

Management Council
OHIO EDUCATION COMPUTER NETWORK

SITE REVIEW OF

**Miami Valley Educational
Computer Association**

(MVECA)

May 1-3, 2000

REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS

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Opening Remarks

Members of the Review Team commend the Board of Directors of the Miami Valley Educational Computer Association (MVECA) for requesting a voluntary on-site review to assess the current operations and services this Data Acquisition Site (DA-Site) provides to its member districts. The Review Team appreciates the contributions made by the MVECA Executive Director, as well as the Greene County Career Center Board of Education in the role as the MVECA Fiscal Agent. We also commend the current Chairperson of the MVECA Board of Directors, the Fiscal Agent Superintendent, and all the members of the Board of Directors for acknowledging the need for this review.

Furthermore, the Review Team wishes to extend its most sincere appreciation to both the staff of the Miami Valley Educational Computer Association and the personnel from the user school districts who took the time from their schedules to provide input.

Governance

The members of the Board of Directors and the Association Assembly should make a renewed effort to participate in the governance of MVECA. This would assure oversight of the Association and quality services for the membership. As part of this renewed effort, the Board of Directors should review, and if necessary, update and refine the governance agreement in consultation with legal counsel. The Association last modified the governance document in 1997. Then each Association Member Board ratified the governance agreement. The Superintendent of Public Instruction approved it on December 16, 1997.

The seven member Board of Directors is elected to three-year terms and consists of at least two Superintendents and two Treasurers from the five counties. The Superintendent of the fiscal agent is also a voting member of the Board of Directors. The Review Team suggests that the governance agreement be amended to appoint the Fiscal Agent Treasurer as an ex-officio member to the Board of Directors. At the very least the fiscal agent treasurer should receive the Board of Directors meeting agendas and other documents prepared by MVECA staff in advance of the meeting. This would increase the fiscal coordination of activities and help insure the appropriateness of the fiscal data.

A review of minutes revealed that the members of the Board of Directors exhibited difficulty in attending governance meetings. Consideration should be given to the governance agreement to provide for the superintendent or treasurer to designate their vote if they are absent. This should be formalized in the Association document, possibly by the use of voting alternates or a written proxy filed with the chairperson or recording secretary. It is recommended that the minutes be signed after approval by the Board of Directors, and maintained for future reference. It is also believed appropriate that the Board of Directors should adopt a resolution to operate under the "Sunshine Law".

A successful DA-Site demands open and specific communication between the Board of Directors, the member users, and the site staff. Four sub-committees (Personnel, Financial, Forecasting and Planning, Financial Software) are called for in the governance document. The review team found no evidence that they are meeting quarterly as required. These committees would serve as a viable method to garner feedback for the improvement and responsiveness of MVECA to its members' needs. The Review Team recommends that the minutes of the Board of Directors be promptly made available electronically to member district superintendents and treasurers. The establishment of advisory committees, roundtables, and user groups would enhance communications and ownership. These groups should publish their agendas and the meeting results. Electronic and/or printed newsletters and other communiqués are important ways to share information with all member users. This would greatly enhance communication within and among members.

The Association has a membership base of twenty-three districts. Also two independent districts and eight nonpublic schools receive services. There is no provision in the governance agreement for an associate and/or other non-voting members. For potential state funding, the Association should consider providing for the inclusion of nonpublic and of community school districts. This could be accomplished as a "User Entity" as provided in Ohio Administrative Code section [3301-3-01 (27)]. Perhaps each group (nonpublic, and charter) could be authorized to designate one of their members to have a vote in Assembly Meetings.

This review and committee activity should provide basic information for the MVECA performance plan. The Ohio Department of Education requires this plan under the incentive funding for DA Sites.

There appears to be an appropriate governing authority residing with the Board of Directors and not with the fiscal agent. The governance agreement does provide for amending the agreement, and for the change of membership, officers, and of the fiscal agent. The fiscal agent is appropriately held harmless in the operation and responsibilities of the Association according to the governance agreement.

