



## CIP Narrative FY2024

### STATUS AND PROGRESS

**What is the status and progress of your continuous improvement plan for this past year? Briefly describe your goals, current status, and an overview of your ITC's efforts towards completion of your plan and activities.**

ACCESS reviews goals from previous years to ensure they are completed or continued. Goals for FY24 are projected and include both new and ongoing.

The organization's focus is to provide exemplary services to the customers we serve in Mahoning and Columbiana counties. Customers include:

- K-12 public and non-public schools
- The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County (15 branches)
- Community and STEM Schools.
- The Columbiana County Port Authority & Involta, LLC (as our commercial partners)

While providing required core services to K12 public schools, ACCESS continuously evaluates and adapts to accommodate additional services to meet customer needs. The investment in the ACCESS Fiber Network has broaden service offerings through this infrastructure.

### Training Goals

ACCESS offers three options for training. Providing options has proven of value to customers in managing their day-to-day responsibilities.

- In-person,
- Simultaneous in-person and virtual
- Virtual only

In FY24, ACCESS will continue to provide training options and opportunities. Remote training options are recorded and made available for those unable to attend or as an opportunity for refresher training. Feedback on these options has been extremely positive.

## Staffing and Support Goals

ACCESS has a staff of 13 fulltime and two part-time. Conscientious individuals support all areas of our services. Educating and supporting school personnel and general customers is our goal. Cross training is ongoing to prepare for the loss of a needed skill set and sustain the level of operation we require. Maintaining safety compliance recommendations within our environment remains a high priority to protect our staff.

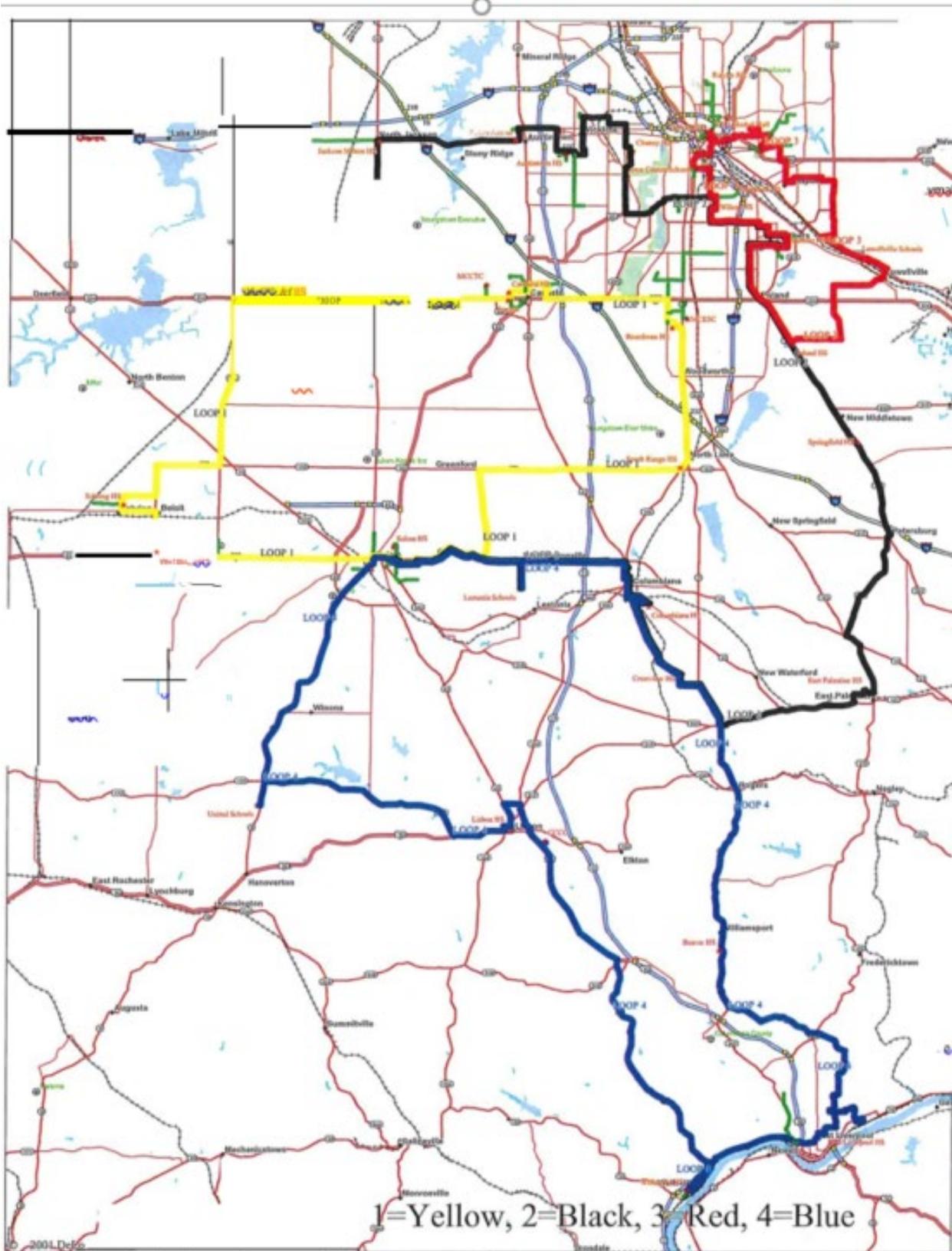
FY23	Two FTE added; one fulltime and two part-time	Completed
FY24	One FTE will be added to Student Services	Pending

