

ARCC - A - TECT

"PLAYING A PART IN BUILDING BETTER SCHOOL DISTRICTS"

Arrowhead Regional Computing Consortium

5 West 1st Street, Suite 300

Duluth, Mn 55802-2070

Voice: 218.723.1700 Fax: 218.723.1923

Volume 11, Issue 1

www.arcc.org

January/February 2007

ARCC Governance Board Members: Chair: Kim Josephson, Cloquet; Clerk/Treasurer: Scott Wirtanen, Hibbing.

Directors: Herb Hilinski, Cromwell-Wright; Vickie Jerry, Deer River; Brad Johnson, Hermantown; Sue Kaslow, Hill City;

John Klarich, Nashauk-Keewatin; Jane Mianowski, Cook County; Gene Paulson, Mesabi East; Lyn Rajala, Grand Rapids; Jim Schwarzbauer, Proctor.

ADMINISTRATION

Marv Roberts, Executive Director x105
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



Happy Presidents Day!

Inside this issue

- Page 2 **Misc Info** – ARCC-A-TECT Online, ARCC Website, Voice Mail Q & A
Page 3 **E-Rate** – E-Rate Column
Page 4 **E-Rate** – E-Rates Continued
Page 4 **Finance** – IRS Mileage Rate Change, 2007 Workshops and Trainings, FFMS Expanding Hours, Brain Teaser
Page 5 **Payroll** - *NEW* Deadline for STAR Reporting, 2006 W-2's Available on ESS, Calendar Year 2007 Limits, 2007 PERA Rates, . . . And 2 Become 1, What's New!
Page 6 **Student** – NWEA Class Roster File v1.3, Watch Out For Embedded Tabs in MDE's New "Universal File.xls"
Page 7 **Student** – Campus 2007 Version
Page 8 **Student** – MARSS Update, Brain Teaser Answers
Page 9 **Net News** – Software Licensing 101, Microsoft Vista for Your PC

Next Board Meeting: January 25, 2007
Hermantown Admin Bldg, 4307 Ugstad Rd; Hermantown
10:00 a.m.

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO ATTEND

Thank You Jim -

Jim Schwarzbauer will be leaving the Proctor School Board and thus will be leaving the School Board representative seat he holds on the ARCC Board. The ARCC Board and I will miss Jim and we thank him for his years of service.

~ Marv Roberts



Annual Meeting & Regular Board Meetings-

The annual meeting of ARCC member districts will be held on January 25, 2007 at the Hermantown School District Administration Building. An agenda and map have been sent to all member districts. In addition to the annual meeting there will also be regular 2007 Board meetings held on :

January 25	May 17	October 11
March 22	August 23	December 20

The agendas for all regular Board meetings are also sent to each district prior to the meeting. Although 11 of ARCC's 30 member districts have staff or School Board members serving on the ARCC Board, we certainly would welcome representatives from the other 19 districts who might want to attend. Input from every member district is valued.

~ Marv Roberts

MISC INFORMATION - Kris Schmidt



ARCC-A-TECT Available Online ~

If you would like to join the many people who are already receiving an email letting them know when the most current newsletter is available on the ARCC website (www.arcc.org) rather than having one mailed to you, please contact me at kschmidt@arcc.org or x100. I would be happy to add you to my group email list. From the website you will be able to print a copy if you desire using Adobe Acrobat Reader which can be downloaded from our site if you don't already have it.

ARCC Website (www.arcc.org) ~

How many times in the past month have you visited the ARCC website? Maybe you weren't even aware of it. There is a lot of helpful information there including the following:

- Links to each of the ARCC member districts
- A calendar with upcoming workshops, board meetings & ARCC holidays
- ARCC staff contact information
- Directions to ARCC
- ARCC-A-TECT's including past issues
- Links to Student, Finance & Payroll pages
- Weather conditions in the Duluth area
- Links to many useful websites
- Downloads and more!



Take a look; please let me know if there is anything you think might be helpful to add to our site or any ways to make navigating through it easier. Enjoy!!



~ Voice Mail Q & A ~

Q: Once I am in someone's voicemail box, am I able to enter another voicemail extension without pressing zero for the receptionist or having to hang up and call back?

A: Yes, to do this, press *8 and then the new extension number.