Administration

The review team feels that MVECA is at a critical decision time as management looks to the future. The Board of Directors needs to establish precise and definitive directions for MVECA. How will the leadership position(s) be defined and organized? Who will provide executive administration and management for the organization? Who will provide technical management and direction? Specific job descriptions must be established and the resulting positions filled quickly. Long range planning including a business plan, staff evaluation procedures, appropriate and consistent job descriptions, personnel and procedures manual(s), and communication avenues must be created and implemented within a few months. The member users, Board of Directors, and MVECA staff must be involved in the process. The end product(s) should be widely considered, adopted by the Association Assembly, be in place within 120 days, and widely distributed. Additionally, they should be reviewed periodically and updated.

In concert with the recommendations focusing on the revision of the governance document, it is recommended that a corresponding policy manual be developed to aid in the guidance and operation of the consortium's activities. There is always the possibility of a change of the Fiscal Agent or the administration within the Fiscal Agent that could affect the policies of the Association. A policy manual formalizing all policies that directly pertain to the Association's operation would promote consistency regardless of any Fiscal Agent changes. Such direction would also assure that the management of the Association rests with the governing board of the Miami Valley Educational Computer Association.

Attention should also be devoted to the development of a five-year business plan for the Association. Planning of this nature is most effective through the utilization of a planning and forecasting sub-committee to formulate sound decisions and assure "buy in" of planned services by the eventual end-users. Such a plan should prioritize new and/or expanded services and consider the impact that change will have on the need for facilities, equipment and support personnel. An effective, well-developed plan requires input from members, including end-users of MVECA's services.

It is the opinion of the Review Team that lines of authority and responsibilities assigned to DA-Site staff members have been vague and need better definition. Regular staff meetings are needed to coordinate activities and insure that the "best thinking" of all staff members can be directed to assigned functions.

The current service agreements appear to be inadequate under typical operating procedures and the Ohio Department of Education expectations. Legal counsel could assist in development of these documents. The detailed service agreements should specify services offered and at what cost. The documents would be agreed to by both parties, and contain effective starting and ending dates.

The Review Team, in discussions with the staff and with users, discovered inadequacies in the current service price schedule. The schedule needs to be updated periodically in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code sections [3301-3-03 (A)(2)] & [3301-3-04 (A)(1)]. Costs per unit of service should be based upon an accurate cost

analysis, be applied uniformly to all members and non-members, and invoiced promptly. This will help insure adequate cash flow for offered services and help members plan usage and budgets.

Finance

The cash asset condition of MVECA is commendable. There appears to be appropriate cash flow for the operations of the site. The year-end carryover is adequate to meet the Ohio Administrative Code. Financial plans need to be developed to insure adequate funding for the future.

Procedures for the collection and deposit of funds need to be reevaluated. DA-Sites often have staff prepare the invoices and issue them to the appropriate district and/or organization. The check is sent to the fiscal agent for deposit in the designated account. There is software available to assist the staff of the DA-Site and of the fiscal agent in the reconciliation of deposits. This would facilitate the prompt deposit of funds as required by law. Performance bonding and appropriate cash bonding of employees is essential.

Information flow among the Board, Executive Director, and Fiscal Agent is inadequate for practical business decisions and operations. It appears the governing body is not given detailed fiscal reports generated under the oversight of the Fiscal Agent Treasurer at each regular meeting. The Review Team feels the current practice is a violation of Ohio Administrative Code section [3301-3-07 (B)(1)(c)] and inhibits proper oversight by the Board of Directors.

Specific procedures for securing supplies, facilities, equipment, and the expenditure of funds and other resources (including spending limits) must be developed and adopted. A system of checks and balances, and good information flow is needed as the Board, site administration, and Fiscal Agent work together to conduct the business of MVECA.

Detailed written agreements for fiscal fees, interest allocation, and facilities leases should also be on file. This would assist in the proper management of MVECA.

Personnel and Staff Development

The Review Team would encourage the administration and governing body of MVECA to review and update the job descriptions for employees of the organization. The job descriptions provided to the Review Team were incomplete, inconsistent, outdated, and not reflective of the job duties actually being performed by the various staff members. This is a task that should be addressed by the Personnel Committee called for in the MVECA governance document. Based on these inconsistencies, the site may be in violation of Administrative Code section [3301-3-07(I)(2)(d)] requiring all staff members to have training and/or experience necessary to perform the duties contained in their job descriptions.

An additional task for the Personnel Committee would be to develop a comprehensive personnel policy manual for MVECA personnel. The staff indicated a need for such a policy manual to clarify questions regarding personnel policies.

