

ARCC - A - TECT

"PLAYING A PART IN BUILDING BETTER SCHOOL DISTRICTS"

Arrowhead Regional Computing Consortium

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Volume 10, Issue 3

www.arcc.org

May/June 2006

ARCC Governance Board Members: Chair: Kim Josephson, Cloquet; Clerk/Treasurer: Scott Wirtanen, Hibbing.
Directors: Herb Hilinski, Cromwell-Wright; Brad Johnson, Hermantown; Kathe Johnson, Deer River; Sue Kaslow, Hill City;
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Denise Bohrer, Controller/Director's Assistant x102
Kris Schmidt, Office Manager x100

FINANCE/UFARS

Jeff Yeager x110
Mel Hejda x111
Cathy Erickson x113
Cindy Olson x101
Kevin Lindquist x123
Kris Schmidt x100

PAYROLL/STAR

Nikki Logan x103
Carol Knight x104
Kevin Lindquist x123

STUDENT/MARSS

Kerry Chaffey x109
Teri Henderson x107
Kevin Lindquist x123
Jim Livesay x121
Dale Nielsen x108

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Jim Livesay x121
Bob Buchanan x122
Kevin Lindquist x123
Dale Nielsen x108



Honor Our Vets
Memorial Day!

Inside this issue

- Page 2 **E-Rate Column** – Program Integrity Assurance or Selective Review?, Cost Effective, Transfer of Equipment
Page 3 **Finance** – SMART Finance Notes, Finance and UFARS Yearend Workshops, Budget Simulation Input Forms
Page 4 **Finance** – Upcoming District Training Sessions, Summer Finance Support, Brain Teaser
Page 5 **Payroll** – ACH File Limits for Payoff Payrolls, Summer Cleanup/Training Days, Reminders, Tips
Page 6 **Student** – Infinite Campus – Assessments, EOY Submission, MARSS Info
Page 7 **Net News** – The Schools Interoperability Framework – Update, Brain Teaser Answer

Next Board Meeting: May 25, 2006
Hermantown Admin Bldg, 4307 Ugstad Rd; Hermantown
11:00 a.m.

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO ATTEND

Welcome Lyn-

In the last newsletter I thanked Larry O'Brien for his 24 years of continuous service on the ARCC Board. Although I will very much miss Larry and what he brought to the Board, I am very excited to announce that the ARCC Board has appointed Lyn Rajala to fulfill the remainder of Larry's term as the Instructional Management representative on the Board. Lyn has many years of experience working with various student information systems and will bring a wealth of information and insight to the Board. I would like to thank Superintendent Silko and the Grand Rapids School Board for making Lyn's expertise available to ARCC and our member districts.



One of the first items Lyn will get involved with as the newest member of the ARCC Board is adopting a 2006-2007 budget. A Budget Committee comprised of Kim Josephson (Cloquet Business Manager), John Klarich (Nashwauk-Keewatin Superintendent), and Scott Wirtanen (Hibbing Business Manager) is currently working on a budget that will be presented to the full ARCC Board in May. Since member district enrollment is a key component in determining ARCC revenues, we are always struggling to generate adequate revenue as a result of the continued enrollment decline in the region. Although the Budget Committee has not reached a final decision on what (if any) changes will be recommended to any of the ARCC fee rates for 2006-2007, please be aware that we will do all that we can to maintain or improve services while keeping fee rate increases (if any) to a minimum.

- Marv Roberts

E-RATE COLUMN - Cindy Olson



Program Integrity Assurance or Selective Review?

Do you know the difference between a “Program Integrity Assurance (PIA)” review and a “Selective” review? Every E-Rate application goes through a “PIA” review. This is a basic review of your application to see if your discount rate can be verified, if the funding you requested is reasonable and to see if any other issues need to be clarified before your application can be funded.

For funding year 2006, the “Selective” review process has gone through a major overhaul. A selective review requires more in-depth information from you including (but not limited to) a copy of your technology plan, documentation of your competitive bidding process, verification that you have a budget to pay for your share of the services, and verification that you have other resources necessary to make use of the services you requested (i.e..... training, computers, software, electrical capacity and maintenance).

The PIA review is usually an e-mail with 2 to 5 questions and you have 7 days to respond. The “Selective” review is 9 pages long and you have 30 days to answer their questions and return supporting documentation.

If you do not provide enough information, your “PIA” reviewer will contact you for more information or clarification. Your “Selective” reviewer will NOT follow up with you if your submission is missing requested information or documentation. Therefore, it is extremely important that you provide complete responses to any “Selective” review.

Please note that your service provider may NOT act as your representative and complete your “Selective” review.