## Fiber Infrastructure

ACCESS owns and manages an extensive fiber network covering 350+ miles of aerial and underground fiber. The ACCESS Fiber Network (AFN) connects all member school buildings and is available to all non-member customers served. The AFN is monitored 24x7x365. ACCESS provides data, voice, video, wireless, storage and disaster recovery services seamlessly across the ACCESS fiber network. Network Services staff maintain all electronic devices to support the transmission of services across the infrastructure. Communication is ongoing with ODOT, local construction companies, the Ohio Utilities Protection Agency (OUPs), AT&T, Ohio Edison, AEP and many other utility-focused organizations that affect the AFN. All new fiber builds, pole transfers, and new construction needs are the responsibility of ACCESS. ACCESS partners with the Columbiana County Port Authority, and its partner Involta, LLC, to facilitate economic development across portions of the AFN. ACCESS partnered with BroadbandOhio to pilot an extension of the AFN from member school United Local Schools to its community using a grant received by the district. ACCESS will be engaging in a new overlash project with Involta LLC to increase capacity for community development and provide additional resources to ACCESS.

FY23	Connected several bus garages and stadiums to the fiber network on behalf of its customers.	Completed.
FY22-23	Participated in a pilot project with BroadbandOhio extending a fiber path from a member school district into its community.	Completed
FY24	As our K-12 schools require fiber builds, we will continue to address their fiber needs to improve their delivery of services...	Ongoing
FY24	Maintain our relationship with our commercial partners. These relationships benefit our members. Partnered with Involta LLC to overlash fiber and provide joint ability to serve the community	Ongoing

ACCESS FIBER NETWORK – Serving Mahoning and Columbiana Counties



### Voice-Over-IP Infrastructure

VoIP (Voice-Over-IP) services are available to our customers. Participant schools have the advantage of on-network calls and local dialing among customers through the infrastructure design. Through a partnership with *The Education Connection (TEC)*, ACCESS provides voicemail, on-call services, bully tip lines, and integration with bell schedules, security and intercom systems, among other things.

ACCESS VoIP services currently serve 22 school districts, including ACCESS and the public library system (15 locations).

FY24	Leveraging our VoIP infrastructure to integrate with customer needs remains a focus.	Ongoing
FY22	ACCESS added one large city school district to the VoIP Infrastructure.	Completed
FY23	Added three additional district VoIP projects.	Completed
FY24	Anticipate adding another school district to our system.	Pending
FY24	Ongoing goal is to reduce local district telephony costs by adding them into the ACCESS VoIP system.	Ongoing

### Internet Filtering

*GoGuardian* Internet filtering is currently used as the primary CIPA-compliant Internet filter for all of our K-12 customers. ACCESS collaborated with the MCOECN and state-wide ITCs to evaluate alternative options in CIPA compliant filtering to better serve customer needs and be more cost effective.

