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The Newsletter of the Licking Area Computer Association – Newark, OH

From The Executive Director's Desk – Sandy Mercer

As I complete my 25th year as Director of the Licking Area Computer Association (LACA), I thought it would be appropriate to give you some trivia in regards to LACA, an organization we hope you have all come to depend upon and enjoy.

- LACA's doors opened in Oct 1982 and the first district live on accounting, the only application offered, was Lakewood in January 1983. LACA had 6 users access the system.
 - Today, LACA has 14 major applications and over 4400 users.
- Payroll was first offered in 1983. Newark City's payroll posting program would take approximately 6 hours to process. Checks were also driven to State Farm, where they were burst and prepared for staff mailing.
 - Today, the payroll posting program takes less than 5 minutes for Newark, our largest district. Checks are also directly deposited into bank accounts and check stubs are distributed through e-mail for a majority of staff.
- Student Administrative Software was first offered in the summer of 1984 and the first building live on the application was Licking Heights High School. All records were manually entered. There was no conversion.
 - Today, LACA supports 82 school buildings (serving over 36,000 students) and there are five student administration applications supported: SIS, DASL, DSL, Progress Book and SSEM
- E-mail was first offered in 1994 and was strictly text based. It took about 10 minutes just to go through steps to connect. (I was overwhelmed with receiving about 5 e-mails per day.)
 - Today, LACA processes between 200,000 – 300,000 total e-mails per day. 94% of this e-mail is SPAM. (My average number of e-mails per day is now 225. Needless to say, I am still overwhelmed.)
- Internet Access was first available at LACA in 1994 and was strictly text based. Only one person in each district was trained on the use.
 - Today, Internet Access is accessible at every desktop in every district. Strangely enough, our biggest concern now is *restricting* access to the Internet!
- Library Services were implemented in 1997 along with LACA's first website and website hosting services. One electronic resource (SIRS) was only available on CD.
 - Today, we have 16 electronic resources, all available through the Internet, and 56 building libraries fully automated (serving over 27,000) students.
- LACA's first attempt at offering a high-speed network was in 1999. Districts upgraded to T1 speeds. (equivalent to 1.544Mbps)
 - Today, LACA offers fiber speeds of 10-200Mbps.
- Video services were first offered at LACA in 2001, and six buildings received a hardware grant through Ohio SchoolNet for \$600,000.
 - Today a video unit costs under \$1500.
- Progress Book was first offered in 2002. We had so many districts interested; we had to offer the application to 35 buildings during the pilot year.
 - Today, LACA supports 82 school buildings of which 65% are also offering the parent website services

It is fascinating to reflect on the accomplishments and to speculate what the services will be like 25 years from now!

💰 FISCAL SERVICES 💰

Electronic Time Card System/Services



The TimeWare project is moving forward. We have been working closely with TimeWare to refine their program to conform to the needs of a school district. The district contacts are still working to refine their district and employee policies. Both Southwest Licking and Licking Heights have people clocking in and out on a daily basis. Licking Heights has imported information twice into a test data base. Southwest Licking hopes to do their first import with their April 20th payroll information.

Human Resource Project

SSDT is developing a Human Resource Package that currently includes an Employee Kiosk and online approval of employee leave. The Kiosk will allow employees to log in and review their personal information, leave balances and days taken, and individual payroll checks including earnings and deductions. C-Tec is piloting the Employee Kiosk. The Kiosk is planned to be ready for all districts to use by the beginning of the school year.

The online approval of employee leave will allow employees to apply for leave and have it forwarded electronically to their immediate supervisor for approval. This process is still under development. Maysville has agreed to pilot this portion of the project.

Individual professional development, job applications, and performance appraisal tracking programs should be coming in the near future.

Web Based Programs

Most of the latest updates to the fiscal USAS/USPS web based programs have been on the “back end” to improve performance and to prepare for future enhancements. A supervisor field was added to USPSWeb that will be used by the new HR employee leave program.