With Schools and Library Division (SLD) increasing their staff by 21% over funding year 2004 (largely to expand their audit initiatives) it could mean that districts will see more “Selective” reviews in the future.

Cost Effective

In the March 31st SLD News Brief, SLD clarified that not only must the winning bid be the most cost-effective of those received, it must also be cost-effective compared to prices available commercially. While we understood that the bid must be the most cost-effective of those received, it is new information that it must also be cost effective compared to commercially available prices.



Now that we have this piece of information, it is understandable why SLD has begun to deny E-Rate requests it has deemed cost ineffective. According to the E-Rate Central weekly update of March 13, 2006, SLD had denied 11 schools through wave 38 of funding year 2005 for this very reason. Also, according to E-Rate Central quite a few of the denials are for smaller schools. It appears that SLD is taking student count into consideration and looking at the total cost per student of the E-Rate funding requested.

Up to this point, SLD has only used this reason to deny applications for internal connections. There is no indication at this time whether this practice will also be used to deny requests for telecommunications and Internet access.



Transfer of Equipment

We finally received an answer to the question of whether E-Rate funded equipment could be used for ineligible purposes. The example is a district that purchased a server with E-Rate funds to be used for e-mail and web hosting. After 3 years, the district decided to purchase a new server for e-mail and web hosting and wondered if they could move the old server to the role of file server. SLD recently informed us that the equipment can NOT be used for ineligible purposes, no matter how old. It also can not be sold or traded for anything of value. E-Rate Central, an E-Rate support organization, suggests that until this situation changes, equipment purchased with E-Rate funds that is no longer being used for an E-Rate eligible purpose should be stored in a basement or warehouse for 5 years past the last date of the funding year in case of an E-Rate audit.



SMART Finance Notes – Jeff Yeager

- **Session Default** – Click ok to store the default screen. The system uses this information to record the date and period.
- **Session Update** – Make sure your SMART Finance session is ended each day when you leave work.
- **Budget Changes and Transfer Screens (Data Entry) for FY2007** – Remember to import a copy of the current budget or zero amounts to use the budget changes and transfers screens.
- **Budget Update** – Call if you have questions or need help preparing or importing the fiscal year 2006-2007 budget spreadsheet file.
- **Accounting Calendar Periods** – Close the A/P, A/R, F/A, and G/L periods when finished processing for the month.
- **Vendors** – Use capital letters without punctuation to satisfy the US Post Office requirements.
- **Ending Expenditure and Revenue Accounts** – Stop inactive or obsolete accounts with an end period of 200614. Using the last period of a fiscal year permits an account to report for the year, but not allow next year processing. (*Purchase Order districts need to be careful not to use stopped expenditure accounts on next year orders!*) If you choose to stop accounts with an end period less than 200614, move the activity and budget to the correct account or ask ARCC to process a Code Conversion.
- **Purchase Order Cleanup** – PO districts should check open purchase orders for old data to remove before year-end.
- **Requisition Cleanup** – PO districts should check open requisitions for old data to remove before year-end.
- **Period Balance Reports** – Its time to start checking the period balance report for the Accounts Payable control account in all funds (B-0X-206-000). This report must agree with open vouchers via the voucher summary screen. If you have a difference, it usually is due to manual Journal Entries adjustments in the system control account.
- **Bank Reconciliation** – Remember to lock the reconciliation screen before starting the next month. Locked reconciliations display as finalized on the reports. Make sure you reconcile timely to comply with the Check 21 changes and prepare for the audit.

Finance and UFARS Yearend Workshops – Jeff Yeager

Yearend training is planned for June 2 (Hampton Inn – Duluth) and June 5 (NESC – Mt. Iron). Sessions are from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Auditors and districts are invited to attend this workshop. Discussion includes UFARS reporting changes, yearend refresher and a SMART Finance update.



Registration will be announced with an e-mail or fax notice by early May.

Budget Simulation Input Forms – Cindy Lee Olson

Electronic copies of the budget simulation input forms are available on the ARCC web site for both 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. You can find them on the ARCC web site at <http://www.arcc.org/main.htm> - then click on the **Finance Bar** and then click on the **Revenue Simulation Input Worksheets** link. You will see the simulation input forms in both Excel and Adobe Acrobat format.

Completed forms can be e-mailed to me at cindylee@arcc.org or faxed to me at 218-723-1923. Budget simulations will be completed on a first-come first-served basis and can be delayed if we are preparing for regional training sessions.

Upcoming District Training Sessions – Cindy Lee Olson

To register for any of the following sessions, send an e-mail to cindylee@arcc.org. Please register one week prior to the session so that we have time to prepare district specific handouts for each participant.