As stated elsewhere in this report, the current plan to add up to three additional staff members over the next year should be carefully examined. The needs of the organization, for the long term, may not reflect the anticipated job duties for these three positions as described to the Review Team. This is an aspect that needs to be the subject of serious dialogue among members of the MVECA Board of Directors prior to filling these positions. It is important that a vision for the future of MVECA be created, and that the new positions assist in implementing this vision.

The above notwithstanding, it is the opinion of the Review Team that this site is in violation of Administrative Code section [3301-3-07(I)(1)] requiring staffing levels sufficient, as measured by user and staff satisfaction, to meet the service needs of the user. Interviews with both staff and users indicate that staffing levels are not sufficient to meet user requirements at all times.

The Review Team would encourage that each member of the staff be involved in a written professional growth evaluation process on an annual basis. This activity should be highly structured and provide measurable goals and objectives for each staff member to be measured against. The professionalism of the current staff is quite high, but constant cultivation through growth and evaluation processes is warranted.

State Board of Education rules for DA-Sites require specific training experiences on an on-going basis for all employees of DA-Sites. Documents provided to the Review Team by the Executive Director indicate that the site may not be in compliance with the following Administrative Code sections [3301-3-07(I)(2)(d)], [3301-3-07(I)(3)(a)], [3301-3-07(I)(3)(b)], and [3301-3-07(J)(1)] relative to staff training and on-going educational requirements. This needs to be reviewed and steps must be taken to insure that all staff members are in full compliance with these rules at all times.

Consideration is also warranted toward assurance of sufficient cross training of responsibilities among the MVECA staff. Cross training of the staff would assure that no one staff member is indispensable, and would provide adequate user support during vacation schedules and other absences. Currently it appears that very little cross training of the staff has been performed. In addition, there appears to be too great a reliance on the technical expertise of the Executive Director. A loss, or an extended absence, of the Executive Director could cause significant service delivery problems for the organization. Appropriate cross training, personnel realignment, and additional staffing would help to alleviate this potential problem.

Other DA-Sites have met success by employing persons respected in their field and possessing keen interest in data processing. Consideration might be given to requiring future fiscal services software support specialists to hold and maintain a valid school district Treasurer's license in Ohio. Such an employee would not only understand the total function of a school district business office, but also would be able to provide immediate assistance should a member district experience a temporary vacancy among their fiscal employees. The Review Team heard a desire for additional fiscal support personnel, which would appear prudent.

Consideration should be given to encouraging all staff members to obtain and maintain professional certifications within their job classifications. Certifications from A+, Cisco, Compaq, Novell, Microsoft, ODE, etc., can all provide additional benefits to both the employees and the MVECA member school districts.

Physical Facilities

The Review Team was impressed with the current adequacy of the office space being provided and the evidence that consideration has been given for the provision of staff work areas away from the noise of the computer hardware. Additional consideration will have to be directed, however, to accommodate the planned growth in the number of staff members.

The DA-Site should be commended for providing and equipping an impressive training facility. The plans to update the equipment in this training facility this summer should make the facility viable for a much longer term. It is understood by the Review Team that the training facility will be converted to all Windows-based computers, whereas the facility now contains all Macintosh systems. As there are some districts served by MVECA that utilize Macintosh systems primarily, some consideration should be given to keeping a mix of hardware in the training facility in order to adequately serve the training needs of all MVECA member districts.

It is recommended that additional consideration be given to the security and safety mechanisms guarding the facility. The Review Team was told that the current electronic monitoring system was sometimes inoperable, and that its effectiveness was seriously limited. Consideration is recommended to installing a system that would monitor numerous aspects of the facility and automatically notify public safety authorities and/or perform automated system shutdowns and similar protective measures.

Hardware

The site should be commended for the adequacy of the current central computer equipment housing software services to the member districts. The system appears to be providing response times well within user expectations. While some users expressed concerns about periodic system response problems, it is believed that these are actually network saturation issues that need to be addressed jointly by the district and MVECA personnel.

The Review Team is concerned that recent improvements in Internet access bandwidth and content-filtering support appear to have been implemented as a reaction to user complaints, as opposed to prospective monitoring of usage and careful planning. It is important that the MVECA staff be diligent in reviewing usage, projecting future needs of the districts, and implementing just-in-time improvements for the benefit of all member districts. This is especially important when there are no financial impediments to funding the required needs of the users.

