

**CIP Narrative Online Reporting (FY2020)****LOGIN**

Lisa Smith

**SERVICE YEAR**

SY2020

**ITC NAME**

ACCESS

**IRN**

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**1. STATUS AND PROGRESS**

During FY19, ACCESS continued to improve its customer service offerings and fine tune its fiscal position.

ACCESS has a total staff count of 12. No additional staff is anticipated at this time. Cross-training is a key focus for ACCESS as many long-term employees make up the organization. As retirement opportunities present themselves for staff, ACCESS needs to be in a solid position to support the knowledge vacating its organization and replace individuals who are highly trainable in our specialized areas. We continue to look at potential individuals who may be needed to fill vacancies in the near future. All areas of ACCESS services are supported by conscientious individuals whose goal is to educate, support and lighten the burden for our school/district personnel.

**Network Services including Library Automation Support**

As in past years, ACCESS strives to remain on the cutting-edge technologically within our network services environment. Infrastructure is critical and maintained daily by our staff who oversees our 325+ miles of privately owned fiber connecting our schools in both Mahoning and Columbiana County. ACCESS is a registered ISP with ARIN. We continue to provide primary Internet services through the Ohio K-12 network via OARNet and ensure redundancy through a second local ISP provider. 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. ACCESS oversees and manages all new fiber builds, pole transfers, and new construction needs.

With such an extensive fiber plant asset, ACCESS provides data, voice, video and wireless services across the network.

- ACCESS is enhancing VoIP services for our members and has on boarded three (3) additional school districts in the past year. Currently 16 districts are being provided voice and messaging services daily. Through our partnership with The Education Connection (TEC), ACCESS not only can provide voicemail and on-call services, but also integration of our VoIP system with bell schedules, security and intercom systems, text messaging and bully tip lines among other things.
- Hardware maintenance and support services are being offered to assist districts with some additional needs at a reduced cost.
- Internet filtering has been an ongoing project for ACCESS with a change in brand being implemented this year. Our new product, Securly, provides a solution that allows districts to better control devices being sent home and brought back into the school building.
- Security remains an ongoing focus for ACCESS. Our team is working alongside the MCOECN in continuing to develop security policies aligned with NIST Standards to protect ACCESS and the district data and technical assets we maintain. We continue to monitor and utilize the appropriate tools to safeguard our investment. We will

continue to participate with the MC Security Work Group to collaborate with other ITCs to share, develop and provide a quality level of security in our environment.

- We strive to continue providing our districts/schools with the services they need and expect. Engaging a variety of vendors to provide consortium opportunities for our membership is ongoing.

Library Services are also part of Network Services at ACCESS. Staff assists districts with configuration and support of the INFOhio resources that are offered. We will continue to provide electronic resources, and offer any new resources developed by INFOhio. Our focus is on sharing these rich resources made available to our schools in light of the fact that many schools are eliminating key library personnel or facilities. Teachers and students can continue to benefit from web-based resources available anytime and anywhere.

### **Student & EMIS Services**

Software Answers' Progressbook Suite is the sole student package utilized at ACCESS. To date, StudentInformation and GradeBook are used by all of our schools. Data Map is being implemented for more schools this year than originally anticipated along with some instances of Virtual Classroom. SameGoal IEP Anywhere is provided as a core application for our member districts. Third-party products, such as learning management, point-of-sale, notification, transportation and various other systems are supported from a data-integration standpoint.

Student Services staff ensure our members are supported and assisted when needed. Continuous training occurs at ACCESS in all areas of student information and EMIS. District administrators are alerted to EMIS requirements and changes to ensure that reporting goes well and that data integrity is maintained. ACCESS, as the keeper of the district/school data, continues to provide data as authorized by schools to assist with grant proposals or third-party vendors engaged by the district/school. Student Services staff continue to train, whenever possible, on new procedures and methods required by ODE and our core service providers, Software Answers and IEP Anywhere.

Training new school staff on student application software and on EMIS functionality is an ongoing goal of this department due to staff retirement and turnover.

With the recent acquisition of Software Answers, ACCESS may begin evaluating student information products for future consideration.