The USASWeb program is now starting to look at the User Preference Option Screen (OPTSCN) in Reflection. If you have a “deliver to vendor” defined in your OPTSCN, the “deliver to vendor” fields will automatically be populated when you add a requisition or purchase order in USASWeb. When searching for an account or a vendor inside one of the data entry screens, you will now receive a pop up box instead of going to the vendor or account entry screens. You will then be able to either select the vendor or account you are searching for or close the window.

If you have any questions or problems with any of the fiscal web based programs, please call Melody, email fiscal@laca.org, or post a help desk ticket.

AESOP

Southwest Licking is using the AESOP program for sub teacher calling. They are downloading a spreadsheet from the AESOP program and using the USPS Import program to load the attendance and pay information for their sub teachers and absence information for their regular teachers in payroll. Cathy Donahue has offered to create documentation and do the training for other districts that are interested in using this HUGE time saving process.

LACA will send out a notice to fiscal users when this training is offered. Thank you, Cathy!!

STUDENT SERVICES – SIS

Year End SIS

LACA has 7 Districts remaining on SIS/POISE this current school year. The “End of School Year Procedures” and list of all LACA created reports that are placed on each school’s CD are listed on our SIS Student Services Web Page. <http://www.laca.org/Services/SIS/documentation.htm>.

Remember: Once a building is closed-out in July, there is no further access to change or add a report that was incorrect.

Please remember to build next year’s (2007/08) calendar on the P310 before you leave for the summer. This is a MUST! LACA needs the next year calendar to transfer necessary information to EMIS.



Student Fees

If a student owes fees at the end of the year and there is a balance on the FEES Screen, the dollar amount will disappear with the SIS school closings done by LACA in July.

We suggest each school using the “Fees Screen” submit and print an “Outstanding Fee Report” (R110) and keep it in a safe place for next year’s reference. LACA will include an Outstanding Fees Report on each building’s year end CD.

End of Year Email

End of Year information will be requested by email. Please respond with the information requested.

1. When do you want your Grade Labels printed?
2. Secretary’s last working day of this year. Secretary’s first working day of next year.
3. Grade Card Order for next school year.
4. Starting and Ending dates of each six / nine weeks (next school year).

Remember to return the information to Linda by the deadline dates. The forms are ordered by the end of June.

Up Coming SIS Trainings

Year End – May 9, 2007 at 9:00 – 12:00

Start of Year – August 14, 2007 HS/MS at 9:00 – 11:00 and Elementary at 1:00 – 3:00

Start of Year – August 15, 2007 Elementary at 9:00 – 11:00 and HS/MS at 1:00 – 3:00

Elementary Scheduling – August 21, 2007 at 9:00 – 11:30 and 1:00 – 3:30

Attendance – September 11, 2007 at 9:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00

Fees – September 18, 2007 at 9:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00

To register, go to the DASL webpage, at <http://www.laca.org/Services/DASL>, click on SINC, choose SIS Class Type, and register for any of these SIS classes.

C-TEC Conversion

C-TEC conversion is just around the corner and requires several steps to be done by C-TEC and LACA. We plan on completing this process on June 8, 2007. Please be aware that the C-TEC Conversion MUST be done before you print the senior transcripts.

Watch the SIS "Good Morning" message and DASL Announcements on the DASL web site for the announcement of the C-TEC Conversion completion.



SIS – Closing of Schools

Closing of schools simply means LACA will clean up the SIS building files i.e.: erase all current CLIS records, current attendance, etc. When the new school year starts, the system will be fresh.

During July, LACA starts the year end closing of school buildings. Please note that SIS users will be temporarily locked out of their building's SIS system during the close.

DASL Scheduling Highlights



Springtime is here and on March 6th districts started scheduling for the 2007/08 school year. Schools on DASL are using a few features SIS/POISE never had.

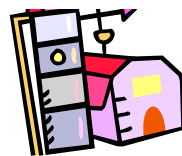
- Save several different scheduling results
- Create different scheduling runs
- Execute the batch scheduler during the day without logging out of DASL
- See the batch statistics immediately
- Eighteen different scheduling card formats to choose from

To register for the DASL Elementary Scheduling class, go to the DASL webpage, <http://www.laca.org/Services/DASL>, click on SINC, choose DASL Class Type, and register for the DASL scheduling class.

