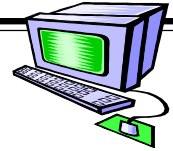




SPRING 2005



Connected

The Newsletter of the Miami Valley Educational Computer Association

SUPERINTENDENTS AND TREASURERS:

At the April Assembly Meeting, the Assembly will need to elect a new member to the MVECA Board. If you have any interest in serving on the MVECA Board, please make your interest known to one of our current Board members, or Norma Stewart at MVECA.

ASSEMBLY MEETING – APRIL 21, 2005
breakfast: 9:00 a.m.
meeting: 9:30–11:00 a.m.

THIRD FRONTIER NETWORK - GOOD NEWS!

On November 30, 2004, Gov. Taft participated in the lighting ceremony for the Third Frontier Network. ODE has now moved forward to purchase communications equipment for the K-12 TFN backbone. Once this equipment is installed and tested, MVECA and other DA Sites will begin connecting to TFN. MVECA expects to be connected to the backbone within the next 10-18 months. With bigger pipes, the K-12 ONEnet backbone can meet the demands of IP video, media streaming, and other technology advances. Our next challenge is to increase bandwidth from MVECA to our districts.

What's New?

Ohio LIT - Round 9

(Free Laptop Computer Program)

The dates have been set for round 9 of the Ohio LIT Training Sessions. MVECA will be hosting round 9. The first class will be Monday, April 25, 2005; the second class for this session is scheduled for Friday, May 20, 2005; and the third class will be on Monday, June 20, 2005.

Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, and Assistant Principals are all eligible.

You must register through Ohio SchoolNet to attend.
<http://www.osn.state.oh.us>.

What's New?

The INFOhio Electronic Resources

Preview has been underway for several weeks now, but two weeks remain. If you haven't yet had an opportunity to look at some of these 160 online resources, we hope you will do so. These products are available from INFOhio's free preview through March 15th for all educators, parents and students. Go to <http://www.infohio.org/ER/Preview2005/Summary2005.html>.

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HELP WANTED:

**SOFTWARE SUPPORT PERSON
FOR EMIS, DASL SUPPORT.
FULLTIME.**

**CONTACT MVECA
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

"The brighter you are, the more you have to learn."

—Don Herold

Student Services

Angle Crandall

Stacy Hurtt

Becky Nininger

Sandra Ingledue



EMIS UPDATE

FY2006 EMIS Change Process Announced by ODE

The Ohio Department of Education, EMIS staff has announced that they are beginning the FY2006 EMIS change process. This entails analyzing changes in law and federal reporting requirements to determine if there should be any changes in EMIS reporting requirements for the 2005-06 school year. The results of this process may require changes to student information systems, so software vendors are very interested in the outcomes.

ODE is attempting to hold the number of changes to an absolute minimum, except for changes that meet the following criteria:

1. The proposed change is required by law,
2. The change will make reporting less burdensome for districts,
3. The change will significantly improve the quality of the data being reported to EMIS, and/or
4. The change eliminates reporting of data that is no longer required or used by ODE.

If you have any suggestions about EMIS changes that would simplify EMIS reporting, or would make ODE/EMIS data verification reports easier to read, please send suggestions to the MVECA help desk at hdesk@mveca.org by **Friday, March 11, 2005**. The MVECA EMIS/Student Services Team will compile the list of suggestions and share it with ODE.



Presentations from February Training Available On-line

Presentations from the February 17, 2005 EMIS Report Training Sessions can be found at <http://www.mveca.org/EMIS/default.htm>.

Spring EMIS Training – FY2005 Yearend Reporting

This year MVECA will sponsor two separate EMIS training sessions. The first session will be held on April 13, and content will include the FY2005 Yearend reporting checklist and ODE yearend reports, *except for testing and accountability*, which will be covered at the second session. The date for the second session will be announced following the spring conference of the Ohio Association of EMIS Professionals (OAEP), which will be held May 1-3. Holding the session on accountability and assessment after OAEP will give everyone attending the conference an opportunity to hear updates from ODE staff about any changes in policy and reporting instructions. Once the assessment section of the FY2005 EMIS Manual is released by ODE, the MVECA staff can design the training to best assist the districts we serve.

