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## SY2023 CIP Narrative Responses for ACCESS

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OEEN Portal <webform@ohio-k12.help>

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To: smith@access-k12.org

Below and attached is a record of your SY2023 Continuous Improvement Planning Narrative Responses. **DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL..**

### ITC Name

ACCESS

### IRN

085563

### ITC Director

Lisa Smith

### Email

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## 1. Status and Progress

### Status

ACCESS continues to focus on the CIP goals from the previous year and have met or are in process of meeting outlined goals in FY22.

### Focus

Our focus is to provide exemplary services to our customers in Mahoning and Columbiana counties. Our customers include K-12 public and non-public schools, The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County (15 branches), the Columbiana County Port Authority (as our commercial partner) and community and STEM schools. We continuously evaluate and adapt to accommodate customer needs. While we focus on the core services required of ITCs to provide to schools, we also look for, and provide additional services to benefit our customers. Our staff takes pride in accomplishing the tasks set forth in our annual CIP.

### Training Goals

In FY22, our delivery of training expanded due to the Pandemic. We currently offer three options for training, i.e., in-person, simultaneous in-person and via Zoom, and via Zoom only. Providing options has proven of value to customers in managing their day-to-day responsibilities. Moving forward in FY23, we aim to continue providing training options and opportunities. Remote training options are recorded and made available for those unable to attend or for refresher training.

### Staffing & Support Goals

ACCESS has a staff of 13. One FTE was added to Network Services in FY22. Conscientious individuals support all areas of our services (network, student, EMIS, and fiscal), with the goal to educate and support school personnel and general customers. 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. We hope to add additional staff in FY23 to accommodate supporting the growing needs of our customers.

# Network Services

## Fiber Infrastructure

ACCESS owns and manages an extensive fiber network covering 325 miles of aerial and underground fiber. The ACCESS Fiber Network (AFN) connects all members and is available to all non-member customers we serve. The AFN is monitored 24x7x365. ACCESS provides data, voice, video and wireless services seamlessly across the ACCESS fiber network.

ACCESS 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 to facilitate economic development across portions of the AFN.

- In FY22, ACCESS connected several bus garages and stadiums to the fiber network on behalf of its customers.
- In FY22, ACCESS participated in a pilot project with BroadbandOhio extending a fiber path from a member school district into its community. If the opportunity presents itself, we will entertain another such project in FY23.
- In FY23, as our K-12 schools require fiber builds, we will continue to address their fiber needs to improve their delivery of services...
- In FY23 we will maintain our relationship with our commercial partners. These relationships benefit our members.

## Voice-Over-IP Infrastructure

VoIP services are available to our customers. Participant schools 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. ACCESS VoIP services currently serve 17 schools and the public library system...

- Leveraging our VoIP infrastructure to integrate with customer needs remains a focus.
- In FY22, ACCESS added one large city school district to the VoIP Infrastructure.
- In FY23, we anticipate three additional district VoIP projects to be completed.
- Ongoing goal is to reduce local district telephony costs by adding them into the ACCESS VoIP system.

## Network Maintenance, Wireless and Hosting & Support

Network maintenance, hosting, storage and support services are available to our customers to help lower their costs.

- In FY22 ACCESS installed a data Storage System for school district use. Network staff continues to work with districts to leverage secure storage available.
- In FY23, we anticipate adding more districts in transitioning local servers and data back-ups to ACCESS via our virtual and data storage infrastructures.
- This service is an ongoing endeavor for ACCESS to provide customers with cost-saving options.
- Cisco Meraki managed wireless services remain available to our customers. ACCESS remains competitive offering products (consortium options) that our customers request. This offering will continue indefinitely.

## Internet Filtering

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

- In FY22, ACCESS and district technology coordinators evaluated Internet Filter products anticipating a change in FY23. Once a product is selected, implementation will begin in FY23.
- In FY23, implementation of a new Internet filtering solution will take place.

## Network Security

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.

- In FY22, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) began being implemented across all targeted applications.
- Acquiring Cyber Insurance to cover the ITC needs remains an ongoing goal with negotiations occurring annually.
- Assist our K-12 customers with security needs (education and understanding).
- Provide products, in collaboration with the Management Council, to schools, such as TechGuard, a security application to run phishing campaigns and educate district staff.
- Security was important and remains so as a major focus in FY23. This is an ongoing endeavor

### **Email Solution**

ACCESS provides Google email (Gmail) and G-suite educational features to all our districts/schools. Google Classroom is widely used. We will continue to implement all new features and security available in the platform as it becomes available from Google. Security parameters available will also be an ongoing focus..

### **General**

Participation in consortium application offerings through ITCs and the Management Council is also beneficial for our customers. We will remain engaged in these opportunities.

## **INFOhio Library Services**

ACCESS contracts directly with INFOhio for library service support for our K-12 schools. Our partnership has been well received and very successful. In July 2020, a consortium offering facilitated by INFOhio with SORA/Overdrive, began for our schools. 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.

- In FY22, we expanded the SORA/Overdrive Consortium offering to other schools.
- In FY23, we will continue to expand this offering.
- We will continue our contract for INFOhio library services support, directly to our schools, indefinitely.

## **Student & EMIS Services**

### **Student Information Application**

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 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.

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

### **EMIS Services**

Assistance is provided for data needs to support grant proposals and submission requirements.

- In FY22, 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.
- Our involvement will continue in FY23 upon request..

### **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. We strive 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.

- Maintaining this level of service will be ongoing in FY23.

# Fiscal Services

## Fiscal Application - Redesign

All fiscal customers currently utilize the Fiscal Redesign application. 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.

- In FY22, Feedback from districts/schools migrated remains positive.
- We anticipate no changes in FY23.

## 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.

- Training options are always discussed with customers. In-person training resumed in FY22. As new information is presented by SSDT, training is scheduled to share information.
- Maintaining this level of service will be ongoing in FY23

## 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 FY23

- 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 evaluated staffing needs in FY22 and will be adding additional FTE in FY23 to prepare for the future.
- ACCESS will continue to develop electronic training materials for all support areas. . 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.
- ACCESS will 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 anticipate resuming face-to-face meetings with district administrators.
- ACCESS will conduct user-group meetings in all service areas as well as ensure advisory committees meet regularly to plan ahead.
- ACCESS will continue to move forward through our partnership with the MCOECN CISO. Security policy development is time consuming and without a full-time resource to tackle these needs, extremely difficult.
- ACCESS will continue to participate in EMIS Alliance to support districts and new employees working within EMIS.
- 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 assist districts in the transition to a new Internet Filter product, if one is selected.
- ACCESS will participate in the MCOECN SchoolSpring Job Board training districts to utilize this service.
- 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 in-person

county Superintendent meetings, however, during FY22, 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, and his team, 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 contracts with META for their 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 Management Council and currently serves on the INFOhio Advisory Board. The Executive Director will serve on any committee assigned to by the Management Council and participate 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. Staff members reside on committees representing their areas of expertise.

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**

07/18/2022

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