

Delaware Center for Educational Technology
Board of Director's Meeting
Minutes of Wednesday, December 22, 2004
Collette Education Resource Center
Dover, Delaware

The Board of Directors for the Delaware Center for Educational Technology met on Wednesday, December 22, 2004 in public session at the Delaware Center for Educational Technology Office, Collette Education Resource Center in Dover, Delaware. The Honorable John Carney called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

- Voting Board members present: Mr. Ted Ammann, Mr. John Carney, Mr. John Doyle, Dr. Sandy Falatek, Mr. Dean Ivory, Ms. Loretta Martin, Mr. Ronald Pierce, Mr. David Sechler, Dr. Dianne Sole, Dr. George Stone and Ms. Valerie Woodruff were present. Mr. Thomas Jarrett and Mr. Jim Decker were absent. A quorum of voting members was present.
- Ex-officio non-voting members: Ms. Anne Norman and Ms. Pat Sine were present. Ms. Jennifer Davis, Dr. Charles Fletcher, Mr. Russell Larson and Mr. David Singleton were absent.
- Mr. Dan Farley, Dr. Wayne Hartschuh, Ms. Wendy Modzelewski, Mr. Michael Morton and Ms. Pam Reed were also in attendance.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the minutes from the September 9, 2004 meeting as submitted.

Online Professional Development Academy / Delaware Virtual School

The DCET submitted an FY06 budget request for \$100,000 above DCET's base budget for a Professional Development Academy and an Online Virtual School. As stated in the handout, "the purpose of the Online Professional Development Academy and the Delaware Virtual School will be to provide a coordinated statewide approach to providing Web-based professional development for educators and expanded eLearning opportunities for K-12 students."

The discussion lead to Dr. Hartschuh providing information on the SREB (Southern Regional Education Board) Facilitator Training course that two Department of Education professionals recently went through. The six-week SREB Facilitator Training course also included the two DOE professionals facilitating an online course, Differentiated Instruction, that 24 Delaware educators participated in. This is the type of professional development activities that the funding from the funding request would support. Mrs. Woodruff mentioned that small school districts could offer online courses for students in classes with limited numbers of instructors, (i.e., Spanish IV) at a cost savings to the state. The funding from the funding request would be used to develop a process for this type of course offering. The concern of bandwidth usage for online courses was raised. Bandwidth is a concern, but there are alternatives that can be used to address the bandwidth concerns.

Joint Finance Committee (JFC) Hearing

DCET's JFC hearing is scheduled for February 15, 2005 at 1:00 pm. Board members were encouraged to attend if their schedule permits. Dr. Hartschuh gave a brief update from the last JFC hearing. Ubiquitous computing, replacement cycle of equipment and handhelds was discussed. Dr. Hartschuh agreed to prepare an information sheet for the JFC hearing.

Structural Change

Dr. Hartschuh informed the Board of a recent structural change. Denise Allen has been transferred from the Department of Education to the DCET staff. Denise handles Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) federal funding. Dr. Hartschuh will oversee the funding. Funds are distributed in two ways: formula and competitive. Currently, this project is in its third year of funding. There is concern with the 27.7% cut in funds for the 2005-06 school year and eliminating the program for the 2006-07 school year. Mrs. Woodruff pointed out that 25% of the formula funding must go for professional development. She also explained why she believes merging EETT and Denise Allen into the DCET makes sense. Denise will still be working with the Department of Education Curriculum Workgroup as well. According to Mrs. Woodruff, the library is key in our efforts to integrate technology with instruction.

DCET Action Plans

Changes in FY04-05 Action Plan

Dr. Hartschuh said the FY04-05 Action Plan highlights the main things DCET will do each year. This year, DCET will focus on the following areas: Level of Technology Implementation (LoTi); Partners in Technology (ParTech); the annual Delaware Instructional Technology Conference, scheduled for April 13-14, 2005; Best Practices in Professional Development and Instructional Technology, which is the development and delivery of clusters; and Delaware Virtual School, which will include online professional development.

There are two items that have been added to the DCET FY04-05 Action Plan: LoTi Project Schools and placing computers in student homes through ParTech. The Board needs to review the current Action Plan and begin preparing the FY06-07 Action Plan.

There was discussion about ParTech giving computers to a district who in turn, gives them to students. Dr. Hartschuh explained that Warner Elementary School in the Red Clay School District is the first to try this project. While the Board was receptive to this project, many believed research based study should be done to compare data with student's current achievement levels. There needs to be a baseline. Hopefully, results will show students are increasing their learning levels. Dr. Hartschuh is talking with the MAR*TEC group to see if they are willing to do the study. When asked what ParTech plans to do in year two, Dr. Hartschuh said there are currently enough donations for next year's 5th grade students at Warner Elementary. There are also software licenses for each computer. The plan is to allow the current 5th graders to keep the computers and give next year's 5th graders other computers that have been donated to ParTech. There was also discussion and agreement among the Board that an evaluation plan be in place. If results show this project is making a difference in a positive way, ParTech could potentially provide computers for other schools in the future.

Development of FY06-07 Action Plan

Board members were asked to provide feedback to Dr. Hartschuh as to whether DCET should focus attention in other areas. The EETT oversight will definitely be added to the FY06-07 Action Plan. Mr. Carney asked Board members to think through the plans and ideas and give their information to Dr. Hartschuh before the next Board meeting.

LoTi (Levels of Technology Implementation)

LoTi Survey – It was reported that over 5,000 teachers from fifteen of the nineteen districts have already taken the LoTi survey. Two additional districts plan to have their employees take the survey in the spring.

LoTi Project Schools – The five project schools have had at least one professional development day. Chris Moersch comes in to provide the training to each project school. The principals have been very supportive. DCET has three Board members who are part of the project schools. Each shared positive remarks. Basically, each one believes the LoTi survey represents small steps in the right direction. The DCET is looking to expand the LoTi Project School initiative next year by at least 3 schools, dependent upon available funding.

LoTi Mentor Certification Training – On September 28-30, 2004, Chris Moersch presented a three day training session for twenty-eight people at the DCET Office. Projects were completed by some participants. These people know how to present, talk the language and promote LoTi knowledge to other districts. They are also gaining the knowledge at the district level.

ParTech

Updates about ParTech were given earlier in the meeting.

eRate

There has been considerable debate over the eRate program in the media. The eRate program gives schools discounts on telecommunications services and internal wiring. Much of the debate has centered on the misuse of funds, and the most recent debate was sparked by a decision to withhold commitment of funds. According to Dr. Hartschuh, the FCC changed their accounting practice and could not commit funds until they were in possession of the funds. The problem is that the FCC collects funds quarterly from the Baby Bells. They know how much they will be collecting so they commit funds to schools based on those projections. This practice is not allowed under the new accounting system. The funds have to be in hand prior to commitment. Therefore, the FCC halted sending commitment letters. The new accounting practices were put in place to address fraud and abuse concerns, but there

was an unintended consequence. The Senate is working on language to address this concern that will waive the accounting requirements that are halting the commitment letters. This problem has not effected Delaware because the State gets eRate reimbursement at the end of the year, with the bulk of the funding going to the Department of Technology and Information for telecommunication services. Dr. Hartschuh agreed to notify districts of the current eRate application window that closes in February 2005.

Next Steps

Board members were asked to send comments for the FY06 action plan to Wayne Hartschuh.

Adjournment

Having no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 pm.