Registration information can be found at: <http://www.oaep.net/>.

Registration for the April 13 meeting is now available online on the TRAINING CALENDAR which is located on the MVECA web site at www.mveca.org.

EMIS Calendar of Spring EMIS Events

March 15-17, 2005 - Ohio Education Data Systems Association Spring Conference
(Registration closes on March 4, 2005)

April 13, 2005 - Yearend EMIS training session at MVECA

May 1-3, 2005 - Ohio Association of EMIS Professionals (OAEP) Spring Conference

“Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not.”

— Walter Bagehot

PROGRESS BOOK



Hello to everyone! Wow, the school year is nearly three quarters over! Things are going very well with Progress Book, Parent Access and the Special Services Module.

We have six districts currently using the Special Services Module and appreciate their giving us some great feedback! We have begun creating custom forms for some of these districts for use with the Special Services Module. The demographic data is automatically populated onto these custom forms just as it is with the state forms. We have received some great enhancement requests from the districts and are pleased to inform you that Software Answers will soon be releasing an upgrade to the module containing many of your enhancement requests. The standard state forms contained within the module have recently been posted to the Special Services section of the Progress Book web site.

Eight of the fifteen Progress Book districts are now set up to use the Parent Access feature of Progress Book and with great feedback from the districts. It appears that parents are delighted with the ability to go into their student's accounts and make checks on homework assignments, grades, messages and more! Parents can also be given proper permissions, at the request of the districts, to login and view and even comment about the IEP forms for their students who are on IEPs.

As of the February 18, 2005 updates to Progress Book, the standards, benchmarks and indicators for the following content areas have been added:

- * Music
- * Drama and Theatre
- * Technology
- * Library
- * Foreign Languages
- * Visual Arts
- * Dance

The updates also included a fix for "post homework / messages to the web" not showing up in Parent Access. Both homework and messages will now appear until 11:59 PM of the due date.

New information has recently been posted to the Progress Book web site containing samples of the letters sent home to parents and some user information. If you are a Progress Book district or a Special Services district, are not yet using the Parent Access feature and would like to, send us a clean copy of your school logo in jpeg. or gif. format and contact us for remaining instructions to get this going for you. You can view the districts currently setup for Parent Access by going to: <https://parent.mveca.org>.

SPECIAL SERVICES MODULE (SSEM)

You can find helpful Quick Tips online by going to: www.mveca.org/progressbook and clicking on either "Click here for Quick Tips on Progress Book" or "Quick Tips for Special Education Module Users". The Progress Book web site is updated regularly so check in now and then to see what is new.

Upcoming Events

We have reserved space here at MVECA in the Commons for Friday, March 4, 2005. If you would like to view a presentation of the Special Services Module and/or Progress Book, join us from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sign up online by using the following link: www.mveca.org/www/training/registration_form.htm. The Special Services Module will be presented first, followed by the Progress Book presentation.

If you would like to schedule a presentation of Special Services or Progress Book in your district or would like to come to MVECA to view either or both of the modules, email us at progressbook@mveca.org We will do our best to accommodate you.

If you have any questions about either of the two modules, let us know. Keep in touch. Your needs are important to us!

SESSI GRANT



MVECA, in conjunction with Clark, Greene and Clinton-Fayette-Highland ESCs, has applied for a grant to assist MVECA districts with the rollout and implementation of the Student Services module (SSEM) of Progress Book.

If successful, the grant funds will be used to:

- *train "field facilitators" at each ESC to help support users of the software when they are in your districts;
- *help defray some of the costs for staff at MVECA to support the software;
- *purchase video equipment for MVECA to use to capture and stream training for districts to use in trainings and review sessions for staff.

You will receive more information about the opportunities available to you through the grant as soon as MVECA receives word that we have received the funds (on or before April 11, 2005).

The SSEM software can be used within or outside of Progress Book. Districts do not have to use Progress Book software to use the SSEM module.



SIS UPDATE

Although the calendar is turned to only March, this is the time of year that many high schools, junior high schools, and middle schools begin the scheduling process for the next school year. Documentation for the scheduling process in SIS can be found on MVECA's web site.

