

# COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY MEETING MINUTES

October 10, 2001  
Legislative Office Building, Room 1A,  
Hartford, CT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judith Greiman; Louis Hernandez; George Selmont; Patty Fusco; Paul Picard; Theodore Sergi; Cal Heminway; Peter Young; Denise Moynihan; Michele Macaуда; Jonas Zdanys for Val Lewis; Marc Herzog; Barbara Gibson; Ken Wiggin; Rock Regan; Paul Kobulnicky

Others Present: Michael Helfgott, Executive Director; Bob Dixon, DOIT; Rob Vietzke, DOIT;

Ms. Greiman called the Meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Helfgott began with a discussion of the Commission's current year budget and the reductions in it required thus far by OPM. He stated that later in the meeting he would ask for an endorsement of a letter to OPM requesting additional money for State FY03. He indicated that based on conversations he had had with affinity groups since the last meeting, he felt that the Commission's message was the correct one and that, over time, it would receive the needed support.

Mr. Helfgott spoke of the importance of network content/applications to the Commission's agenda, and spoke of the need to have at least some pilot applications on the network during the Spring, 2002 timeframe in order to demonstrate its capabilities. He also mentioned the E-Rate process, which would be discussed later in the meeting, the statutory obligations required of the Commission and the need to secure private sector funding.

Mr. Sergi mentioned that the funds for school wiring had been reduced to \$7.5 million for FY03 and Mr. Wiggin indicated that the Digital Library had been cut by \$118,000. Mr. Kobulnicky stressed the vulnerability of the budget and the need for the Commission members to understand that.

## **Content Committee**

Ms. Harris, Chair, reported on the Committee's work. She reviewed the COAST (Committee for the Organization and Assessment of Submissions for Technology) Report that had already been approved by the Commission at an earlier meeting. She highlighted the section on CEN Policy Statements for its importance because it provided a set of criteria governing how content would get on the network. At the Committee's recent meeting in September, it focused on the need to identify content/applications for use by schools, and the particular need for content management systems. She said that at its next meeting in December, the committee would be focusing on professional development.

Ms. Greiman asked for comments on or questions about the report. Mr. Kobulnicky stated that it will be very important to be able to assess the content once it's on the network so that the Commission can determine and report on its impact. There was a general discussion by Commission Members about the availability of content resources. Mr. Sergi mentioned a number of sources of which he was aware: the CREC (Capitol Regional Education Council) portal provides access to a number of national resources; the State's other regional educational service centers were also providing material that could be useful, Massachusetts's VES product, and the Learning Station all represented only a sampling of what is available. The Commission discussed the need to get some useful K-12 content identified quickly so that

some of it could be in a pilot mode before the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Harris supported the need to get people together quickly to evaluate applications without utilizing the more lengthy COAST process. Ms. Greiman appointed an Ad Hoc committee to identify content that was responsive to the Department of Education's priorities, and asked Mr. Young to Chair the effort. She suggested that the Committee contain representation from the department, Ms. Harris and Ms. Fusco from the larger Content Committee, and Mr. Helfgott, among others. Mr. Selmont suggested using the State's leverage when negotiating with vendors and Ms. Greiman added that the recommendations should be brought to the full Commission.

### **Connecticut Education Network**

Mr. Kobulnicky provided an update on the recent Network Committee meeting. He indicated that the discussion had focused on a few significant matters. Equity, in the form of every school having access to a base line of services provided by the State Department of Education, was very important. The impact of the network on schools and kids was also important and needed to be quantified. The Committee also continued to discuss budget and cost share issues.

Mr. Regan introduced Mr. Dixon and Mr. Vietzke from DOIT and asked them to give a report on their network activities. They mentioned that the visits to schools and libraries were occurring at the rate of 10 to 15 per week and would be complete by mid-November. Preliminary information and trends seemed to confirm the usefulness of the activity. Some towns were using the DOIT-prepared reports to successfully secure additional local support for their technology initiatives. One emerging statistic was that there were 5.9 active jacks per classroom confirming that the State's investment in school wiring was having a positive impact. They also mentioned that a portion of the network backbone was completed during the past week, and that November 1 was the new due date for the first six districts to be on the network.

Ms. Greiman suggested that the individual district reports be shared with districts, legislators and other town leaders.

### **Budget Request for FY02**

Ms. Greiman referred to the one page draft budget document prepared by Mr. Helfgott and stressed that it reflects where the Commission wants to move its agenda and the speed with which it wants it to move. She also emphasized the usefulness to the Commission and to OPM of putting all of the information together on a single sheet. Mr. Helfgott introduced the document as a first attempt at looking of the cost of the Commission's initiatives. He stated that he needs to incorporate it into a letter to the OPM by October 15, 2001, asking for permission to submit expansion options in year FY03. Mr. Picard raised concerns about the local districts' ability and willingness to support their own plans and to join with the network and suggested that this ought to be an area of concern for the Commission. Mr. Wiggin felt that some of the items should not have level funding, but should be growing. There were additional questions raised, particularly about the out-years of the budget, about how the figures were determined, what they included, and noting that costs that were being shown as level from year to year in fact would increase over time. Mr. Picard suggested that security be explicitly listed as an attribute of the network and its support. Ms. Greiman sought and received consensus support that the document would provide the framework of the submittal to OPM.

### **Universal Services Fund Application**

Mr. Helfgott discussed the complexities involved in putting together a USF application. He stated it demanded significant time, experience and know-how. He indicated that he would continue to investigate resources that could be helpful to the Commission for this process, and stated that it would be beneficial if someone could be dedicated to the task. Mr. Wiggin concurred and suggested looking out-of-state to someone who has already submitted an application on behalf of some other state.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Greiman stated that the next meeting would be in room 1A of the Legislative Office Building. She thought that at the meeting, the Commission would begin to discuss plans for the next legislative session. The Commission also had to submit a report to the legislature January

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Mr. Wiggin, received a second from Mr. Sergi, and was unanimously approved at 11:03 a.m.