



Lisa Smith &lt;smith@access-k12.org&gt;

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## SY2022 CIP Narrative Responses for ACCESS

1 message

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**OEEN Program CIP** <webform@ohio-k12.help>  
To: smith@access-k12.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 10:59 AM

Below and attached is a record of your SY2022 Continuous Improvement Planning Narrative Responses. **DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL..**

**ITC Name**

ACCESS

**IRN**

085563

**ITC Director**

Lisa Smith

**Email**[smith@access-k12.org](mailto:smith@access-k12.org)**1. Status and Progress**

As an organization, our focus is to provide exemplary services to our customers in Mahoning and Columbiana counties. Our customers include K12 public and non-public schools, the Youngstown and Mahoning County library system, the Columbiana County Port Authority (as our commercial partner) and a few other entities. We make every effort to accommodate customer needs as best we can, instituting new offerings and tweaking existing ones.

ACCESS continues to serve customers with an efficient staff of 12. Conscientious individuals support all areas of our services (network, student, EMIS, and fiscal), with the goal to educate, support and lighten the burden for our school personnel and general customers. We understand the importance of each position held. Cross training is ongoing to prepare for the loss of a needed skill set and sustain the level of operation we require.

ACCESS participated in an ODE ITC Site Review November 2019. The results provided feedback to assist in measuring our services to our customers.

As a result of the Pandemic, ACCESS adjusted its business model to answer the needs of the Ohio businesses and schools it serves. Using Zoom and Google Meets, we have, and continue to, provide face-to-face communication with our customers and conduct important training and operational meetings safely. ACCESS will continue this practice indefinitely. As our K-12 customers continue to transition from traditional instruction to remote and back (or as a hybrid), ACCESS will continue to offer support as needed. Customer feedback indicates that remote training and meetings have been efficient from a time and travel cost to customers and have asked ACCESS to consider a hybrid approach in the future. Maintaining safety compliance recommendations within the ACCESS environment remains at a high priority to continue to safeguard our staff.

**Network Services**

ACCESS owns and supports an extensive fiber network covering 325 miles of aerial and underground fiber connecting our members and non-member customers in both counties we serve. The network infrastructure is monitored 24x7x365. ACCESS network staff maintain all electronic devices to support the transmission of services across this 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 ACCESS fiber network. All new fiber builds, pole transfers, and new construction needs are the responsibility of ACCESS. ACCESS partnered with the Columbiana County Port Authority to facilitate economic development across portions of the ACCESS Fiber Network.

ACCESS provides data, voice, video and wireless services seamlessly across the ACCESS fiber network.

- VoIP services are available to our customers. Customers who receive these services have the advantage of on-network calls and local dialing among customers through 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. Leveraging our VoIP infrastructure to integrate with customer needs remains a focus.

- Network maintenance, hosting, storage and support services are available to our customers to help lower their costs.
- *Securly* Internet filtering is in use as the primary CIPA-compliant Internet filter for all of our K-12 customers. We continue to evaluate new filtering products in preparation for migration, if necessary, prior to contract expiration. ACCESS has collaborated with the Management Council and ITCs to evaluate alternative options in filtering to serve needs better and be more cost effective for our customers.
- Cisco Meraki managed wireless services are available to our customers. ACCESS remains competitive offering products (consortium options) that our customers request. Many times, we source products to leverage cost without offering managed services to accommodate customer needs.
- Security remains an ongoing focus. In collaboration with the Management Council CISO, ACCESS continues to develop security policies aligned with NIST Standards to protect infrastructure, data and technical assets we maintain. We monitor and utilize appropriate tools to safeguard our investment.
- ACCESS provides Google email and G-suite educational offerings to our districts/schools
- Participation in consortium offerings through ITCs and the Management Council is also beneficial for our customers.

### **INFOhio Library Services**

ACCESS contracts directly with INFOhio for library service support for our K-12 schools. Our successful partnership is allowing us to free up a staff person to assist in other areas. In July 2020, a consortium offering facilitated by INFOhio with SORA/Overdrive, began for our schools. EBooks will enhance digital and traditional learning. ACCESS plans to continue involvement with SORA/Overdrive and leverage educational/curriculum-based training options through INFOhio.