- From MVECA's home page (<http://www.mveca.org/>), select the 'student services' link located toward the middle of the page.
- The 'student services' links will be displayed. Selecting the 'SIS information' link will display a page divided into two columns. The column to the left lists MVECA SIS Documentation in chapter format.
- Selecting 'Chapter 6 – Scheduling' will open the scheduling document to the right of the 'Chapter 6 – Scheduling' link.
- At this point, the scheduling document can be printed if needed.

Several schools have used or are using the DSL Server Application that allows course requests to be added via the web. The application requires entry of student last name, birth date, school code, and student id. Options to display the student's course history, course requests, and current schedule may be listed. Courses can be selected from a list of valid courses to be added to the student's requests. When entering online requests is complete, the school notifies MVECA to load the requests into SIS. Feedback from those schools using the online course request application has been very positive.

ODE's change process is now underway for EMIS FY06 reporting requirements. We hope to learn more details regarding the changes at the OEDSA Conference to be held in Columbus on March 16 and 17. With additional details in hand, we will be better able to plan for working sessions in MVECA's computer lab for elementary school scheduling needs in SIS.

Schools can begin enrolling new students for the 05/06 school year. When entering next year's students in SIS, the students should be entered with an 'I' status and an '05/06' school year.

Shortly after the last processing of October EMIS data (3/18/2005), processing of Yearend EMIS student data begins (5/20/2005). Last year, the first processing of Yearend data occurred on 4/23/2004. This year the first processing of Yearend **staff** data is 4/22/2005; however, the first processing of Yearend **student** data doesn't occur until almost a month later (5/20/2005). This difference decreases the number of times processing of student data will occur before the final submission deadline in July.

With that news, as time allows, schools can begin processing the R500 (District-Wide Membership Report) in SIS to begin reconciling school/district attendance figures. Leaving the 'P028 Version No.' field blank will generate the R500 for just the school. Entering '99' in the 'P028 Version No.' field will generate the R500 for the district.

Schools can begin adding end-of-year program codes to the MEMB or MEMS screens in SIS.

High Schools that do not schedule students into PSEO courses via SIS can be updating course history for the students taking PSEO courses as that information becomes available.

As we learn of any new yearend reporting requirements, we will share the information with our schools. If any of the information entry can be completed early, the yearend workload may be lessened and made more pleasant.

Please be on the lookout for additional information via email and, as always, if I can be of any assistance, please email me at nininger@mveca.org or hdesk@mveca.org or call me at 937-767-1468, extension 3108.



FISCAL UPDATE

Michelle Powers and Deb Dinnen

USASWEB

Many of you have had the opportunity to use USASWEB to create requisitions. This web based interface has been updated to include:

- o Query, create, modify, delete or clone budget and revenue accounts
- o Convert requisitions to purchase orders
- o Query, post, load draft, modify, delete or clone purchase orders
- o Query, post, modify, or clone receipts or reduction of expenditures

Instructions are available on the fiscal webpage www.mveca.org/FISCAL/fiscaldocs/USASWEB%20v1.2.doc.

PAYROLL

W2 tapes have been submitted to SSA, State of Ohio and RITA. The process ran very smoothly this year. Thanks for your cooperation!!

V4.2 USPS

You have been patiently waiting the release of the new USPS software, Version 4.2. We introduced the software enhancements at our USPS Roundtable in October, 2004. We anticipate installing it with the March release. V4.2 will provide these enhancements:

- o **Deductions by Job**- City, retirement, Medicare and FICA deductions can be job specific. Example: Board picks up retirement on regular job but not on supplemental job. DEDNAM will have a flag (Y/N) to indicate a job level deduction. DEDSCN will have a new field for Job Number. This will limit the withholding to only wages paid on the job assigned to the deduction code. Deductions with no job assignment will withhold based on total gross paid to the employee.

- o **Conceal employees**- Users will have the ability to by-pass former employee records, making them appear to be deleted from the data files. BIOSCN will have a flag to determine if the records for this employee should be concealed. In USPCON, the MASK field allows users to by-pass the conceal employee flag in all modules when using the "NEXT" and "FIND" keys. This replaces WIPOUT.