FY22	ACCESS and district technology coordinators evaluated Internet Filter products anticipating a change in FY23.	Completed
FY23	Implementation of a new Internet filtering solution took place.	Completed
FY24	Maintain GoGuardian filtering environment through FY25	Ongoing

## Network Security

Security remains an ongoing focus. In collaboration with the MCOECN CISO, ACCESS continues to develop security policies aligned with NIST Standards to protect infrastructure, data and technical assets maintained. ACCESS monitors and utilizes appropriate tools to safeguard our investment.

FY22-FY24	Multi-Factored Authentication (MFA) began being implemented across all targeted applications.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Acquiring Cyber Insurance to cover the ITC needs remains an ongoing goal with negotiations occurring annually.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Assist our K-12 customers with security needs (education and understanding).	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Utilize CISO Services through the MCOECN	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Provide products, in collaboration with the MCOECN, to schools, such as TechGuard, a security application to run phishing campaigns and educate district staff.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Security was important and remains so as a major focus.	Ongoing

## Email Solution

ACCESS provides Google email (Gmail) and G-suite educational features to all our districts/schools. ACCESS automatically creates student accounts on behalf of the schools. Schools can create their own staff accounts using local or ACCESS Active Directory. Google Classroom is widely used as a learning management system.

ACCESS will continue to implement new features and security available in the platform as it becomes available from Google. Several security measures are being implemented for staff and student users as well as measures to also reduce the risk of spamming. Security parameter implementations, as they become available, is an ongoing focus.

FY22-FY24	Multi-Factored Authentication (MFA) implementation for all ACCESS staff	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Implementing Google login restrictions to only US IP addresses	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Restricting student users from accessing Gmail with IMAP email clients to reduce spamming risk.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Monitor all Google alerts to identify Google security incidents in a timely manner	Ongoing

## INFOhio Library Services

ACCESS contracts directly with INFOhio for library service support for our K-12 schools. The partnership has been well received and is very successful. A consortium offering, facilitated by INFOhio with SORA/Overdrive, is available to our customers. EBooks have enhanced digital and traditional learning. Feedback has been positive about INFOhio resources as well as SORA/Overdrive. ACCESS plans to continue involvement with SORA/Overdrive and leverage educational/curriculum-based training options through INFOhio.

FY22- FY24	Expanded the SORA/Overdrive Consortium offering to other schools.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Continue contracting for INFOhio library services support directly to our schools.	Ongoing
FY24	Continue customer training	Ongoing

## Student Services

Frontline - Progressbook Suite is the sole student package utilized at ACCESS. All public K-12 schools use StudentInformation , GradeBook and Parent Access. In addition, a few schools have purchased DataMap. SameGoal's IEPAnywhere is the special education application in use by schools. Third-party products are supported from a data-integration standpoint. If a district engages in a relationship with a third-party vendor, ACCESS can assist with data integration needs, per the parameters of the engagement and upon school authorization.

FY22	ACCESS participated in an RFP process for student information applications through the MCOECN.	Completed
FY23-FY24	ACCESS does not anticipate any significant change in product.	Ongoing

## EMIS Services

Assistance is provided for data needs to support grant proposals and submission requirements. EMIS Crosscheck is used to assist schools with verifying their data.

FY22- FY24	Provides data for grant opportunities per requests from MCOECN, ODE, ODJFS, and the governor's office, and other entities	Ongoing
FY23-FY24	Utilize EMIS CrossCheck through META Solutions	Ongoing

## Training - Student Information and EMIS

Continuous training occurs in all areas of student services and EMIS to educate users on new procedures and methods required by ODE and our core service providers. EMIS changes and reporting periods are monitored closely by ACCESS staff. District administrators and support personnel constantly receive updates to EMIS requirements and changes. ACCESS strives to maintain data integrity and ensure that reporting goes well. ACCESS participates in EMIS Alliance and trains customers accordingly. Our staff remains flexible and works diligently with our schools to adjust to the rapid changes that are occurring in a moment's notice. We have successfully conducted training in both student services areas and EMIS virtually.

FY22-FY24	Maintaining this level of service will be ongoing	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Continue participation in EMIS Alliance training	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Staff participation in EMIS Advisory Committee and Workgroups	Ongoing

## Fiscal Services

All fiscal customers currently utilize the Fiscal Redesign application. Fiscal Redesign application servers are hosted in the MCOECN virtual environment. Fiscal and network staff ensure data migration and new hosted implementations are functioning as designed. ACCESS collaborates with the MCOECN and SSDT to acquire knowledge necessary to train its users and to keep its staff informed.