Elementary Scheduling May 21, 2007 or August 23, 2007. Two sessions each day at 9:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00

DASL Year End information will be forthcoming in May.

Count Your Eggs, DASL Has Hatched!



The DASL Barnyard is growing! The Maysville and Foxfire District went live on March 13, 2007. This brings the count to 10 districts (32 Buildings) live on DASL at LACA. Summer will bring 4 more districts: C-TEC, Granville, Northridge, and Mt. Vernon. Since the barnyard is growing, so could the support calls. Please let us know how well we are responding to your issues.

The DASL team would like to thank all the individuals involved in making the SIS to DASL conversion a success for the districts LIVE on DASL. A conversion like this one – is of great magnitude and affects everyone that used SIS. We appreciate your patience and efforts!

LIBRARY SERVICES

SIRSI K-12 Inventory Training



SIRSI K-12 Inventory Training will be held at LACA from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon on the following dates: April 25, 2007 (Newark Elementary Library Aides only), May 9, 2007, and May 16, 2007. Please bring the updated inventory materials from INFOhio's SIRSI K-12 handbook.

LACA Libraries Welcome Hartford Elementary and C-TEC



Hartford Elementary, in the Northridge Local School District, will be converting their library collection to the SIRSI K-12 library automation software. Conversion begins on April 10 by using SmartPORT and the Curriculum Resource Catalog to catalog the entire library. Lisa Evans and Tracey Langley are library volunteers and will do the conversion themselves.

The C-TEC library will convert their collection to the SIRSI K-12 library automation software. They are currently using Winnebago library automation software but will make the conversion this summer. Edna Ridenbaugh is the librarian at C-TEC.

WELCOME HARTFORD and C-TEC!

Lakewood Local School District & Licking Valley Elementary Part of INFOhio Statewide Automation Grant

Both Lakewood and Licking Valley Elementary were accepted to be a part of INFOhio's statewide LSTA Library Automation Grant. The 2007 LSTA Automation Grant is a restricted grant program for eligible school libraries to automate through INFOhio and the SIRSI K-12 software.

The grant proposal was submitted in March and the State Library will notify INFOhio in August as to whether the grant proposal has been approved. If approved, the grant will begin on October 1 and all libraries will begin the conversion and training process.

GOOD LUCK LAKEWOOD and LICKING VALLEY!

IVDL UPDATES

Enhancing Video Services for 2007-2008

Schools are experiencing a record year for videoconferencing with over 450 connections scheduled so far! Great work from your Video Lead Teachers!

LACA will be enhancing video services so that schools can capitalize on the portability of newer videoconferencing systems like the Polycom. By purchasing video support for a single system (or building), we will support the video system in any building in which it is placed. We will continue to work directly with one lead teacher per video system. If you have two video systems, then we will work with two lead teachers and so on.

Northeastern Ohio Distance Learning Showcase – May 15th at LACA

All teachers are invited to come to LACA on May 15th between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm to participate in the collaborative videoconference. Teachers in Northeastern Ohio will be presenting video clips of some of the collaborative classes that they conducted this year. This is a great opportunity to see how other schools are integrating video distance learning into the classroom. You don't have to stay for the entire presentation. Please let us know if you plan to attend: ivdlorders@laca.org.

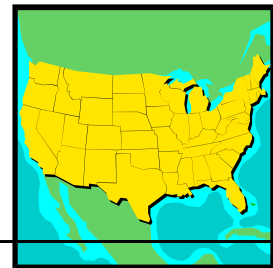
Video Distance Learning Class Experiences



Searfoss Elementary in Johnstown and Lincoln Middle in Newark participated in **Follow the North Star** distance learning class by Conner Prairie. Students learned about the Underground Railroad in 1836 Indiana. Student participants played the role of fugitive slaves and interacted with representative characters they may have met during their escape to freedom. Both schools rated the class as “very good” and the students enjoyed the class.