- o **Defer attendance posting** – Provides the option of deferring immediate leave balance updates when ATDSCN records are entered. The leave balance update will be delayed until the payroll the transaction date covers. A flag will be added to USPSDAT/USPCON to indicate if districts will utilize the deferred posting of leave.

We will schedule a roundtable sometime after the release to present these updates.



Technology News

New Helpdesk Software Will Benefit Everyone

Thor Sage

Unicenter ServicePlus Service Desk by Computer Associates (C.A. Unicenter) is a new helpdesk software package that could potentially help improve the quality of services MVECA member districts receive. The software, which is being implemented at all OECN data acquisition sites throughout the state, offers clear and comprehensive organizational tools for handling large numbers of helpdesk requests. MVECA employees using the software will be able to efficiently track service requests of all kinds while district employees will have the ability to check the status of their requests from an easy-to-use web interface. Additionally, the software will help guarantee the quality and timeliness of the services MVECA provides by tracking the various elements of service-level agreements (SLA's). These SLA's, currently being developed, will essentially serve to define MVECA services and processes in a detailed way so that member districts will know exactly what to expect from their D.A. site. At the same time, the helpdesk software will offer a method of tracking work processes as they relate to service-levels. Essentially, the helpdesk software will help MVECA employees to make sure that every service request is handled by the appropriate staff in an appropriate amount of time.

In addition to request tracking, the software offers other features that will help MVECA refine its internal processes so that we can better serve our member districts. Detailed asset tracking, customer contact databases, knowledge archives, and process analysis tools are all part of the C.A. Unicenter package. Through the use of these features, service requests can be tied directly to an affected end user and/or asset. This, in turn, will allow MVECA support personnel to more efficiently accumulate all needed information relating to any request. Analysis tools included with the software will help us measure our effectiveness and identify areas where MVECA or member district employees may need more training or assistance. Knowledge archives will allow users to seek out answers to common problems in the form of posted FAQ's, documents, videos, etc.

The potential for the overall improvement of MVECA services, through the use of the C.A. Unicenter package, is enormous. With the development of SLA's and the use of this helpdesk software, MVECA customers should expect to receive consistent, high-quality services that can be measured, and reported on in detail. Districts will also be able to obtain information about what MVECA services their own personnel use and how often they use them. Virtually all aspects of MVECA operations will be impacted in a positive way through the use of the C.A. Unicenter package, and our customers should expect to reap the rewards as the implementation process moves ahead.

New email retention policy

The MVECA Board approved a policy to help with the problems of storage and disposal of old email on the MVECA server. Effective May 1, 2005:

- messages in the Newmail or Inbox folder, older than 120 days will be deleted weekly
- messages in the mail folder, older than 120 days will be deleted weekly
- messages in the outbox or Sent folders older than 120 days will be deleted weekly
- messages in the Wastebasket, Trash, Deleted folders will be deleted weekly

Any mail message that needs to be kept should be filed in a folder other than the ones listed above.

Pictures, files, reports and videos should be downloaded to the local computer and deleted from the mail folder.



FREE TRIAL

MINDS is offering ONE FREE MC-eKC CONCURRENT LICENSE for each MVECA member district (\$425 value) from 01/01/05 to 06/30/05, as well as highly discounted consortium pricing for additional concurrent licenses.

MINDSconnects™ eLearning Knowledge Center (MC-eKC) consists of over 350 hours of video streaming professional development, eLearning tutorials, conference sessions, best practices and more. In addition, it offers DigitalCurriculum's more than 90,000 Ohio aligned instructional multimedia components as well as Data-Driven Decision Making (a 23 session online course), the Oral History Project (a national project-based learning initiative), and a distance learning database. ***Update: MC-eKC New and Upcoming Content.***

Contact Bill Schroeder for your district's password.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Bill Schroeder

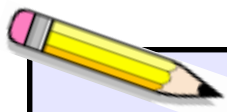


Video streaming Update

This past summer Discovery Learning purchased AIMS, the company that produces Digital Curriculum. Discovery Learning also owns United Streaming. In most other states they are combining the two products into one offering. However, due to existing service contracts, they are still separate and competitive products in Ohio. This has led to many questions about the future of both services. According to Dataserv/Minds, Discovery Learning plans to continue adding video content to Digital Curriculum for the next two years.