Q: Can I bypass listening to the voicemail greeting and just leave a message?

A: Yes, by entering *1 once you hear the beginning of the greeting. Just keep in mind many people have new messages daily and it may be important to listen to them.

E-RATE COLUMN - Cindy Olson

E-Rates

By now most districts have completed Form 470 and are working on getting all of the information ready to complete Form 471. I have to admit that Form 471 is my least favorite form. Maybe it is because I know it's the form that will generate the most interaction between you and the program integrity/assurance folks at Schools and Library Division (SLD).



At any rate, the best way to handle form 471 is to come to your meeting with all of the documentation necessary to successfully file the form so that we don't have to perform any "shoot from the hip" guesses in my office!

Here is what you will need to bring with you for your form 471:

- Copy of your December 2006 MARSS report including fall enrollment by MARSS site and students eligible for free or reduced lunch by MARSS site. Districts who submit their MARSS data through ARCC will not need to bring this information as I can access it from our student support staff.
- Copy of bills for your month to month service providers. I would suggest bringing 3 months of bills so that we can generate an accurate annual cost estimate.
- Copy of successful quotes and bids so that we can calculate annual costs and also submit copies of these to SLD with Item 21.
- Copy of contracts. All services that are not tariff or month to month services must have a contract. The contract must be signed at least 28 days after Form 470 was filed and on or before the date the Form 471 is filed. The contract must be signed by your service provider and your school district and must contain a date for both signatures. Contracts are also required for all internal connection (equipment) requests.
- Statistical information that includes number of rooms with phone service, number of rooms with internet access, internet access (bandwidth), number of devices with internet access, number of network drops.
- Technology budget for items not covered by e-rates for fiscal year 2008.
- Every service provider you select must have a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) number.
- Your PIN number.

We are going to submit your item 21 attachment information electronically this year. ARCC purchased a multi-page document scanner and we will scan all of your contracts, bill copies and Item 21 face sheets and send them via e-mail to SLD. We are hoping that this speeds up the funding process.

A couple districts have asked questions about selecting a service provider in cases where they only receive one quote or no quotes. Remember that you are allowed to seek quotes from service providers but are not required to do so (at least for now). If you only received one quote, you are allowed to select that service provider. If you received no quotes you are allowed to stay with your current provider. Just make sure that you put a dated note in your e-rate file that you only received one quote or that you received no quotes.

For districts who receive more than one quote, SLD included some quote scoring rubrics in this week's newsletter that can help you select your service provider within the e-rate guidelines. Here they are:

Example #1

Factor	Weight
Price of eligible products and services	30%
Prior experience	25%
Personnel qualifications	20%
Management capability	15%
Environmental objectives	10%
Total	100%

Example #2

Factor	Weight
Price of eligible products and services	30%
Other cost factors (including price of ineligible products and services, price of changing service providers, cost of breaking contract, etc.)	20%
Local service provider	20%
Ability to provide maintenance on equipment purchased	15%
Extended warranty on equipment	15%
Total	100%

I plan on sending out an e-mail in the near future with a Form 471 to do list that includes a number of electronic files. I will also send out an updated Form 471 schedule for you to sign up for filing support. Thanks and have a nice holiday season!

FINANCE - Jeff Yeager, Cindy Olson, & Cathy Erickson

IRS Mileage Rate Change – Jeff Yeager

The standard IRS mileage rate is changing to 48.5 cents per mile for business miles driven. This change is effective January 1, 2007.



2007 Workshops and Trainings – Cathy Erickson

Business Managers and Superintendents should watch for mailings regarding upcoming trainings and workshops. The annual Profiles Session will be held in mid-February with one session at the south half of the region and one in the northern half. Locations are still being secured at this time. ARCC finance staff will also be offering supplemental trainings in between our regular workshop schedule. In March the focus will be on Student Counting, and in April we will take a closer look at the Levy Certification. More details on these and future trainings will be sent out in January.

FFMS Expanding Hours ~ Cindy Olson

Effective January 2, 2007 ARCC will expand the hours of Cathy and Cindy's finance support. Monday through Friday FFMS staff are available from 7:00 to 4:30 to answer your finance, funding, and management questions. Contact us for more details.