### **Fiscal Services**

ACCESS is a participant in the Redesign project. 100% of ACCESS districts intend to migrate to this new platform. The Fiscal Redesign application for ACCESS stakeholders is currently housed at ACCESS in our virtual environment. Fiscal Services and Network Services work closely to ensure data migration and district hosted implementations are functioning as designed. To date, ACCESS has six districts currently using the Fiscal Redesign application in production. ACCESS continues to work with the MCOECN and SSDT to acquire knowledge necessary to train our users and to keep our staff informed. The fiscal services staff continue to support our district treasurers and their support staff on the Fiscal Classic (USAS & USPS) application and Fiscal Redesign in production as well as third-party integrated applications (KIOSK, RAM, SC View, etc.). The fiscal services team also works closely with EMIS staff to ensure that the proper district fiscal data is submitted to ODE via EMIS. The internal fiscal operation of ACCESS Council is supported in-house by our resident Treasurer.

ACCESS' goal is to have all districts moved to the Fiscal Redesign application by December 2021. Maintaining current level of fiscal support while training, migrating and supporting the new application will be a challenge for our small staff. No plans are in place to hire additional staff.

### **New Facility**

In December of 2018, ACCESS purchased a new building to house staff and conduct trainings. In lieu of continuing to rent, a property was purchased to help off-set long-term costs for the organization and its membership. The new facility meeting spaces are made available to our members for their use in holding events and training sessions.

The ACCESS wide-area-network equipment remains housed in a secure co-location environment, providing a cost-effective means of maintaining utility needs and security. The co-location environment is four miles from the

ACCESS staff offices location.

## 2. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

In FY19, a customer survey was performed that highlighted some areas that needed addressed.

In FY20,

- We will work on better time management practices. With such a small staff, there many times are not enough hours in the day to tackle new endeavors.
- We will work on developing electronic training materials covering all areas of support to assist schools with not having to allow release time for their staff to attend our trainings or having someone sick miss an in-person training.
- We will engage in more professional development for staff (in-person or on-line) to refresh their skills and develop knowledge of new skills that can benefit all.
- We will offer more security awareness trainings and guidance for our schools. Demonstrating KnowBe4 is an example of what can be used to instill security awareness.
- We 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.
- We will conduct user-group meetings in the all service areas as well as ensure advisory committees meet regularly to plan ahead.
- We will continue to participate in EMIS Alliance to support districts and new employees working within EMIS.
- We will undertake moving additional members to the Fiscal Redesign application following the timeline established.
- We will support staff participation in state-wide committees to allow ACCESS to have a voice and be represented on behalf of our membership.
- We will establish a Finance Review Committee to evaluate our current fees and determine any increases required as a result of decreasing district/school ADM and increased purchased service costs. Supporting our schools and adequately funding our operation, to maintain and improve current level of services, is a primary focus

## 3. INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

ACCESS is proud to be a member the OECN and will continue to collaborate and partner with ITCs across the state to provide the best services possible to its stakeholders.

ACCESS participated in the MCOECN Customer Satisfaction Survey and randomly provides its own survey to its stakeholders. Results from survey tools are reviewed and used as guidelines for making any necessary modifications to support and services.

The Executive Director and leadership team (department directors) visit with district administrators on an annual basis to discuss issues and seek feedback on our delivery of services. The Executive Director attends monthly county Superintendent meetings, while the Treasurer attends monthly county Treasurer meetings. The Director of Student Services and State Reporting attends county principal and curriculum director meetings.

The ACCESS helpdesk system is set to require a survey to be completed by the requestor at the time the ticket is closed. These results are reviewed daily, and any negative comment is addressed via a direct phone call from the Executive Director.

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, contracted by and developed at NOACSC, to provide reports through its integration with the Software Answers 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, on the Advisory Board of INFOhio, and participates in scheduled ITC Directors events and meetings.

ACCESS staff continue to participate in meetings and workshops across the state provided by ODE, the Management Council, independent ITCs and vendors. Some examples include, EMIS Alliance, Network Security Work Group, Fiscal Redesign committee, OETC, OAEP, OEDSA, among others.

ACCESS staff is encouraged to communicate with fellow ITC staff in their areas to share with and learn from each other.

**SUBMITTED ON**

07/25/2019