

MONTROSE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MINUTES
CHOCONUT VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACULTY ROOM

APRIL 28, 2011 7:00 P.M.

(Visit our website at www.masd.info)

Mr. Karl Wimmer
Chairperson

Mr. Craig Owens
Administrative Representative

I. WELCOME

April 28, 2011 Technology Committee meeting began at 7:00 PM

II. ATTENDANCE

Board members present included Karl Wimmer and Kathy Mordovancey

I. OLD BUSINESS

- **Update on the Disaster Recovery Project:** Mr. Owens reviewed the current status of the Disaster Recovery project involving the deployment of the Unitrends backup equipment. He indicated that the unit has been installed in the high school data center. Although the unit was originally intended to be installed in the new administration building, continuing work in the basement location there prevents its installation. Mr. Owens indicated that Mr. John Bender has been working with the vendor to configure the unit and it is currently backing up nearly all critical servers. Backups occur nightly, with more extensive weekly backups scheduled over the weekends. Additionally, routine archives of the unit have been scheduled and are running successfully. So far the unit has been functioning well and the vendor support has been excellent. Mr. Wimmer asked for an description of the servers that are currently being backed up.
- **Update on the Status of the Exchange Transition:** Mr. Owens discussed the current status of the continuing migration to Exchange 2010 for district email service. He indicated that approximately 25% of our email users had been moved over. Mr. Owens also indicated that he had recently participated in a week-long professional Exchange 2010 training and felt much more comfortable working with this technology and he is now prepared to move the remaining users over to the new servers. Mr. Owens indicated that he is exploring alternative ways to handle spam, an email problem that continues to plague district users. He indicated he is exploring, based on discussion with other enterprise-level Exchange administrators, the utilization of email proxy services to 'offload' email security responsibility to a third-party provider. One product he has explored includes Postini from Google. Mr. Wimmer questioned fiscal implications of the decision to explore a third party provider and Mr. Owens described the total cost of ownership (TCO) for spam and virus management include both the time for our end-users to manage their email as well as the time tech support spends handling calls regarding spam and email that are erroneously categorized and blocked as spam. Mr. Owens indicated that he is also investigating the feasibility of utilizing Google Apps, which the district receives free as an educational institution, for handling district email instead of Exchange. Mr. Wimmer indicated that the district has made a substantial investment in the infrastructure for our email and we should remain cautious in any decision to migrate away from that. Mr. Wimmer asked Mr. Owens to remain attentive to the security of email in any hosted email service that he investigate.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- **E-Rate Information:** Mr. Owens indicated that the district's E-Rate Form 471 has been under review and he has been working with our E-Rate consultant and Frontier Telecommunications for the last month to respond to the reviewer's concern. Mr. Owens provided the following written report to summarize the situation;

"On March 17, 2011, the district was notified by our E-Rate consultant, Sherry Lorenzo, that the MASD Funding Year 2011 Form 471 was under review. The form 471 is a document that is filed annually to declare chosen services and providers of those services and report service agreements to the funding agency, the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company – the administrating agency of the E-Rate program. Specifically, the review was concerned with our agreement with Frontier for connectivity service for Lathrop and Choconut.

There were two issues that the reviewer was concerned with. First, we requested funding for an amount in excess of the amount that is declared on the agreement with Frontier. This additional amount is for the exact additional cost of taxes and fees that are routinely charged monthly by the telecommunications carrier. We asked Frontier to provide documentation indicating the amount of their charged taxes/fees. We provided that documentation to the reviewer on March 21 and we believe the reviewer was satisfied with the response.

Second, the reviewer asked us to provide additional documentation regarding the \$50,000 non-recurring charge (NRC). The district chose a fee structure that included an up-front NRC and reduced monthly recurring charge as the most cost-effective solution over the term of the agreement. However, on the signed agreement that was submitted with our 471, the \$50,000 is described as an 'installation cost' instead of a capital investment. This term 'installation' raised red flags for the reviewers and they requested a detailed description of the equipment and services and associated costs so that a determination of eligibility could be made for each component of the 'installation'. The problem with this is Frontier's installation is not costed against this initial capital investment. It is absorbed into (or amortized across) the entire term of the agreement. If we attempted to define specific equipment or services associated with the installation, our chances of being refused funding for part or all of the application are substantial.

