

**Minutes of the  
Commission for Educational Technology**

Tuesday, February 11, 2003  
9 A.M. – 12 Noon  
101 East River Drive  
East Hartford, Connecticut

Members Present:      Rock Regan; Cal Heminway; Leslie Averna; Valerie Lewis; Denise Moynihan; Patricia Fusco; Ken Wiggin; Merle Harris; Bart Stanco; Paul Picard; William Cibes; and Marc Herzog.

Others Participating:   Michael Helfgott, CET Executive Director; John Vittner, DOIT; Susan Binkowski and Mike Suntag, SDE.

Acting Chairperson Merle Harris called the Meeting to order at 9:16 A.M.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of December 19, 2002 were passed unanimously.

**Connecticut Educational Network**

Mr. Regan updated the Members on the activities of the CEN. He mentioned that the budget and the inability to access the \$10 million in bonding for the CEN are still negatively impacting his agency and the Network. He reiterated that there is a tremendous plan to deploy the network within the target timeframes, but that it relies on the dollars being released within the requested timeframes.

DOIT has completed a network connection to the Armory, resulting in an ability to give demonstrations of the Network in proximity to the Capitol and the Legislative Office Building.

**Universal Services Fund Application**

Mr. Helfgott provided an update on the State's application to seek E rate funds, in the form of discounts, from the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company. He reported that it was filed electronically before the February 6, 2003 deadline. The application is seeking support only for those qualifying expenses that take place during E rate Year 6, which is the same as State FY03.

In order to maximize the benefit to the state, DOIT had re-competed its network related contracts in order to make them E rate compliant. Based on the towns included in the application and their respective discount rates, every \$45 that the State spends on qualifying expenditures will be matched by \$55 in E rate discounts.

There was a discussion of the need to better inform the communities of the State's application and of the implications, if any, for the local applications. It was agreed that Mr. Helfgott would convene a meeting of members of the Commission to discuss a number of related E rate issues: the questions raised by Mr. Heminway in his earlier memos; the impacts of the State's actions on local communities; and communications with the State's schools and libraries.

### **Update on Budgets**

Mr. Helfgott gave an update on the current year's budget and on work being done to secure funding during the next biennium. He mentioned that he and Mr. Vietzke were securing testimonial letters from a number of groups all advocating for the completion of the CEN and other of the Commission's strategic elements.

Ms. Moynihan stressed the need to communicate the Commission's progress to its constituencies. She mentioned the negative tone of the comments about the CEN at a recent CECA meeting. Mr. Stanco suggested that linking the testimonials to the strategic goals would be an effective tool for advocacy. Ms. Aversa thought that the SDE should communicate the Network and Commission status to superintendents and the LEAs.

Mr. Picard, speaking for the CEA, and Mr. Heminway, speaking for CAFE, indicated that their organizations think the completion of the Network is important, and that they are keeping them informed. Mr. Wiggin suggested that the agency hearings before the legislature is an important opportunity to spread the word.

Mr. Helfgott agreed to get material to use before the legislature to the Commission members. In response to an offer by Ms. Moynihan, Mr. Regan said he'd try to have a demo ready for the May 1 CECA Technology Expo at the Legislative Office Building.

### **OpenVES**

Ms. Aversa and Mr. Helfgott reported on the progress with OpenVES. After numerous meetings with the vendor during the past two months, a presentation was held at DOIT January 17, 2003 for superintendents and technology coordinators. The response at the meeting was very positive, and a follow up poll by SDE confirmed that those in attendance thought very highly of it.

Mr. Heminway added that CREC and other members of the RESC Alliance liked it, but he was concerned that only districts on the network would have access to it. Mr. Wiggin suggested that a non-network school should be included in the pilot to demonstrate the value of the CEN.

### **Annual Report**

The Commission members reacted favorably to the content of the draft report, but made a number of suggestions:

1. Move the Observations section to the beginning of the report where it will have a greater impact
2. Adding more to the CTDLC section, and others, that would speak to the impacts on students and on learning outcomes.
3. Include more references to national reports and Connecticut's low ranking under Sense of Urgency.

Mr. Helfgott said he'd incorporate the suggestions into a revised draft and have the final version back to the Commission. He invited them to take up to a week to provide him with more comments and suggestions.

The Meeting was adjourned at 10:26 A.M.