“I absolutely loved **Follow the North Star**. The use of actual students role-playing the parts of slaves grabbed my students’ attention. It really made it real to them when they saw that they could have been treated in such a way. The content was very appropriate for grade five social studies. It hit the standard exactly.” By Alissa Gardner - Searfoss

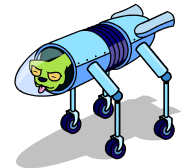
Read Across America is a distance learning project where schools are paired with other schools in the United States and Canada. Each class selects a book to read to the partner class. The session included question & answer interaction as well. Students from Searfoss Elementary in Johnstown read to schools in North Dakota and Canada. Northridge Homer Elementary students were reading partners with a school in Paris, Texas.



“The **Read Across America** sessions were great and were very interactive. My students LOVED these conferences and asked if we could connect again with these classes. The other teachers were very friendly and cooperative. My only suggestion would be for the classes to have a few connections throughout the year. I feel like our first connections could have been a stepping stone to something bigger. The Canadian school has already discussed becoming pen pals with us, but I think we could do even more through videoconferences. We really enjoyed it and had a wonderful experience!” By Alissa Gardner - Searfoss

“**Read Across America** was wonderful! The class from Texas was very cordial and Deb Peterman’s children enjoyed the book the Texas students read. The Texas students enjoyed the book Deb’s children read as well. I stopped in for awhile and it was fun listening to the questions the classes were asking back and forth. Great experience!!” By Penny Ziegler - Homer

Mr. Bunting’s science class at Heath High School participated in **Spacebots** from NASA Digital Learning Center located in Houston, Texas. The students were introduced to the great extent that NASA uses robotics technology in its exploration of space. Comments about the program and the NASA presenters were fantastic.



“The students were glued to their seats and everyone asked questions. This will definitely be a part of next year’s curriculum.” By Amy Gibson – Heath

St. Francis de Sales has participated in numerous classes from the Cleveland Institute of Music. “Since we do not offer any kind of band or instrumental program this has given us the opportunity to expose our students to a wonderful variety of music and instruments. Students acted and danced to an opera in **Let’s Go to the Show**. Third graders preformed an opera as part of **Spellers of Note** and 1st & 2nd graders learned what huge role music plays in video (movies, commercials, cartoons...) in **Music in the Movies**. The **Music in the Movies** had a wonderful vocabulary tie-in as the students had to use words to describe the mood or tone that the music presented. Our 7th & 8th graders participated in **Langston Hughes** which had a wonderful tie-in to their Poetry unit.” By Jill Merry – St. Francis de Sales

EMIS UPDATES



February EMIS Update

February EMIS is known as the 'reporting week that spanned six weeks'. Because of beautiful Ohio's unpredictable weather, most districts in the state had to use a week other than the specified 'first full week of February' for reporting.

Make sure all reports from February reporting are verified and all fatal errors are corrected. The last submission opportunity is May 11, 2007.

Secure Data Center

Beginning with the June (N) 2007 processing period, the Secure Data Center (SDC) will have new features that will enable users to manipulate and customize their school or district-level data. The SDC will still be accessible through users' SAFE accounts, but will have many of the features that users currently see in the iLRC Power User reports. Users will be able to drill down to view the components that go into each calculation, even to the individual student level. Certain reports will be designed to create an easy presentation to other staff members. More information will be forthcoming as we get closer to the Yearend (N) reporting period.

Yearend EMIS

It is spring and EMIS is in full bloom. As we prepare to end another school year, we need to make sure everything is complete for EMIS reporting.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

May 2 – 9:00-11:30 SIS Yearend EMIS

May 2 – 1:00-3:30 SIS Yearend EMIS

May 3 – 9:00-11:30 DASL Yearend EMIS

May 3 – 1:00-3:30 DASL Yearend EMIS

May 23 – 9:00 – 12:00 EMIS Coordinator's Meeting

Things you can do now:

- Enter all membership codes
- Keep up on Discipline
- Obtain lists of students who did not take the State tests and enter their records with the appropriate waiver code
- Obtain lists of students who took tests with accommodations

Happy Spring

D3A2 Project Update

Have you heard about D3A2? If you haven't, we promise you will soon! Two districts within LACA's service area have been piloting this new statewide application for teachers. They are Southwest Licking and Tri-Valley Local. To find out more about D3A2, visit the website at www.d3a2.org.