In our attempts to respond to this review/request, we brought several people into the discussion including our primary account rep from Frontier, the lead sales engineer from Frontier, Frontier's programs specialist, and Ron MacClay from ECTS (our consulting agent). We exchanged a series of email as well as held several conference calls.

Our initial response to the reviewer was a document from Frontier that clarified the terms of the agreement and more clearly defined their use of 'installation cost', making it clear that this was not an actual fee to cover the installation phase of the project, but was a one-time capital investment to offset the cost of the entire project. We believe that this response was accepted substantially, but the reviewer came back with a follow-up request for additional detail, including a network diagram, the specific equipment to be used and a clear indication of the demarcation between Frontier's network and the MASD network. In order for equipment to be eligible for E-Rate Internet Access or Telecommunications funding (vs Internal Connections, which we would not be eligible for) the provider's network must operate independently and not be a part of the school's network. The provider must also maintain ownership of the equipment.

We worked with Frontier to produce a document that ECTS believes will satisfy the reviewer and clearly establishes the equipment utilized and demarcates the network boundaries. This document was provided on April 27 and has been submitted to the reviewer.

We will wait to hear a final ruling on this application. If we do not receive funding on the NRC, the district will become responsible for this \$50,000. However, we did apply for an E-Fund (different than E-Rate) grant as part of a consortium application that was submitted by NEIU. A part of this E-Fund grant was intended to cover the portion of the NRC not covered by E-rate subsidy for districts participating in the NEPAWAN that were entering into new agreements for services. I am not sure if the E-Fund will cover 100% of the NRC if we are not funded. I do understand that about 35% of the \$50,000 (or approx. \$17,500) will be available through this grant. Therefore, in worst case I assume the district liability on the NRC may be around \$32,500 if we are not funded through E-Rate."

- **Microsoft Licensing Discussion:** Mr. Owens discussed a new licensing structure for Microsoft software that was negotiated by Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13. Historically, IU 13 has provided the most competitive pricing on MS software for PA schools and our district has taken advantage of their licensing programs. In the past, however, the district has purchased individual ('perpetual') licenses as needed and

maintained a copy of the purchase orders for these individual purchases as proof of ownership. This created two problems – first the administrative burden to maintain current licensing on all products that were purchased disparately. Second, the perpetual licenses did not include rights to upgrade to newer versions of the products as they became available. Larger schools were able to take advantage of more robust and flexible school agreements with Microsoft directly – but these required large volume purchasing that didn't make fiscal sense to smaller schools. Mr. Owens provided a summary of a new program that provides smaller school the opportunity to change their licensing structure to a school agreement similar to what the larger districts utilize without the requirement for large volume purchasing. The program utilizes an annual fee based on the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) faculty and staff employed by the district and scales across a five year contract. Mr. Owens provided a document outlining the program. Mr. Wimmer asked how much we currently spend on MS licensing and Mr. Owens indicated that he currently has approximately \$25,000 budgeted for this year's licensing – primarily to upgrade all older machines to Office 2010 and purchase additional Windows7 licenses. Mr. Owens indicated that the amount utilized for MS licensing varies from year to year based on upgrades required, but over a five year period that amount should be equivalent to the total five-year contract amount for this new MS agreement (approximately \$50,000, or about \$10,000 annually). Mr. Wimmer asked what the advantages of this program were if the pricing was equivalent with the way we were doing it now. Mr. Owens indicated that it provides the most current version of all software over the term of the agreement, ensures that all machines on the network are automatically legally licensed for the products, provides licensing for the Office products for all current employee to install at home (purchase of a CD would be required), and also provides access to a variety of unique software called the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack which includes some desktop virtualization tools.

II. OPEN FORUM

Mrs. Mordovancey asked if it were possible to provide some kind of a 'class' in MMS for use by the Senior Project coordinator to provide progress information that parents could see in their Parent Portal. Mr. Owens indicated that it is not created as a class within MMS and therefore can't be configured to seen in the portals. Because it is a multiyear project, it might not be possible to roster as a 'regular' class section. Mr. Owens will explore the possibility with the guidance office and report back to the technology committee. The Guidance Department would set the roster in MMS (all Seniors) and Mr. Powers (Senior Project Coordinator) would handle the data entry and communications with the parents.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 PM