Concerns were expressed to the Review Team that there was no plan or stated methodology by which districts were upgraded to T-1 communications services by MVECA over the past several years. The perception by users was that the methodology utilized was to satisfy first those that complained the loudest. In a multi-district cooperative such as MVECA, it is important that there be policies and procedures put into place that govern how and when such upgrades are performed. It is vital that these policies be as fair as possible to each school district, that each school district be made aware of how these decisions are determined, and that they be widely communicated to the membership.

It is recommended that the current MVECA-Net plan be reviewed and be fully memorialized in writing. The Review Team was told that the full financial model for MVECA-Net is not documented in writing. According to the Executive Director, if the MVECA-Net financial model was approved (in its entirety) by the MVECA Board of Directors, it is not known when this was done. Currently the Executive Director makes judgments about fees that are to be charged to each district, and there is no clear authorization for the Executive Director to do this. This could lead to charges of impropriety or favoritism to one or more districts. By fully documenting all aspects of the fee structure this can be eliminated. Until this fee schedule is completely outlined in writing, it is the opinion of the Review Team that MVECA is not in compliance with Administrative Code sections [3301-3-03(A)(2)] and [3301-3-04(A)(1)]. These code sections require that the DA-Site maintain an accurate schedule of services and written service contracts.

However, the implementation of ATM-based connections may necessitate a change in the concept of MVECA-Net. As ATM edge switches are implemented the concept that MVECA does not own and/or control the ATM edge switch may become an issue, and a support nightmare. At the same time, the Review Team was told of several districts making poor technology decisions with regard to network upgrades, and there is a lack of standardization on both topology and vendors that leads to inefficiencies for MVECA and its member districts. Consideration should be given to extending the point at which MVECA's networking responsibilities begin and end. While any such change would raise costs, it should achieve greater reliability and long-term efficiencies for the districts, and would be an invaluable service that MVECA can provide to the schools that it serves. It is also believed that MVECA could provide these services more cost-effectively for the districts than the for-profit vendors currently being utilized by the schools.

The Review Team was concerned about inconsistencies in providing design and installation services to districts without direct costs, despite the fact that the Board has approved charges for such services. It is also a concern that not all member districts are aware that such services are available, and that if every district took advantage of these services, MVECA would have insufficient financial and personnel resources to provide these services in a timely and cost-effective manner. It is recommended that the adopted fees be assessed anytime services are rendered. In a multi-district cooperative like MVECA it is important that all districts be treated equally within approved Board policies.

Software Services

The Review Team would like to commend the MVECA staff on the timeliness of installing software releases, and renewed efforts in providing release notes, documentation, and in-service to the MVECA member districts. However, it is the opinion of the Review Team that the site needs to make public domain software more readily available for the users. In addition, the staff must make time to document and train the users in the use of these additional software options.

Documents provided to the Review Team by the Executive Director indicate that the site is not in compliance with Administrative Code section [3301-3-07(F)(3)] relative to an established procedure approved by the governing body for suggesting changes to the software providers. This needs to be reviewed and steps must be taken to insure that such a procedure is adopted, implemented, and communicated to the membership.

Information provided to the Review Team during user interviews indicate that the MVECA staff, while solving problems in a timely manner, often fail to provide adequate follow-up information on the nature of the problem, including possible ways the problem could be prevented or fixed in the future. It is recommended that doing so would be beneficial to both the member district and MVECA personnel. Including the problems and resolutions in a "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" document available electronically to users is suggested as a means of meeting this user request.

Users of student services software expressed a desire to perform report customizations themselves, but have been told by MVECA staff that this is not possible. This functionality has been implemented successfully at other DA-Sites, and the Review Team recommends that the MVECA staff examine this user request more closely.

User Inservice

The DA-Site may be in violation of Administrative Code section [3301-3-07(J)(1)], which requires an ongoing comprehensive program of training for users be available for each of the services supported by the DA-Site. In the opinion of the Review Team, based on user input, training provided is fragmented, intermittent, and not comprehensive.

Users expressed a need for more training, on a regular basis. They also requested that training be stratified by user expertise level to make more effective use of personnel time. Another expressed request was for the DA-Site to offer more training in a "hands-on" mode, with equipment and software identical to that regularly utilized by the user for better knowledge assimilation.