Introduction

The Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2) project is a long-term initiative focused on developing the capacity of educators while improving instruction and student achievement. D3A2 will provide systemic access to timely data and educational resources aligned to Ohio's Academic Content Standards.

Tools for Educators

Tools accessible through D3A2 will help educators analyze data, and then point them to resources such as lesson plans and assessments designed to address academic needs identified by the data.

D3A2 will put data and resources in the hands of educators, parents and students in a powerful, appropriate and easy-to-use format. As D3A2 progresses, teachers will save time by gaining access to aligned resources for improving classroom instruction.

PROGRESS BOOK



Parent Access Website

We did it! Thanks to everyone's cooperation, we have successfully converted all districts to the new Parent Access website.

Parent Access is an excellent tool for parents and students to stay updated on what is happening in the classroom. Not only can teachers post assignments, but they can also post messages to students and parents. It is a great resource!

Teachers had a few changes to their grade books after the conversion. The two changes are on the Post Homework link and the Post Homepage link (this replaced the Post Messages link).

The Post Homework page gives more options in presenting the assignment. This page can be treated as a word document; the letter size, color, and font can all be changed. You will also notice 3 tabs at the top of the page after you **SAVE** the assignment: links, attachments, and students. These tabs allow you to add websites and documents for students to view at home. The Student tab allows you to exclude students to whom you do not want the assignment to be posted.

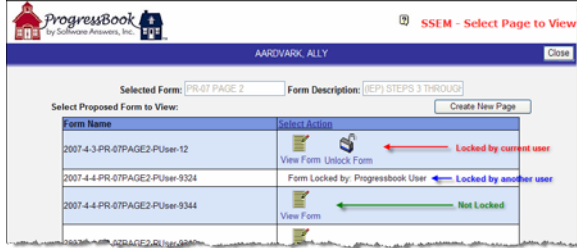
The Post Message link is now called Post Homepage. You will be able to create a more personable layout with the options of changing the letter size, color, and font. When you **SAVE** the message, there will be 2 tabs at the top of the page: links and attachments. This is a great place to post things like newsletters and permission slips!

Trainings have been scheduled with many schools on these changes. If this is something you are interested in, please have your building principal contact progressbook@laca.org.

Parents and students will continue to use their same usernames and passwords to log-on. Also, they will no longer receive the security warning when accessing the website. Parents and students will find the new Parent Access website welcoming and easy to use.

SSEM (Special Services Education Module) 4.0 IS LIVE!

We were able to install SSEM Version 4.0 on Thursday evening, April 5th. This new version brings users many new features and greater software functionality.



Form Locking

Users are now given the ability to lock a form containing sensitive data while they are working on it, and then unlock it once complete. This is easily controlled using the “Lock Form” and “Unlock Form” buttons on the form itself.

All users can easily see the status of the form on the Select Page to View (pictured left). Users can easily identify if they have locked the form, if the form is locked by another user, or if the form is unlocked. District administrators will have the ability to unlock any locked form if necessary.