FY22- FY24	Feedback from districts/schools migrated remains positive	Ongoing
FY24	Continue to participate with State Steering and OASBO	Ongoing

## Fiscal Training

Fiscal Services staff supports district treasurers and support staff with day-to-day operational needs of our customers using the Fiscal Redesign application and provides continued training as needed. Third-party integrated applications are also supported as needed. ACCESS fiscal and EMIS staff work together to facilitate proper reporting of district financial data to ODE via EMIS.

FY22- FY24	In-person training resumed in FY22. As new information is presented by SSDT, training is scheduled to share information.	Ongoing
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## AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

**What are the key areas of improvement you plan to address this coming year? Why were these key areas included? Were any needs identified in your local survey? Provide an overview of the activities and professional development planned to address these key areas and describe what you hope to accomplish this year with those activities.**

The ODE ITC site review, in-house customer surveys, and adjusted business model (due to the pandemic) provide insight into areas for consideration and modification.

FY22-FY24	Work on time management practices. Many times, there are not enough hours in the day to tackle new endeavors with such a small number of staff. Although many areas could use additional staff support, we remain vigilant in keeping our personnel costs down for our members. We evaluated staffing needs in FY22 and added additional FTE in FY23 to prepare for the future. We intend to add one FTE in FY24	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Develop electronic training materials for all support areas. Feedback has been positive and we will continue to tweak methods to improve delivery.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Engage in professional development for staff to refresh or develop their skills.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Continue on-site visits with customers instead of relying solely on help desk tickets and email. Doing so provides instant feedback from face-to-face discussions. Many meetings were done virtually in FY22 due to the Pandemic. In FY23 we resumed in district meetings on a limited basis with district administrators. We intend to do more in FY24.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Conduct user-group meetings in all service areas as well as ensure advisory committees meet regularly to plan ahead.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Continue partnership with the MCOECN CISO.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	Continue to participate in EMIS Alliance to support districts and new employees working within EMIS.	Ongoing
FY22-FY24	ACCESS will look at personnel and succession planning to ensure that we have enough staff in place for successful transitions expected in the next few years. Several of our staff members are approaching retirement eligibility.	Ongoing
FY23	Assist districts in the transition to a new Internet Filter product, if one is selected.	Completed
FY23-FY24	Participate in the MCOECN SchoolSpring Job Board training districts to utilize this service.	Ongoing

FY23-FY24	Engage governmental entities for potential service offerings. Continue our partnership with the Columbiana County Port Authority (CCPA) to facilitate economic development using the ACCESS Fiber Network.	Ongoing
FY23-FY24	Goals are reviewed at monthly administration meetings and modifications made as needed to chart success. All goals and objectives are to be met in the current year, unless goals should remain ongoing to benefit our operations and support.	Ongoing

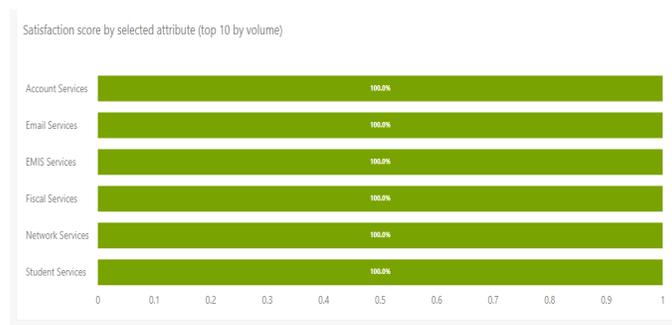
## INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

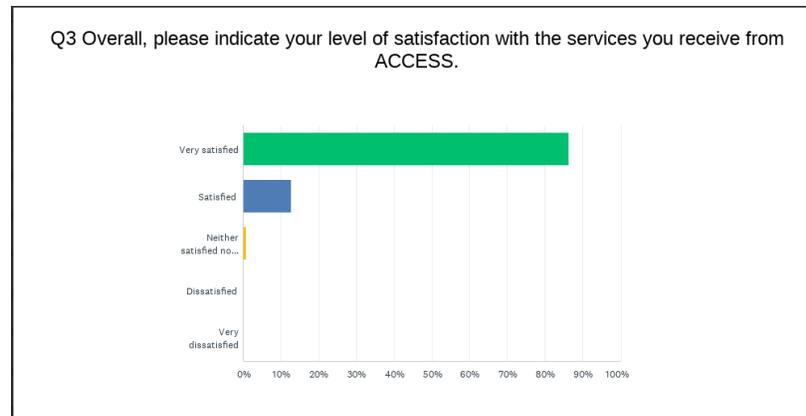
### How do you obtain input from customers, governing board, and staff in identifying the key areas of improvement? Did you do anything new or different in developing your new plan?