Brain Teaser ~

1. On a standard traffic light in the USA, is the green on the top or bottom?
2. How many US states are there? (Don't laugh, some people don't know)
3. In which hand is the Statue of Liberty's torch?
4. What 6 colors are on the classic Campbell's soup label?
5. What 2 letters don't appear on an American telephone dial? (No cheating!)
6. What 2 numbers on the telephone dial don't have letters by them?
7. When you walk does your left arm swing with, your right or left leg?
8. How many matches are in a standard American pack?
9. On the United States flag is the top stripe red or white?
10. What is the lowest number on the FM dial in America?

Answers on page 8

PAYROLL - Nikki Logan




NEW Deadline for STAR Reporting

The STAR website officially opened on December 6th. The revised due date has been changed to January 31st. This deadline is not only for the final submission of your STAR data, but is also the deadline for the completion of the Licensure/Assignment Discrepancy Reporting and the Highly Qualified Reporting. Keep this in mind when working on your STAR data. You will not want to wait until the last minute to begin submitting your data.

2006 W-2's Available on ESS

It's still not too late to give your employees the option of printing their own W-2's via ESS. Give us a call and we can enable the W-2 consent process.

Calendar Year 2007 Limits



Maximum wage limit for OASDI portion of Social Security increased to \$97,500. Maximum withholding for an employee is \$6,045.00 ($\$97,500 \times .062$). TSA (403b) and Deferred Compensation (457) limits increased to \$15,500. If an employee is 50 or over at any time in 2007 their limit increases to \$20,500.

2007 PERA Rates

The rates for PERA's Coordinated Plan increase as of January 1, 2007. Employee's withholding percentage went up to 5.75% and the employer's withholding percentage increased to 6.25%.



...And 2 Become 1

The combining of the SMART Finance and SMART HR databases was completed on November 30th. All of your district's finance and payroll data is now located in one database. Although this transition is transparent to the users, it will allow us to provide you with more advanced reporting options in the future. Thanks go to Kevin for all of his hard work in making the process go so smoothly.

What's New!

- Pilot districts have been selected and will begin working in the near future on some of the new features in SMART HR. You will be notified as soon as these features are made available to all districts.
- Calculation and creation of Form 941 Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return
- Tracking of employees on COBRA
- If there are any districts interested in piloting Online Applicant, please call or email Nikki. This feature allows you to build and post job openings, allowing both employees and non-employees to apply for those positions online.



STUDENT - Kerry Chaffey, Teri Henderson, Dale Nielsen

NWEA Class Roster File v1.3 - Dale Nielsen

There have been some nice improvements made to the Campus SQL Report, "NWEA Class Roster File". The new version is 1.3



Summary of changes:

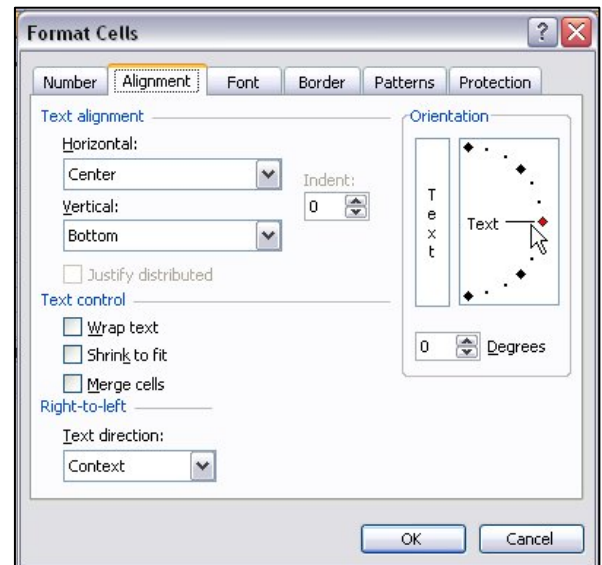
1. New method of joining CampusAttribute and CampusDictionary tables that provides consistent information in drop lists.
2. Hid filtering options for student records flagged as 'State Exclude' and 'LEP'. No districts interviewed responded that they test those kids so we're filtering their records out automatically.
3. Removed the 4 rightmost fields on the output file: Sac Code, Disability, LEP, and StateExclude.
4. Wrote new procedural docs and posted to:
http://www.arcc.org/Campus/Campus SQL Reporting Services/sql_reporting_services_page.htm
5. Fixed a bug - Eliminated 'duplicating' items in the 'class' drop list.