Operations

While system backups of user data are performed on a regular schedule, the Review Team does not feel that the backups are stored in a manner to adequately protect the interests of the member districts. A fire or other disaster at the MVECA computer center could currently result in the loss of up to a full month of work and data for all MVECA users. While such an event is unlikely, it is not deemed appropriate to maintain this procedure when a minor modification could minimize the maximum data loss to a single business day by daily taking backup tapes off-site for secure storage. It is the opinion of the Review Team that this site is in violation of Administrative Code section [3301-3-07(G)(1)] because of the extended vulnerability window of the current storage procedure.

As stated elsewhere in this report, it is recommended that the DA-Site develop an operations and procedure manual to collect, organize, and formalize processes utilized in the daily operations of the DA-Site. As the

organization grows and expands services, it is important that these processes be documented and communicated to all members of the MVECA staff to insure that each is aware of his/her responsibilities.

Since it is a long distance call from most member districts to MVECA, users requested that consideration be given to providing a toll free number for user calls. This is a standard offering by most DA-Sites.

Users expressed a desire to be able to reset user passwords for other staff members within their district, if authorized to do so by the district superintendent. Currently MVECA does not provide this capability to users, however, software to do so is available in the public domain and this is an offering by many other DA-Sites. It is recommended by the Review Team that MVECA implement this capability for its users, increasing user satisfaction, and reducing demands on MVECA staff time.

Closing

The Review Team feels that MVECA is currently providing adequate services to its member districts. However, there is no long-term plan or vision for the organization. Numerous administrative tasks remain undone, and additional staffing is needed to meet growing user demands for additional services.

Without careful planning for the future, and attention to administrative aspects of the organization, MVECA's ability to service the future needs of its members could be seriously impacted. Open and honest communication among the Board of Directors and the Executive Director needs to occur to assure the future of MVECA. The Executive Director needs to concentrate on administrative and planning needs of the organization and relinquish technical tasks to other staff, or a realignment needs to occur that will permit Mr. Bosserman to concentrate solely on technical tasks. It is clear that there is not time for Mr. Bosserman to assume the responsibility for all duties for which he is currently charged.

It is the belief of the Review Team that the recommendations made within this document will help MVECA to grow stronger as an organization. MVECA has the potential to be a dynamic and exemplary service provider. To achieve this, member district personnel, (the owners of the organization), must take a more active role in the governance and leadership of the organization.

A wise old sage once said that "Advice is given by the bushel and taken by the thimble full". The members of the Review Team recognize that advice from "outsiders" is both good and bad. The "good" is that fresh insights can be brought to bear by people not caught up in the daily operations. The "bad" is that our exposure is only fragmentary. Our visit resulted in a "snapshot" photograph of an active, ongoing operation. Possibly we may not have grasped enough of the "insiders" perspective to understand why things are the way they are. We felt it our responsibility to provide some reactions that, upon close examination by management personnel, might challenge their thinking and generative cooperative discussions and decisions that will improve operations of this DA-Site. We are pleased to have been able to share in your growth.

Appendix

The attached appendix outlines requirements of OECN DA-Sites as specified in Ohio Administrative Code and/or rules of the State Board of Education. This document identifies areas that the Review Team believes represent the current condition of the MVECA consortium. All "no" responses on this document are potential non-compliance items, and should be investigated thoroughly by the Board of Directors and Executive Director.

Appendix

5. Does the consortium have a member base of at least eight consortium member districts which are provided with continuous on-line computerized electronic communications services?
[3301-3-03(A)(3) & 3301-3-04(A)(1)]

Yes X No ___

Evidence:

Derived mainly from staff and user interviews/surveys. Each member district must have guaranteed access for electronic communications services, with at least a dedicated dialup capability.

6. Is the aggregate ADM of all consortium member districts at least fifteen thousand students?
[3301-3-03(A)(3) & 3301-3-04(A)(1)]

Yes X No ___

7. Does the consortium's governance document include provisions for a governing assembly, a board of directors/governing board, an executive committee, or a combination of these entities?
[3301-3-07(A)(2)]

Yes X No ___

Evidence:

Content of current governance document.

8. Does the governance document include provisions which encourage participation by end user representatives?
[3301-3-07(A)(3)]

Yes X No ___

Evidence:

Document content which provides for user representation. Examples include user groups, advisory committees, ad hoc committees, and/or the participation of end users on the governing bodies of the consortium.