As a member of the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN), ACCESS will continue to collaborate with ITCs across the state to provide the best services possible to our customers.

The Executive Director and leadership team (department directors) plan to visit with district administrators on an annual basis to discuss issues and seek personal feedback. The Executive Director normally attends monthly in-person or virtual county Superintendent meetings. The Treasurer attends monthly county treasurer meetings. School needs or concerns may be discussed at these meetings. The Director of Student Services and State Reporting attends county principal and curriculum director meetings. All relevant staff members attend ODE and state level meetings. The Director of Technology, and his team, attends MCOECN ITC security and network meetings with state-wide ITC colleagues and vendors. The Director of Technology and Executive Director oversee the ACCESS Fiber Network. Feedback is encouraged at all times.

The ACCESS helpdesk system is automatically set to send and require the ticket requester to complete a survey at the time the ticket is closed. The Executive director reviews survey results daily, and any negative comment is addressed via a direct phone call from the Executive Director.





ACCESS participates in the MCOECN Customer Satisfaction Survey, when offered, and randomly provides its own survey to its customers. In FY23, ACCESS surveyed its customers and found all services to be very satisfied or satisfied. From a ticketing perspective, all tickets in FY23 to date have been met with 100% satisfied – the highest rating. All survey results are shared with the ACCESS Board of Directors and membership. Results are used as guidelines for making modifications to support and services.

Member advisory committee meetings, in all service areas, occur annually to gain feedback on current and future needs as well as service offerings.

Feedback is solicited after every meeting and training session provided. This permits staff to identify issues quickly and move toward developing remediation tactics, if required.

Feedback about ACCESS services is also received directly from the Board of Directors at regular monthly meetings and by the Assembly at the fall and spring meeting.

## COLLABORATION EXAMPLES

**Highlight examples of new or recent collaboration with other entities, or new products or services where collaboration could be valuable. Do you anticipate these efforts will directly contribute to your ITC’s service improvement? If so, explain.**

All ACCESS partnerships have provided our customers with value-added services and have assisted ACCESS in providing the most and best options for its customers. A few of them are listed below.

- ACCESS utilizes Harmony, developed at NOACSC, to provide reports through its integration with the ProgressBook Suite. Our districts are fond of this application and utilize it frequently.
- ACCESS contracts with LACA for the RAM application used by school fiscal departments.

- ACCESS contracts with META for the EMIS CrossCheck application used by our districts. District staff are appreciative of the added layer of data validation this product offers.
- ACCESS Executive Director has served as a Trustee of the MCOECN and currently serves on the INFOhio Advisory Board. The Executive Director will serve on any committee assigned to by the MCOECN and participate in monthly ITC Director Meetings.
- ACCESS purchases hardware via MVECA's vendor partnership.
- ACCESS contracts with INFOhio for full support and training services for our customers.
- ACCESS leadership personnel interact with respective counterparts across ITCs for guidance and sharing of information and resources.
- ACCESS department directors continue to participate in meetings and workshops across the state provided by ODE, the MCOECN, independent ITCs, vendors, etc. Some examples include, EMIS Alliance, Security Network Group, Fiscal Redesign committee, among others. Staff members reside on committees representing their areas of expertise. Participation in professional develop, such as OECN United, are encouraged and supported.
- ACCESS staff participates in specific statewide meetings and training opportunities to further their knowledge in their respective areas.
- ACCESS works closely with our Educational Service Centers and SSTR5.
- ACCESS engages in the Ohio-K12 SchoolSprings Jobs Portal through the MCOECN
- ACCESS is engaged with BroadbandOhio, Broadband Access Ohio, and Tri-County Broadband (among other entities) to further the development within areas of the State of Ohio it serves.