The results of this 'tune-up' are that the report is less cluttered, requires less post-extract manipulation and the extract now has a predictable outcome. Thanks to all for your selfless consultation and patience while this was corrected.

Watch Out For Embedded Tabs in MDE's New 'Universal File.xls' - Dale Nielsen

I need to give you a 'heads-up' on this - I recently spent some time working with a frustrated end user. This person had spent the better part of a day trying in vain to load MCA data into their Campus database. I'll spare you the extra reading and skip ahead right to the problem. The spreadsheet that's included on CD media for MCA summer 2006 will be likely to give you trouble if you use the column headings from the sheet titled 'Header Page to Load Final Data'. There are embedded 'tab' characters between some of the words in some of the column headings! What makes this even more unpleasant is that you'll need to go looking for them because they're not visible when you first open that page.

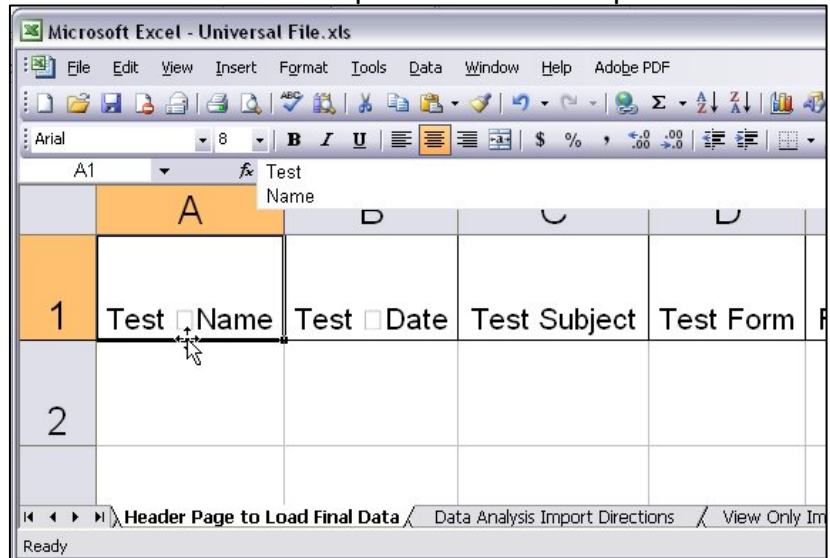
To 'unhide' the tab characters, select the entire row of column headings by clicking on the cell for row 1 (to the left of the cell containing 'Test Name').



Click on the menu item 'Format'. Select 'Cells'. Select 'Alignment'. Drag the alignment arrow to the 3 o'clock position and uncheck the box labeled 'Wrap Text'. Finally, click the button labeled 'OK'. You'll be returned to the spreadsheet. Adjust the column width and you'll be able to see those tab characters. They show up as little square boxes between the words, as shown in cells A:1 and B:1 below. Also notice the data entry block next to 'fx'. See how the words Test and Name are stacked on top of each other?

Each of those tab characters needs to be removed in order for Campus not to misinterpret the source data during import.

You can simply place your cursor to the left of the 'N' in 'Test Name' and hit delete one time. You'll see things 'straighten out' for that field. This needs to be done to each field containing an embedded tab. I had no luck using 'Find and Replace' so the process is completely manual. You may find it easier to load your source data without column headings. As always, I will be happy to work through this with you on a one-on-one basis.



Campus 2007 Version – Teri Henderson

Campus is turning out the 2007 version of their student software. Consensus at the fall Campus User Group meeting was to wait until the end of the 2006-2007 school year to roll it out. We are now busy making plans for the training!

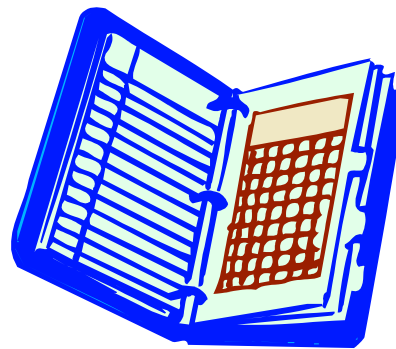
Some of the new features include a Census Wizard, Counseling tool, School Choice, User Security features, and more!