April 26, 2006
9:00-2:30

New Business Manager Series

Northeast Service Cooperative, Mountain Iron

Topics: NESC Services, Student Activity Accounting, Fund Accounting, UFARS Source Codes, Funding Sources, Journal Entries, Ideas Report Review, Cash Flow

May 17, 2006
9:00-12:00

New Business Manager Series

Arrowhead Regional Computing Consortium, Duluth

Topics: Overview of Budgeting, SMART Finance Budget Imports and Changes

May 31, 2006
9:00-12:00

New Business Manager Series

Northeast Service Cooperative, Mountain Iron

Topics: Health and Safety, Transportation Reporting and Chargebacks, School District Bid Laws

July 25, 26, 27
9:00-3:00

Superintendent Training Series

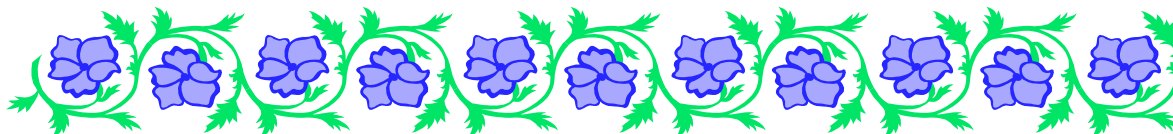
Northeast Service Cooperative, Mountain Iron

Topics not yet finalized



Summer Finance Support – Cindy Lee Olson

Recently a memo was sent out to the region's Superintendents and Business Managers to gauge the level of support that districts will require over the summer months for year end audit preparation and year end tax reconciliation. We received a number of replies and are in the process of reviewing them. If you did not reply and feel your district may be in a position to need this type of assistance, please contact Cindy as soon as possible.



Brain Teaser:

Adam, Becky, Carla, Danny and Elise are lined up at the diving board. Danny is the only person who dives. The others jump. Carla is standing immediately behind her best friend, who is Adam. Adam is two people in front of Becky. The person who dives is the first in line. Elise is next to Adam. In what order are they standing in line at the diving board?

PAYROLL - Nikki Logan

ACH File Limits for Payoff Payrolls

Please contact Bremer Bank if you know that you will exceed your daily file limit. This typically affects those districts that process lump sum payoff payrolls. You can submit a temporary file limit increase. If you need the instructions on how to do this, please contact Carol.

Summer Cleanup/Training Days

We will be scheduling days again this summer for those who would like to come to the ARCC lab to do summer 'cleanup' on their SMART HR data. In addition, we will be scheduling training sessions in the following areas:

- Leave System
- New Payroll User Training
- Injuries & Illnesses / First Report of Injury / OSHA Reporting
- Worker's Comp / Tracking Wages by Category
- Pay Rate Tables / Teacher's Salary Matrix
- Budget Database



Contact Nikki if you are interested in attending a session on any of the above topic areas.

Reminders:

- **GL Undo's** - If you have attempted to move dollars on your payrolls and it has not worked, please complete the GL Undo form and send to Carol. These can also be processed after June 30 as we are able to set the calendar dates to reflect FY06.
- **Pay Calendars** - Build your next calendar before submitting your payroll to ARCC.
- **ESS options** - There are many custom settings for your ESS users. If you would like any of these options turned on, please contact Nikki or Carol.
- **Payroll Reports** - Please review the payroll reports that you receive with each payroll and let Carol know if you would like to add or remove reports to the list you currently have.

Tips:

- **Building a Payee** - Go to MN Payroll Setup/Setup Payees. In the Select box, enter the payee name (must be 10 characters or less) and Enter. Fill in the name and address information.
- **Select payee type of "Deduction"**. Select the option from the drop down listbox whether you want to "Print Detail" and/or "Print SSN" information on the check stubs. Then Save.
- **Adding a Bank for Direct Deposit** - On the check delivery tab, double click anywhere on the screen and the bank table will appear. Click on "Add New Row", enter the routing number and bank name, and then click on "Save Changes". The bank will now appear in the drop down box for selection.
- **FICA Flags** - Go to MN Payroll Utilities/Fix FICA Flags. This will allow you to fix the exempt flag settings on an employee who should be exempt from FICA.

STUDENT - Kerry Chaffey, Teri Henderson, Dale Nielsen

Infinite Campus - Assessments - Dale Nielsen



The 2006 MDE assessment data results are now being received by school districts. The notable change this year is the number of data elements has increased from 169 to 223 and all 3 Basic Standards Tests (BSTs) are being sent in a single file.

What Does That Mean?