MVECA has teamed with Dataserv/Minds to bring you the Digital Curriculum offering for \$.75 per ADM. Each district has free access to Digital Curriculum through the Minds Connects E-knowledge learning Center (MC eKC). MVECA held three regional roll-out meetings last month to inform you on your video streaming options and to distribute account information. If you were unable to attend any of these meetings and would like more information on Digital Curriculum please contact Bill Schroeder at MVECA. You can receive your free access to Digital Curriculum plus a personal tour of the software.

United Streaming is also offering their video streaming to our districts for \$.75 per ADM. SOITA is offering Chalkwaves for \$1.50 per ADM. Your Area Media Center offers 134 high demand content standard related (video) titles at no cost to school districts. For more information on the INFOhio catalogue and MVECA offerings, you can contact Bill Schroeder or Jim Pesch at MVECA, or your Area Media Center.



MVECA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fri., March 4	Document Handling Demo 9-10:30
Fri., March 4	Tech Coordinator's Meeting 9-12
Fri., March 4	Progress Book and Student Services Module Demo 1:00-3:00 p.m.
March 15-16-17	OEDSA Conference - Columbus
Mon., Mar. 21	INFOhio Users Meeting 11-1
March 24	NEWCNT/SALNOTICE Training
Fri., March 25	MVECA Offices Closed
Sun., April 3	Daylight Savings Time begins
Mon., April 11	OhioLIT session 3 of round 8
Wed., April 13	Yearend EMIS training
Thurs., April 21	MVECA Board Meeting 8:30 a.m.
Thurs., April 21	MVECAASSEMBLY MEETING 9:30
Mon., April 25	OhioLIT - round 9 - class 1of 3
May 1-3	OAEP Spring Conference
Thurs., May 19	MVECA Board Meeting
Fri., May 20	OhioLIT round 9 - class 2 of 3
Mon., June 20	OhioLIT round 9 - class 3 of 3

(all events listed above will be held at MVECA unless otherwise noted)



INFOhio

Jim Pesch

Sirsi Migration

GO-LIVE day nears for prototype districts. Since November, 2004 our three prototype districts, Northwestern, Cedarcliff, and Sugarcreek, have been rigorously evaluating their test databases. All three districts should Go-Live in March. Next on the block will be Greenon, East Clinton, Clark-Shawnee, and Southeastern. We also look forward to welcoming the Greene County Career Center as the first migration from a standalone product.

INFOhio Tech Services in Lima is still waiting on the MAC client software for testing. It is our hope that it will be available in the fall for our many districts with MAC computers who are anxiously waiting to migrate.

Users Meeting Ahead

Our next INFOhio Users Group meeting will be on Monday, March 21, 2005 from 11:00am – 1:00pm. At your request I have invited Patrick Heekin from Aimpoint Research to demonstrate the Aimpoint Reasearch Libraries product. Some of you purchased this product a few years ago. Discounts are available through a group purchase.

Digital Titles to increase

The area media centers are currently in the process of adding about 40+ additional digital titles. The digital titles are available FREE to all teachers across the state. These new titles include:

Beginning Math Vocabulary	K-3	1999
Learning to use Graphs	K-3	2000
Learning about Sorting and Grouping	K-3	2001
Learning to use a Calendar	K-3	1998
Charts, Graphs, and Diagrams	K-3	1998
Learning about Money	K-3	2001
How our Economy Works: All about Earning and Spending Money	K-3	2001
Scientific Method	3-7	2001
The Water Cycle	3-7	2003
Early Explorers: The Age of Discovery	3-7	2004
Early Settlers: The Era of Colonization	3-7	2004
Founding of Our Federal Government	3-7	2001
Colonial Times: Field Trips to Yesterday	3-7	2001
How the USA Grew: 13 Colonies to 50 States	3-7	2001
Effective Teaching with Classroom Videos	InService2003	

Web Page Update

In the next few weeks you will begin to see updates to the INFOhio webpage: <http://www2.mveca.org/infohio/>.

I will be adding additional links to Sirsi related content. Several of the first DASites to migrate have extensive tips and support materials ready for all to use.



You can register online for all MVECA events at:
www.mveca.org/www/training/registration_form.htm