9. Does the governance document define the responsibilities of each component of the organizational structure?
[3301-3-07(A)(4)]

Yes X No ___

Evidence:

Document content that defines the responsibilities/duties of the following:

- (a) Governing Assembly
- (b) Board of Directors/Governing Board/Executive Board
- (c) Operating Committee
- (d) Fiscal Agent

Appendix

10. Does the consortium's governing authority (including legislative and managerial authority) rest with the board of directors/governing board or the governing assembly rather than the fiscal agent? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(A)(5)]

Evidence:

- (a) An answer of YES requires that the "powers and duties" of the governing assembly and/or the board of directors/governing board, as listed in the governance document, reflect -APPROVAL- authority for establishing budgets, fees, hiring/firing employees, etc.. instead of simply functioning as -RECOMMENDATION- groups with final decisions/actions relegated to the fiscal agent.
- (b) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
- (c) Review of minutes from official meetings of governing groups.

11. Does the governance document identify the process of change and define how organizational changes are to occur? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(A)(6)]

Evidence:

Document content which describes procedures for the following organizational changes:

- (a) Amending the agreement (governance document).
- (b) Adding or withdrawing district membership.
- (c) Changing officers (of governing groups).
- (d) Changing the fiscal agent.

12. Does the governance document contain language that holds harmless the fiscal agent for liabilities, obligations, claims, damages, etc.. relating to the operation and activities of the consortium? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(A)(7)]

Evidence:

Appropriate language contained in..

- (a) The current governance document
or
- (b) A separate contract/agreement between the consortium and the fiscal agent district.

13. Are all governance policies, procedures, and daily site operations conducted in accordance with the consortium's current by-laws and/or agreement(s)? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(A)(8)]

Evidence:

- (a) Review of existing consortium policies/procedures.
- (b) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
- (c) Review of minutes from official meetings of governing groups.

Appendix

14. Does the Data Acquisition Site meet all the responsibilities specified in Rule 3301-3-06(A)? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-06(A)]

Fiscal Operations

15. Are all financial transactions and accounting procedures associated with Data Acquisition Site operations performed in compliance with requirements of the Revised Code and the Auditor of State? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(B)(1)(a)(I)]

Evidence:

Review of audit report from latest applicable financial audit.

16. Are the financial accounting records of Data Acquisition Site activities separately maintained and capable of being audited? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(B)(1)(a)(ii)]

Evidence:

Review of audit report from latest applicable financial audit.

17. Does the fiscal agent, on behalf of the member districts, or the council of governments (COG) hold title to all equipment owned by the Data Acquisition Site? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(B)(1)(a)(iii)]

Evidence:

- (a) Appropriate language in current governance document.
- (b) Review of language in DAS past or present equipment acquisition documents (i.e. lease/lease-purchase/purchase).

18. Are procedures defined and followed for receipting, expending and accounting for Data Acquisition Site funds? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(B)(1)(a)(iv)]

Evidence:

Review of audit report from latest applicable financial audit.

19. Do the consortium's appropriate governing bodies (i.e. the governing assembly, board of directors, etc..) approve all fee assessments, contracts, employee compensation and benefits, as well as initial and modified appropriations, and are these actions evidenced by official meeting minutes? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(B)(1)(b)]

Evidence:

Review of minutes from official meetings of governing groups.

Appendix

20. Are members of the consortium's governing assembly or board of directors provided access to detailed fiscal reports at each regular meeting, as well as other reports upon request? Yes___ No X
[3301-3-07(B)(1)(c)]

Evidence:

- (a) Review of agendas/handouts from previous meetings.
- (b) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
- (c) Review of minutes from official meetings of governing groups.

21. Do the amortization periods for the retirement of any consortium indebtedness not exceed the recommended schedules for depreciation as established by the Internal Revenue Service? Yes X No___
[3301-3-07(B)(2)(a)]

Evidence:

The amortization period for any DAS debt(s) incurred after 6/30/95.

22. Does the Data Acquisition Site maintain a minimum cash balance equivalent to the higher of the following?
(a) An average of thirty days' expenditures for the previous twelve-month period,
or
(b) anticipated expenditures for the next sixty days. Yes X No___
[3301-3-07(B)(2)(b)]

Evidence:

Cash balance entries from the annual financial detail report.