1. Along with your data, you'll receive a new spreadsheet titled '2006 Universal File.xls'. This file contains a new header for your data, along with instructions describing how to prepare the data for importing to your student system. Don't try to use last year's Universal File header for this year's data!
2. You'll need to 'parse' your source data. Since all 3 tests are contained in a single file, you'll need to sort the data by subject (Math, Reading, Writing), then cut and paste the subjects into separate spreadsheets.
3. I've created a '2006' assessments folder for each district on our server here at ARCC. This is a recommended place to keep off-site backups of all of your district assessment data. Just attach your data, 'As Is' to an email message to me. I'll contact you to confirm receipt and solicit any further instructions. It doesn't get much easier than that!

Since the last issue of the ARCC-A-TECT, I've met with 2 **District Assessment Coordinators** to discuss how to store assessments data in Infinite Campus! Both seemed pleased with the results of the meetings. In the coming months, I hope to spend time with each of you to inform you of what the Campus system is doing with assessments data and what they intend for the future. Also to put a 'game plan' together for how you'd like your data stored and represented in the system for various reports and transcripts.

EOY Submission - Kerry Chaffey

The second EOY 06 MARSS is due to ARCC Friday, June 9, 2006.

The following are the turnaround reports your district will receive after the submission:

Different Student ID, Residents Served Elsewhere, Error Report, EOY Check off Report, Low ADM, ADM Adjustment Report, LEP Funding Eligibility, AYP Attendance Report

The other EOY 06 file submission due dates are as follows:

Friday, July 7th

Friday, August 11th

Friday, September 15th

*Friday, October 27th (note this is the final submission)***



****The final EOY 06 MARSS files are due earlier than in previous years, be certain to take note and plan for this change.**

MARSS Info - Kerry Chaffey

Currently and in the past all MARSS files are run through the state Micro Edit program by downloading it from the MDE site onto your workstation. This process will be changing for the FY07 reporting. There will be a web based micro edit which you will access through the internet. This is currently scheduled to be 'rolled out' during the summer months. Watch your email as we will inform MARSS contacts as we receive more info from MDE and the plans for rolling this out and training for this new process.



The Schools Interoperability Framework - Update

ARCC is pleased to announce that it has successfully implemented the first instance of Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF).

The Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) is a non-profit membership organization comprised of over 100 software vendors, school districts, state departments of education and other organizations active in primary and secondary (K-12) markets, who have come together to create a set of rules and definitions to enable software programs from different companies to share information. This set of platform independent, vendor neutral rules and definitions is called the "SIF Implementation Specification."

Implementing products which conform to the SIF Implementation Specification make it possible to share data without any additional programming by the local school or district and without requiring each vendor to learn and support the intricacies of other vendor's applications.

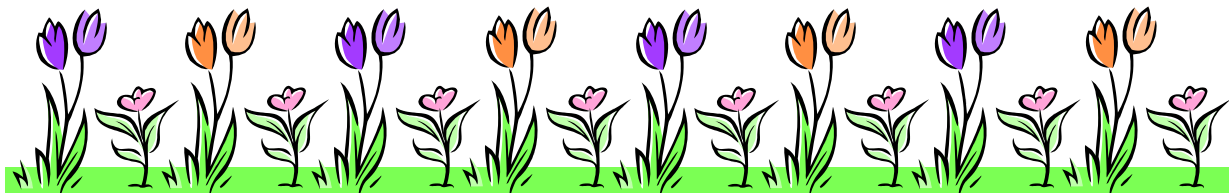
http://www.sifinfo.org/about_sif/general_overview.asp

ARCC has been working with the *Infinite Campus* <http://www.infinitecampus.com:8080/corporateSite/index.jsp> (SIS) staff and *VersaTrans* <http://www.versatrans.com> (school bus routing and planning) to implement SIF between the two software applications. We were able to download *Infinite Campus* student information to *VersaTrans* via SIF. For this first effort, the *Infinite Campus* SIS application and database reside at ARCC, the *VersaTrans* application and database reside at ISD 318 (Grand Rapids).

An upcoming version of *Infinite Campus* this summer will allow for even more SIF functionality, including automatic updates based upon *specific* SIF objects.

By utilizing SIF, the *VersaTrans* application can be easily updated behind the scenes with SIS data on a regular basis. No more double entry or cumbersome data export-import routines should be required.

For general information regarding SIF, go to <http://www.sifinfo.org>.



Brain Teaser Answer:

The people standing in line at the diving board are in the following order: Danny, Elise, Adam, Carla and Becky.

Please contact ARCC with any address or name updates

ARCC WILL BE CLOSED



MEMORIAL DAY



MAY 29, 2006