

Minutes of the Commission for Educational Technology

Friday, February 15, 2002
9 A.M. – 12 Noon
Department of Information Technology
Room 1002A
East Hartford, Connecticut

Members Present: Judith Greiman; Louis Hernandez; Ken Wiggin; Patricia Fusco; Merle Harris; George Selmont; Paul Picard; Theodore Sergi; Paul Kobulnicky; Denise Moynihan; Barbara Gibson; Michele Macauda; and Peter Young

Others Participating: Michael Helfgott, Executive Director; Bob Dixon for Rock Regan, DOIT; Rob Vietzke, Uconn/DOIT; John Walters for Valerie Lewis, DHE; Ed Klonoski for Merle Harris, Charter Oak College; Jerry Papazian for Marc Herzog, CTC; Mac Toedt for William Cibes, CSU; and Janice Gruendel, Connecticut Voices for Children

Ms. Greiman called the meeting to order at 9:12 A.M.

Announcements:

Ms. Greiman thanked the Commission members for their cards and expressions of concern during her recovery from surgery.

She announced that Peter Young will be retiring from his position at ACES in June, by which time CAPSS will have appointed his successor to the Commission, and that Michele Macauda has offered her resignation with regret. Ms. Macauda expressed her thanks for the opportunity of being a member of the Commission. Ms. Greiman expressed appreciation for her work on the Commission, citing particularly the Technical Support and Training document authored by her committee.

The Commission Members were extended invitations from Commissioner Rock Regan to attend the new Data Center Grand Opening February 28, 2002.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Greiman presented the Minutes of the December 12, 2001, meeting. They were approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

CET Budgetary Matters. Mr. Helfgott began his remarks by recapping a number of state budgetary successes. During the Fall, 2001 Special Session of the legislature, \$1 Million was added back to the Commission's budget. The Bond Commission then moved expeditiously and voted in January to release those remaining funds of the Commission. And most recently, the Governor's proposed adjustments to the FY03 budget contained additional support for the Commission's agenda including \$10 million for the network.

E-Rate Update. An E-Rate application did not get submitted this year, but a statewide contract that can be utilized by the Commission, DOIT, state agencies, schools and libraries was put in place.

DOIT School Surveys. Mr. Helfgott reported that DOIT has completed and published its town by town technology surveys. He has found the information useful when meeting with legislators to explain the work of the Commission. In response to a question from Mr. Picard, Mr. Helfgott stated that a summary document has been drafted and will be included in the final report.

Misc. Mr. Helfgott asked the members to update their name and address information on the list he had recently sent to them. He also said that the three agencies (the Commission, the SDE and DOIT) were working collaboratively on their respective annual reports to assure consistency between them. Commissioner Sergi concurred with this approach.

Mr. Helfgott has asked DOIT to take recommendations from Ms. Macaуда's Technical Training Report and look at models on how they could be implemented.

Ms. Greiman expressed her appreciation to the DOIT staff's efforts in working the funds through the Bond Commission's Agenda.

State Budget Update

Digital Library

Mr. Wiggin reported that the Governor proposed restoring funding for the Digital Library, and that the funds would be coming from the State operating budget instead of from surplus funds. He also reported on the extensive use of iCONN during December and mentioned that the Digital Library Advisory Board had had its initial meeting on February 6, 2002. The databases provided are being used by schools, libraries, colleges and parents. The usage trend is increasing, and that is expected to continue.

Distance Learning

Mr. Klonoski, reporting for Ms. Harris, said that the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium would be able to keep its commitments with the \$1 million proposed by the Governor. They will be appearing before the Appropriations Committee on February 25, 2002.

State Department of Education

Commissioner Sergi had copies of the Department's report, Educational Technology Resource Documents 2001, distributed to the members of the Commission. He thanked Ms. Averna and Ms. Binkowski for their hard work in assembling the material. He indicated that \$7.5 million remained in unallocated bond funds and the Governor has proposed \$2 million for FY03, leading to a funding level similar to those in the past for school infrastructure. In response to a question from Ms. Greiman regarding the distribution of the funds, he indicated that there was not yet a resolution. He differentiated between the funding formula, itself, and making sure that those LEA's that receive money spend it in a manner that is responsive to the needs listed in the DOIT reports.

