#). You must email the help desk using your school district email address. You can reserve one to ten at a time with at least a three business day advanced notice and for no longer than one week at a time (so that others can have access). Please bring your employee ID with you when picking them up.

Cloud computing – get your head in the clouds!

Thinking about utilizing the 'cloud' more? Wonder what it is? Check out the many great articles on Cloud Computing in this quarter's [MACUL Journal](#), including an article by Mike Oswalt on page 7. Mike is the 2011/12 MACUL President.

Business Office Connecting Points

What's new with SMART? SMART Finance is constantly evolving!

- Wayne RESA is working on a new release of the Transaction Analysis Module that will allow you to double-click on a PO or Requisition in Transaction Analysis and it will take you to the PO Module to view that purchase order or requisition. The Cost field will be renamed 'Grant'. Soon every screen in SMART will have the ability to File, Export. Soon all SMART Modules will have the ability to scan & add documents.
- The latest release of the Budget Module has made updating budgets easier. When you load a worksheet from Excel, it no longer has to say 'Budget' for the worksheet tab name and it will accept all versions of Excel. It also allows for three different 'scenarios' of budgets besides the original board-approved budget, amended budget, and forecast budget.
- The latest release of the Journal Entry Module allows you to attach files to the Journal Entry. If a Journal Entry has attachments, it is highlighted a different color than the other Journal Entries so you can see at a glance which JE's have additional information attached.
- Several of the SMART Modules have a 'refresh' icon – this allows you to refresh the contents of the database (instead of going out of the module, and back in!). The refresh is available in the Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Vendor, Ledger, and Purchase Order modules.
- The Ledger Maintenance Module will soon have a 'Grant' Code instead of the 'Cost' Code field, per the State of Michigan new naming conventions. This is the three digit state code followed by one digit the district wishes to use, for a total of 4-digits in this field.

Contact Joy Sommers for more information on these or any other SMART topics at (269) 789-2474. If you need training, it can be done at CISD, CACC or at your office.

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

September 2011

www.calhounisd.org

Cyborg Salary Schedule Module

The finance system is introducing a new module to assist districts in the projection of future salary costs. The Salary Schedule module works in conjunction with Cyborg to record job, schedule and step information on a per employee basis and then provides 'what if' projections of future salary costs through the SMART system. Employee information will be entered in Cyborg through the Job Assignment/Changes screen and flow seamlessly between SMART (finance) and Cyborg (HR) systems.

Summer Training

From June through August the CISD has been offering training/refresher sessions for HR and Payroll staff. These sessions included Fringe processing, ORS balancing, a Payroll refresher and Employee Analysis reporting. Participation was good with 30 people attending. Feedback has been very positive. We will continue to offer regular training sessions in addition to our monthly user meetings, all free to members of the CISD consortium.

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.

Time Entry

Time entry is the process of recording staff hours for payroll purposes. The Time Entry module that we are currently in the process of rolling out will permit HR/Payroll to record staff hours from a much easier to use interface than directly in to the Cyborg system. It will also permit new features such as historical look up and will assist in data entry. Time entry has been implemented in two districts and the implementation at other districts is on-going.

Did You Know?

- Did you know that using the Time Entry module provides a permanent record of all time entries made by a pay date?
- Did you know that there is a new law relating to electronic payment of payroll? Check it out at [here](#).

If you have questions regarding any of the information provided, please contact Sherry Williams or Carole McNamara at (269) 789-2474.

Technology Services Connecting Points

Fiber Network Electronics Upgrade

We are in the process of replacing the equipment that 'lights up' the fiber network connecting all of our districts in Calhoun and Branch together. Sam Lutgring and his team are scheduling the exchange of equipment with your technical contacts and will be completed before students begin school in September. This new network equipment will allow us to deliver reliable communications to each local district with a future path for growth. In short – we greatly widened the road for data to travel.

Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect September 2011

www.calhounisd.org

Starr and Juvenile Home

The SPED program at Juvenile Home has joined the rest of the CISD facilities in high speed fiber optic connectivity. Now staff and students will be able to effortlessly connect to network resources (email, files, printers and Internet). In the past the Juvenile Home had to utilize a slow and unreliable cable connection.

Both SPED programs at Starr and Juvenile Home have been updated with new wireless networking through-out their facilities. With full wireless capability staff and students will be able to participate in instructional activities utilizing mobile computing providing a more versatile and real world learning experience.

Educational Technology

The SPED program at Starr has purchased two additional laptop carts with laptops. With the purchase of one more cart of laptops this year, Starr will fulfill its goal of providing each student in its two class pods with a computer. Eliminated will be the wasted time coming and going to a computer lab not to mention the interruption it causes to the instructional atmosphere. Both SPED programs at Starr and Juvenile Home implemented in the spring of 2011 Mac labs. These labs are part of a grant aimed at providing career training in the field of video production.