Services

23. Does the Data Acquisition Site maintain an accurate schedule of services and written service contracts for execution between the Data Acquisition Site and consortium member districts? Yes___ No X
[3301-3-03(A)(2) & 3301-3-04(A)(1)]

Evidence:

- (a) Existence of an accurate service/fee schedule.
- (b) Existence of written service contract(s).

24. Are financial management software services offered, including general ledger accounting with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) reporting, payroll, and asset accounting? Yes X No___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(a)]

25. Are student data management services offered with provisions for student scheduling, grade reporting, attendance tracking, and tracking of special education needs? Yes X No___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(b)]

Appendix

26. Are state-mandated data submission services (i.e. electronic submission of EMIS reports) offered? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(c)]
27. Are electronic communication services offered which permit data extraction, file transfer, and electronic messaging? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(d)]
28. Are consortium member officials provided access to appropriate Ohio Department of Education databases? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(e)]

Evidence:

At a minimum, the following ODE informational programs must be READILY AVAILABLE to consortium member districts via the on-line menu of offerings provided by the DAS:

- (a) Vital Statistics
- (b) Staff Profiles
- (c) Teacher Certification Data
- (d) Fall Enrollment

29. Does the Data Acquisition Site offer technical advice and recommendations to user entities? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(f)]

Evidence:

- (a) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
- (b) Copies of past newsletters, current DAS policies, or other appropriate documentation on file.

30. Are instructional technology resources, as defined by the Ohio Department of Education, offered to consortium member districts? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(C)(2)(g)]

Evidence:

- (a) The phrase "instructional technology resources" is currently defined by ODE as Internet access for staff and students.
- (b) Review of current DAS policies and/or other documentation relative to Internet access.
- (c) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.

Data Communications

31. Is there at least one (1) data communications link to every district in the Data Acquisition Site's geographic service region for which the Data Acquisition Site receives funding? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(1)]
32. Does the data communications link (see Item 31 above) provide each district in the Data Acquisition Site's geographic service region with EMail access to the OECN? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(1)]

Appendix

33. Is the speed and reliability of the consortium's data communications network commensurate with industry standards and does it provide for efficient end-user processing? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(2)]

Evidence:

- (a) Current interpretation is a network consisting of "2400 baud minimum speeds for single users with similar throughput for multiple user circuits."
- (b) Review of actual capabilities re. the data comm network.
- (c) Existence of a network topology map which would not only define speeds, but also the number of devices supported across any given link.

34. Does the Data Acquisition Site support industry standard transmission protocols? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(3)]

Evidence:

Current interpretation is that at least ONE of the following protocols must be functional at the DAS:

- (a) TCP/IP
- (b) DECnet
- (c) LAT

35. Does the Data Acquisition Site facilitate the repair and maintenance of the consortium's data communications equipment? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(4)]

Evidence:

- (a) Copies of appropriate equipment maintenance contract(s).
- (b) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
- (c) Copies of other pertinent documentation.

36. Are options available to user districts which include LAN to WAN connectivity to the OECN? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(5)]

Evidence:

- (a) Review of DAS service offerings, policies, and procedures.
- (b) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
- (c) Copies of other pertinent documentation.

37. Does the Data Acquisition Site make available electronic communication capabilities to any State Board of Education member who resides within the Site's geographic service area? N/A ___ Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(D)(6)]

Appendix

Hardware and Software

38. Does the Data Acquisition Site provide for repair and maintenance of the computer systems equipment which is utilized to support services to multiple districts? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(E)(1)]

Evidence:
Copies of appropriate equipment maintenance contract(s).

39. Is the performance and reliability of the computer systems equipment commensurate with user expectations and industry standards? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(E)(2)]

Evidence:
Responses from user interviews/surveys.

40. Does the computer systems equipment enable the Data Acquisition Site to offer the basic services as described in Rule 3301-3-07(C)(2)? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(E)(3)]

41. Is the current version of each software package, based on the providers' standards for continued support, available for access by user personnel? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(F)(1)]

42. Is all software provided by the Ohio Department of Education maintained and utilized without modification in any respect, unless prior written approval for software modification has been received from the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-04(A)(2)]

43. Does the Data Acquisition Site have support services available from each software provider or designee? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(F)(2)]

44. Does the Data Acquisition Site have an established procedure, approved by its governing body, for suggesting changes to the software providers? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(F)(3)]

Evidence:
Copy of written "change procedure" approved by the DAS governing body.