### **Student & EMIS Services**

Frontline - Progressbook Suite is the sole student package utilized at ACCESS. All public K12 schools use StudentInformation and GradeBook. In addition, a few schools have purchased Data Map. SameGoal's IEP Anywhere 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. Assistance is also provided for data needs to support grant proposals and submission requirements. In FY21, the student and EMIS services team provided data for grant opportunities and/or requests originating out of ODE, ODJFS, and the governor's office, such as P-EBT and Connectivity survey data.

Year-end processing and new school year preparation is critical as schools try to determine schedules and teaching methodologies to cover in-person and/or remote learning. Typical methods used for school opening and reporting are constantly being re-evaluated based on day-to-day decisions and changes made by the district/school or ODE.

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. We strive to maintain data integrity and ensure that reporting goes well. ACCESS is part of 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.

### **Fiscal Services**

All fiscal customers intend to use the Fiscal Redesign application. Final district migrations are currently underway and we anticipate full completion by June 2021. Fiscal Redesign application servers are hosted in the ACCESS virtual environment. Fiscal and network staff ensure data migration and new hosted implementations are functioning as designed. ACCESS collaborates with the Management Council and SSDT to acquire knowledge necessary to train its users and to keep its staff informed. Feedback from districts/schools migrated remains positive.

Fiscal Services staff supports district treasurers and support staff with day-to-day operational needs on both the Fiscal Classic application and Fiscal Redesign in production. 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. The fiscal services team has conducted some training virtually while maintaining some in-house training (as needed) observing safety precautions. We will continue to offer a hybrid model as warranted.

The ACCESS Treasurer oversees the organizations day-to-day fiscal operation as well as supervises the fiscal support team.

## **2. Areas of Improvement**

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.

## In FY22

- ACCESS will continue to 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 will evaluate staffing needs in FY22 to prepare the future.
- ACCESS will continue to work on developing electronic training materials for all support areas. We have made great strides in using Zoom for training and meetings, making recordings whenever appropriate for future use. Feedback has been positive and we will continue to tweak methods to improve delivery.
- ACCESS will continue to engage in professional development for staff to refresh or develop their skills. FY21 was a bit more challenging to meet these goals. We will strive to do better in FY22.
- ACCESS will utilize more interpersonal techniques and skills (on-site visits, phone calls, etc.) with customers instead of relying solely on help desk tickets and email. Doing so provides instant feedback from face-to-face discussions. In FY21, on-site visits were curtailed due to the Pandemic. In FY22, we will continue safety practices with hope that one-on-one meetings can resume.
- ACCESS will conduct user-group meetings in all service areas as well as ensure advisory committees meet regularly to plan ahead.
- Security policy development is time consuming and without a full-time resource to tackle these needs, extremely difficult. ACCESS will continue to move forward as best it can to get to a satisfactory level. We will use the MCOECN CISO to guide us.
- ACCESS will continue to participate in EMIS Alliance to support districts and new employees working within EMIS.
- ACCESS will attempt to establish a Marketplace for products and services at consortium pricing to assist our schools reduce costs. We started building on this in FY21 and hope to have more available to our customers in FY22.
- 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.
- ACCESS will engage governmental entities for potential service offerings. We have been approached by some and will continue to engage others. We will continue our partnership with the Columbiana County Port Authority (CCPA) to facilitate economic development using the ACCESS Fiber Network.

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.

### 3. Input from Stakeholders

As a member of the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN), we 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) visit with district administrators on an annual basis to discuss issues and seek personal feedback. The Executive Director normally attends monthly county Superintendent meetings, however, during FY21, virtual meetings were held weekly. The ACCESS Treasurer attends monthly county meetings for area treasurers. Any school needs or concerns are 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 attends Management Council 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 and randomly provides its own survey to its customers. All results from survey tools are reviewed and then annually 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.

### 4. Collaboration Examples

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 their RAM application used by school fiscal departments.

ACCESS Executive Director serves as a Trustee of the Management Council or on any committee assigned to by the Management Council and participates in monthly ITC Director meetings.

ACCESS contracts with INFOhio for full support 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 Management Council, independent ITCs, vendors, etc. Some examples include, EMIS Alliance, Security Network Group, Fiscal Redesign committee, among others.

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 is always available to collaborate with other Information Technology Centers.

**submitted on**

06/11/2021

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 **ACCESS-SY2022-CIP-Narrative-Responses.pdf**  
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