Training will take place over a two-day period. We have allowed some time for you to review your district's data and get comfortable with the different 2007 features.

Registration is on a first come, first serve basis. If you have not signed up for the training, you may want to do so as soon as possible. We are offering first and second choices.

Dates for the training are:

- April 30 – May 1
- May 2 – 3
- May 7 – 8
- May 9 – 10
- June 18 – 19
- June 20 – 21
- June 25 – 26
- June 27 – 28



If you have questions on 2007 training, please contact Teri or Kerry.

MARSS Update – Kerry Chaffey

There is a new transportation code to use for the 06-07 school year. The following is information from MDE on the new code:



New MARSS Transportation Category – 06

New for FY 2006-07, school districts providing special transportation for selected non-disabled students must now use the MARSS Transportation Code 06. The special non-disabled transportation student consists of three groups of students:

1. Homeless
2. Students attending Care and Treatment Programs
3. Students that have 504 Accommodations Plans that require special transportation

If any of these students require special transportation accommodations as specified in their IEP/IFSP/IIIP use MARSS Code 03 – Disabled, as 03 prevails over 06.

Homeless Students

Homeless students shall be included in the Special Transportation Category regardless of whether or not the homeless student has a disability. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. School districts must provide students experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth, with transportation to and from their school of origin if requested by the parent, guardian or homeless education liaison.

Care and Treatment Programs for Students Without Disabilities

Minn. Stat., section 126A.51, provides that districts may report students without disabilities in the Special Transportation Category when these students are transported to care and treatment facilities. These students must have a short-term or temporary physical or emotional illness or disability and must be placed temporarily for care and treatment for that illness or disability. They have an SAC of 27 or 28 without an IEP and require special transportation or accommodations. Or, the students have an SAC of 27 or 28 and have an IEP and no special transportation or accommodations written in the students IEP.

Temporary Physical Disability

Occasionally, a school district provides special transportation for a student who has a temporary physical disability (e.g., a broken leg). Normally, this student was transported to school on a regular bus route or walked to school. Because of the broken leg, the student now needs special transportation. The instructions for reporting a student in the Special Transportation Category on MARSS require that the student have a 504 Accommodation Plan. The district should write a 504 Accommodation Plan indicating special transportation needs for the student.

The MARSS Transportation Manual has been updated with this new code. It can be found on MDE's website at: <http://education.state.mn.us/mde/static/000754.pfg>.

Brain Teaser Answer ~

1. Bottom
2. 50 (I HOPE you at least got this one!)
3. Right
4. Blue, red, white, yellow, black, and gold
5. Q, Z
6. 1, 0
7. Right
8. 20
9. Red
10. 88



NET NEWS

Software Licensing 101.

The following is courtesy of Raymond Benedetti of CDW Corporation
<http://www.cdw.com/default.asp>

A software license is a contract between the software manufacturer and the software user. A volume license merely extends that contract to a group of users. The Gartner Group (2004), an IT research firm, divides licenses into four categories:



- A **perpetual license** is the most common license type, giving the owner a right to use the software as long as needed (but rarely providing free version upgrades).
- A **term license** limits use of the software to a defined period and does not include updates, but often comes with a maintenance contract.
- An **appliance license** is applied to software already installed on hardware delivered as an integrated product. Appliance licenses are perpetual and often include updates.
- The **subscription license** resembles a term license. It covers a specified period but also provides updates, maintenance services and technical support.

- Jim Livesay

Microsoft Vista for Your PC

Thinking about Microsoft Vista for your PC operating systems sometime in the future?

Here are the basic hardware requirements:

	Minimum supported requirements
Processor	800 MHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor ²
System memory	512 MB
GPU	SVGA (800x600)
Graphics memory	
HDD	20 GB
HDD free space	15 GB
Optical drive	CD-ROM drive ⁵

²Processor speed is specified as the nominal operational processor frequency for the device. Some processors have power management that allows the processor to run at lower rate to save power.

⁵A CD-ROM may be external (not integral, not built into the system)

For more information visit <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/>

~ Jim Livesay

Please contact ARCC with any address or name updates

ARCC WILL BE CLOSED

New Years Day - January 1, 2007



Presidents Day - February 19, 2007