He stated that federal funding for technology professional development will be increasing from a current level of \$4 million to an approximate \$6 million. Some of the money will go out as entitlements to school districts, and the other half will go out on a competitive basis. Most of the statewide training will continue to be provided by the Regional Educational Service Centers.

Mr. Waters discussed the positive role for Schools of Education in the area of teacher competencies. Ms. Greiman mentioned that CCIC had received a grant from SBC to work with Schools of Education to help assure that when students graduate, they are technologically competent.

Commission

Mr. Helfgott reiterated that the Governor had proposed \$10 million for the network. He suggested that the Commission's legislative message would be to express thanks and seek continued support for the Governor's proposal, but to also continue explain the ongoing needs of the educational technology agenda. Ms. Greiman commented that during the Fall's Special Session which was called specifically to cut budgets, the Commission had funds added back. She thanked Mr. Helfgott for his role in that success.

Connecticut Education Network

Mr. Dixon reported that the Governor's proposal would allow the momentum to continue even though the amount in the budget is less than the amount that had been requested.

He explained that the e-rate application did not get filed due to changes and complexities in the network funding stream and in the DOIT network contracts. Most of the effort was aimed at getting a useful contract in place rather than filing an e-rate application that would result in a low level of discounts. These issues will be resolved during the biennial budget process, and it is expected that a Year 6 e-rate application will be filed. He reported that due to the number of hits already on the network, the filtering capacity is in the process of being quadrupled.

Mr. Dixon reviewed the approach to the network design and deployment. DOIT still plans on using two different technologies, which has been its approach with other of its efforts, in an effort to not put 'everything in one pot'. Specifically, the network will continue to be built around a combination of sonnet-based services and, when it makes sense, leased services.

In response to questions earlier in the meeting, Mr. Vietzke commented that the department does want to put the district reports online, but that there are some issues that need to be looked at. Much of the information that is captured in the database is potentially vulnerable, from the perspective of security. Commission members suggested making summary information, only, available. It was agreed that making the information accessible would be useful and possibly trend-setting in the nation.

Mr. Vietzke also spoke about the deployment activities. He reported that there is a lot of higher education traffic on the network. A meeting was held at DOIT on January 4, 2002, with representatives of the schools that will be connected to the network in the next phase. Visits with the vendor are being made to their sites to identify and resolve issues. Meetings have been held with CSU personnel to discuss the CT Library Network conversion and its relocation to the state data center.

He also reported on his attendance at a national conference on state networks last week. The issues across the states are very similar, but he noted that we're one of the few that doesn't employ cost sharing

Content

Ms. Harris remarked that the Content Committee is focusing on professional development. It is their intent to have a report for the next meeting of the Commission covering K-12, with reports/recommendations for higher education and libraries to follow. The committee has also discussed adequate funding levels for professional development and that it needs to be tied to student and teacher competencies. Also, technology professional development does not stand alone, but instead is integrated into other curricular areas.

Mr. Young reported on the work of the ad hoc Content Committee. Since its focus is on the near term, its goal is to identify 'content' people are prepared to use, and not anything they need to be convinced to use. He expressed concerned about volunteers being able to do the work required, and he mentioned that he has put a member of his staff, Karen Kaplan, to work on the effort. She is in the process of contacting the large array of educational groups to get their input. For the longer term, he suggested the Commission needs to look at the staffing needs involved in supporting the ongoing work with content.

The Commission discussed the time constraints involved with getting content on the network in time for the next academic year and intellectual property issues that go along with content creation.

2002 Meeting Dates

The schedule of meetings for 2002 was unanimously approved.

Parent Technology Academy

Ms. Janice Grundel of Connecticut Voices for Children spoke about the progress in building the Parent Technology Academy. Their funding comes from a variety of sources: \$50,000 from the CET; \$25,000 from Hartford for a pilot with the Hartford Public Schools; and \$25,000 from SBC for a Girls in Technology project.

The Academy's mission is to seek ways that parents can have technology in their homes. National data suggest that there is a digital divide, but they haven't been able to find out, particularly in priority districts, who does and who does not have technology at home.

Other Business

Ms. Fusco announced that CECA is having its annual technology expo at the Legislative Office Building on March 27, 2002. She invited the Commission Members to attend.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 A.M.