District-to-District Transfer

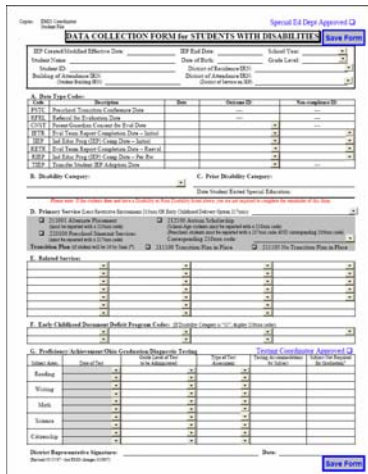
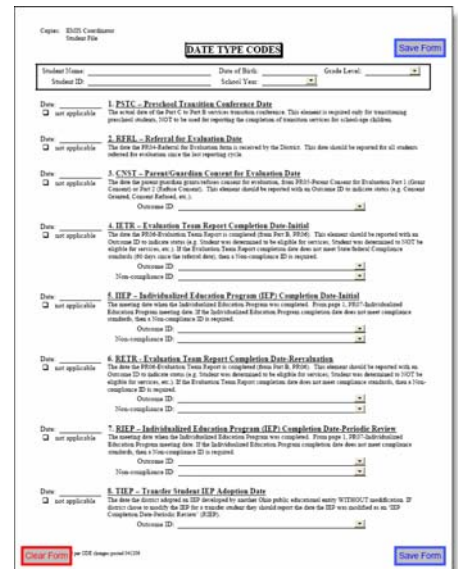
Districts using SSEM now have the ability to transfer a completed IEP or MFE to another district using SSEM as well as receive transferred forms. With 288 districts using the software across the state, many districts will reap the benefits of this feature as students move between districts.

This will also be a huge help to C-TEC as the home school district can instantly send C-TEC the student’s IEP so both districts have an electronic copy and C-TEC staff can begin working on the student’s education plan.

NEW Date Type Code Form

This form (pictured right) is used to record the event dates, outcomes, and non-compliance IDs for special education students as required by FY07 EMIS regulations. It is included at the bottom of IEP form type listing and is a required part of the IEP/EMIS Set. Like other forms, the date fields require dates keyed in the MM/DD/YYYY format and the drop down boxes allow selection of the appropriate value. If a date is not applicable to the selected student, the “not applicable” check box is available to note that so it doesn’t appear the field was missed (ie. Preschool Transition Conference Date for a high school student).

Users are encouraged to contact their district special education department with questions about what information to key on the form and to contact the LACA ProgressBook team (progressbook@laca.org) with any questions on how to put the information on the form or finalizing the form.



EMIS Functionality

The integration piece between SSEM and EMIS is now functional and being piloted in three school districts this school year: Northridge, Maysville, and Lakewood. As the software can now extract the information users are already keying on the IEP into records that the EMIS software can import, these districts will be putting it to the final test before it is released to everyone. Once successfully piloted, this should cut down dramatically on the time involved for EMIS reporting of special education students.

All districts can begin utilizing this feature by generating a one page EMIS Data Collection Form (pictured left) from the information already keyed on the IEP, instead of users manually completing the current 11 page form.

We are excited about this functionality and will keep everyone updated on our pilot success.

Please do not hesitate to contact the LACA ProgressBook Team at progressbook@laca.org with questions regarding this release or other inquiries about the software.

New LACA Technical Projects

Fiber Upgrades 2007-2008

Last year, a majority of the school buildings connecting to LACA were moved from T1 lines to high-speed fiber connections. This summer and fall, the majority of the remaining buildings will also be connected with high speed fiber as we install a second wave of upgrades. When all upgrades are complete, there will be less than 10 buildings out of 98 total buildings in the LACA network that are NOT on the high speed fiber network.

Off-Site Backup Service

LACA will be implementing a new off-site backup service that allows districts to backup their servers direct to a tape backup system located at LACA, safeguarding the district's data in the event a disaster destroys servers or local copies of data backups. Projects like this are now possible due to the high speed fiber links connecting the schools to LACA. We are still in the early stages of this project, but we will have the first districts up and running before the end of April 2007.

L.A.M.A.

LACA has nearly completed development on LAMA, the new LACA Account Management Application which will allow districts to actually request new LACA accounts, request changes to access, delete user accounts, track status of account changes, and many more account management functions all through a web browser, eliminating the need for paper forms. LACA will have the first district using LAMA for all new account requests before May 1, 2007.



**195 UNION ST
SUITE C-2
NEWARK, OH 43055**