Computer Center Operations

45. Are backups done at regular intervals and stored at a secure location? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(G)(1)]

46. Are backups done in such a manner that it is possible to reliably restore the data as needed? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(1)]

Appendix

47. Is the computer system scheduled for user access seven days per week on a regular basis? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(2)]

48. Is the computer system scheduled for user access at least 95 per cent of the time during prime time working hours (7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday)? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(3)]

49. Has a written disaster recovery plan been formulated, reviewed regularly by the Data Acquisition Site's governing body, and filed with the ODE Division of Information Management Services? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(G)(4)]

Evidence:
Copy of written disaster recovery plan.

50. Has a written security policy been implemented which specifies the methods for obtaining, processing, reporting and storing data? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(5)(a)]

Evidence:
Copy of written security policy in effect at the DAS.

51. Has a written security policy been implemented which prohibits access to the computer systems and services by unauthorized personnel? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(5)(b)]

Evidence:
(a) Copy of written security policy in effect at the DAS.
(b) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.
(c) On-site review of data center facilities.

52. Are Data Acquisition Site staff members bonded for the faithful performance of their duties? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(6)]

Evidence:
Copy of appropriate insurance policy/policies.

53. Does the Data Acquisition Site have insurance coverage for all of its fixed assets? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(7)]

54. Has a data retention policy been written, implemented and communicated to all user districts? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(8)]

Evidence:
Copy of existing written policy re. data retention.

Appendix

55. Does the data retention policy (see item 54) specify how the data is stored, how it can be restored and the method for disposal of this data? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(8)]

Evidence:

Review of content - written policy re. data retention.

56. Is the computer system reviewed at regular intervals to ensure sufficient system performance and data security? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(9)]

57. Does the Data Acquisition Site have a signed service contract with every user entity which lists the services used and the basis for calculating the charges for those services? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(10)]

Evidence:

Copy of current signed service contract(s) with every user entity.

58. Is the billing procedure for user services performed in a regular and timely manner? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(10)]

Evidence:

(a) Review of DAS billing procedures & cash flow history.
(b) Bills cannot carry over into the ensuing fiscal year.
(c) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.

59. Are Data Acquisition Site staff members accessible by user personnel via telephone or electronic mail? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(11)]

Evidence:

Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.

60. Has the Data Acquisition Site implemented software which will automatically disable inactive user sessions? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(G)(12)]

Evidence:

Review of existing DAS system software capabilities.

Computer Center Physical Facilities

61. Is the environment for the computer systems in compliance with the computer manufacturer's standards for installation, power, and maintenance? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(H)(1)]

62. Is the physical security of the Data Acquisition Site adequate to prevent unauthorized access to the computer systems? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(H)(2)]

Appendix

63. Is there an area available to provide training for the Data Acquisition Site services described in Rule 3301-3-07(C)(2)? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(H)(3)]

Data Acquisition Site Personnel

64. Are staffing levels sufficient, as measured by user and staff satisfaction, to meet the service needs of the user? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(I)(1)]

Evidence:

Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.

65. Do the Data Acquisition Site director and all managers/supervisors meet the staff qualifications requirements as detailed in Rule 3301-3-07(I)(2)(a-c)? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(I)(2)(a-c)]

66. Do all staff members have the training and/or experience necessary to perform the duties contained in their job descriptions? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(I)(2)(d)]

67. Have all Data Acquisition Site staff been given the appropriate training for the task(s) assigned? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(I)(3)(a)]

68. Are all Data Acquisition Site staff members engaged in an ongoing program of inservice in the areas of assignment? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(I)(3)(b)]

69. Has each staff member earned a minimum of one and one-half CEU's during the previous fiscal year? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(I)(3)(b)]

Training of Users

70. Is an ongoing comprehensive program of training for users available for each of the services supported by the Data Acquisition Site? Yes ___ No X
[3301-3-07(J)(1)]

Evidence:

(a) Review of DAS user training schedule(s) for past year.

(b) Review of agendas & attendee rosters from previous user training sessions.

(c) Responses from staff and user interviews/surveys.

71. Do all appropriate user training programs follow the CEU guidelines as specified by the Ohio Department of Education? Yes X No ___
[3301-3-07(J)(2)]

Evidence:

Review of existing user training programs (CEU guidelines to be made available by ODE).