Data for Student Success

DataDirector 4.0: Evolution, Not Revolution

With the October 24th release of DataDirector 4.0 approaching, the creators of DataDirector have insisted that this upgrade will be “evolutionary, not revolutionary”. DataDirector 4.0 offers users a streamlined interface that makes navigating the site much easier for all levels of users. In addition, the new use of folders allows users to organize and share assessments with ease. However, one of the most exciting additions is the assessment blueprint feature. By adding a blueprint to an assessment, users tell DataDirector what types of questions they would like to add based on standards. DataDirector allows you to create your own questions, choose from your item bank, or DataDirector will choose for you!

Mitch Fowler and Mike Oswalt introduced some of the key features of DataDirector 4.0 in August to Key Contacts as well as teacher leaders. Some of the major changes include:

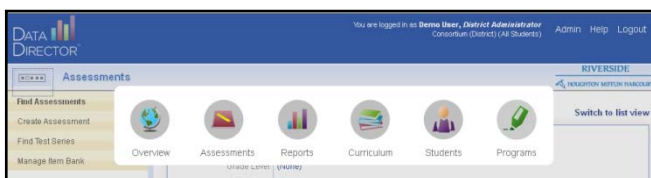
Did You Know?

- A Data Director 4.0 Moodle Site has been set up with training materials, videos, and the latest information. Visit it at <http://onlinelearning.calhounisd.org/cisd> and click on ‘CISD’ and then ‘Data Director’

Updated Navigation With the “App Switcher”

Key Highlights and Changes:

- Users can choose between the App Switcher or Mini-Tab tool to navigate through the site.
- Some tabs from 3.10 have been combined to allow for fewer choices and clicking.



Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect

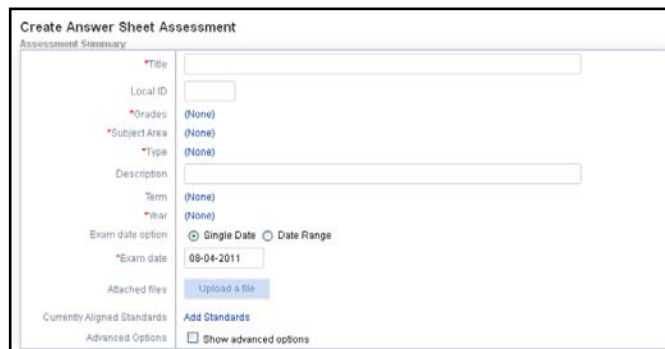
September 2011

www.calhounisd.org

Streamlined Assessment Creation

Key Highlights and Changes:

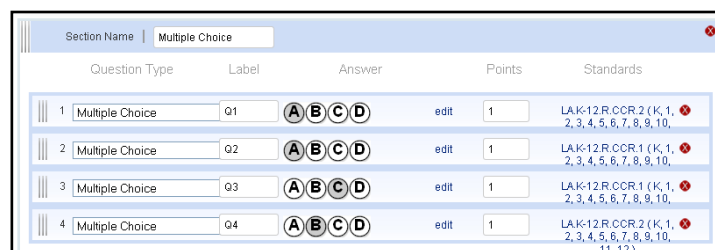
- 4.0 allows users to create an answer sheet on one screen and with fewer clicks.
- This screen includes assessment information, question types, question labels, answer guides, point values, linked standards, and the ability to drag and drop questions



In-line Linking to Standards

Key Highlights and Changes:

- Users now have the ability to link to a standard on the same screen as the creation of the assessment.



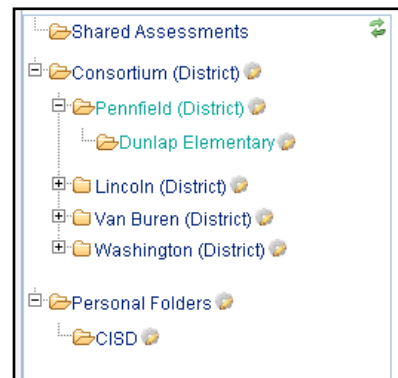
Question Type	Label	Answer	Points	Standards
Multiple Choice	Q1	A B C D	1	LA-K-12.R.CCR.2 (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
Multiple Choice	Q2	A B C D	1	LA-K-12.R.CCR.1 (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
Multiple Choice	Q3	A B C D	1	LA-K-12.R.CCR.1 (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
Multiple Choice	Q4	A B C D	1	LA-K-12.R.CCR.2 (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

Share Assessments in Folders

Key Highlights and Changes:

- Assessments are now placed in folders.
- Users can save their assessments in their private folder.
- Districts can also share assessments with buildings or specific groups of teachers.

For more information or training opportunities, please contact Mitch Fowler, School Data Consultant at (269) 789-2474.



Connecting Points Newsletter

Keeping you informed where technology and school district functions connect September 2011

www.calhounisd.org

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

2011/12 Meeting Dates

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

- September 9, November 9, January 10, 2012, March 14, June 6

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

- September 9, November 9, January 10, 2012, March 14, June 6

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

- September 29 (8 – 3); register for this event at <http://tinyurl.com/3ddcpb6>
- November 17, January 18, 2012, March 21, May 17

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

- October 6, 2011, 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

- September, December, March, June