

eTech Ohio Commission Meeting Minutes
35 E. Chestnut Street, Columbus, Ohio
September 13, 2012

Present: Commission Chair Designee John Conley, Commissioner Designee Katrina Flory, Commissioner Designee John Childs, Commissioner Andrew Bowers, Commissioner Bruce Hawkins, Commissioner Rosemary Herpel, Commissioner Jan Osborn, Commissioner Glenn Watts

eTech staff present: Greg Davidson, Interim Executive Director
Laura Bryson, Chief Information Officer
Victoria Boczkowski, Conference Director
Katy Coy, Communications Director
Lorrie Germann, Program Director
Jill Grier, Legal Counsel
Sarah Luchs, Chief Learning Officer
Kathryn Luther, Executive Assistant
Krista Shaw, Chief Operating Officer

I. Opening and Roll Call

Commissioner Conley opened the meeting and asked for a roll call. Katy Coy called the roll and announced that a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Commission Chair Designee asked for a motion to approve the draft August 9, 2012 Minutes. Commissioner Hawkins moved to approve them, and Commissioner Watts seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor of the motion and the August minutes were approved.

III. Chairman's Report

Commissioner Conley reported that Rebecca Watts will be attending the next Commission meeting to give an update on teacher preparation initiatives in higher education. He also said that Ms. Watts has already met with Sarah Luchs, Chief Learning Officer regarding planning for the 2013 Conference.

There have been some staffing and organizational developments within the Board of Regents' OH TECH consortia. Commissioner Conley reported that John Magill resigned and that Gwen Evans has been appointed as the new Interim Executive Director for OhioLink, which will become part of the OH TECH consortia. These shifts are taking place in conjunction with state partners such as JobsOhio in preparation for the broadband expansion, among other projects.

Commissioner Conley reported on several other projects between the Board of Regents and other state partners. There will be a presentation at the October Commission meeting on the Ohio Means Success portal, which will house all-inclusive information for teachers, parents and students. The iLearn Ohio website launch has been postponed as the Board of Regents and Department of Education are still working through details. Additionally, progress is being made on the P-20 warehouse project. The transition of data has occurred and the warehouse is being made available to researchers in Ohio. Lastly, progress has also been made on the e-transcripts project, which is on target to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. It will be released in the next few weeks.

IV. Interim Executive Director's Report

Interim Executive Director Greg Davidson began with several personnel announcements. Kathryn Luther has joined the staff as the Executive Assistant, and will assist with other communications and ed tech projects. Additionally, Victoria Boczkowski will be moving on from her position in the next week. Director Davidson wished her well and thanked her for her service to the Commission. Commissioner Conley also expressed his thanks to Victoria on behalf of the Commission.

Davidson reported that eTech Ohio appeared before the Controlling Board on Monday, September 10 to seek approval to enter into a contract with Learning.com for statewide internet safety training. A press release and public announcement will roll out in the next day or so. The feedback from districts has been positive, as this initiative comes at no cost to them and costs \$.22 per student, a price districts could not secure on their own.

The deadline for submission of biennial budget materials is Monday, September 17. Director Davidson stated that COO Krista Shaw would give a more comprehensive report.

Early figures for attendance and vendor revenue for the 2013 Conference are trending ahead of last year's numbers.

Discussion followed regarding staffing and budget issues at the North Star video conferencing facility. Though there have been efforts to staff up via intermittent and "on-loan" positions, as well as efforts to cut costs, North Star is still operating at a loss. However, the services are still critical, especially for K-12 customers. Director Davidson noted that the challenges have been made more significant because video conferencing lost its largest paying customer in FY 2012 (Ohio Job and Family Services), and that the technology is becoming outdated.

Commissioner Hawkins inquired as to the future of video conferencing, given some of the significant budgetary challenges. Commissioner Conley explained that the agency is looking into plans and solutions on a statewide level, and taking partner agencies and efforts into account. Duane Baker, a consultant for eTech Ohio, will be completing a report in the coming weeks on the statewide status of video conferencing. Commissioner Hawkins raised the concern that some schools using video conferencing are low-wealth and may not have access to the content otherwise. Director Davidson stated that services could not be sustained at the current level of funding, and that growth could not occur without more funding.

Commissioner Childs stated that ODE had committed funds (tentatively \$300,000) to bridge the funding gap for video conferencing in response to earlier reports about revenue loss. He stated that he would look into it and provide an update on when those funds might be available.

Lastly, Interim Executive Director Davidson reported that K-12 network funding applications are steadily being submitted. The first wave of applications should be sent to ODE in the next week.

V. FY 2013 Financial Update

Chief Operating Officer Krista Shaw opened her report with an update on subsidies. Currently, all but two operating subsidies are paid, with the last two recipients having not yet submitted necessary paperwork. The Multimedia and Ed Tech subsidies will be disbursed once project plans have been agreed upon.

Shaw alerted the Commission to new IT development assessment charges being issued by the state. eTech Ohio's charges for FY 2013 will be \$73,000, based on FY 2012 IT-related expenditures. Additionally, a contract with Omneon Harmonic for North Star maintenance has yet to be executed for FY 2013. The company is attempting to secure a master agreement through DAS, as they are a California-based sole-source vendor. This will simplify the process of executing future contracts.

A discussion of current payroll projections and staffing followed. Commissioner Hawkins inquired as to whether the agency could staff any positions, particularly for the vacancy that will soon exist on the Conference team. Commissioner Conley stated that the request for a Conference staff member had been escalated, as it is a key position.

Shaw presented the FY 2014-15 budget proposal, stating that funding was based on a required 10% cut scenario, which equates to \$1.2 million in General Revenue Funds. Since the North Star facility cannot operate with any more funding cuts (as they are already subsidized by other areas and the majority of their expenses are fixed), the 10% was distributed across all other areas.

Interim Director Davidson stated that the submission will include a proposed change to Radio Reading Services funding that would send those dollars to the National Federation of the Blind, as they offer broader and better services than what Ohio can currently offer. Additionally, Ohio currently pays maintenance and telecom charges that would not be necessary if the same programming was funded at the federal level.

VI. Senior Staff Updates

Conference Director Victoria Boczkowski reported that there are currently 98 exhibitors (30 from Ohio) and 525 registrants signed up for Conference. These numbers are ahead of last year's. The call for proposals has also opened and will remain open through October 10. Hotel blocks will be announced at the end of the month once all contracts are finalized. Programming announcements, including keynote speakers, should be finalized enough to release in the next 2-3 weeks.

Chief Learning Officer Sarah Luchs stated that the Educational Technology practice has been working closely with Conference to develop blended and digital learning Conference tracks. She announced that eTech Ohio will be phasing out the BETA (Biennial Educational Technology Assessment) surveys in order to facilitate Ohio's participation in the national Speak Up survey project. An introductory webinar will take place to announce the initiative on September 26.

Luchs reported that Chancellor Petro, Superintendent Sawyers, and the Governor's office are launching a cross-functional team to work on online and blended learning initiatives. They are working on defining the agenda where there are opportunities for collaboration. One example is the upcoming 2013 Digital Learning Day, which is hosted at the national level by the Alliance for Excellence in Education. This year's date is February 6, 2013 and eTech Ohio will join the Department of Education, Board of Regents, Ohio Resource Center, etc. in a collaborative agenda for the day.

Discussion followed about statewide preparation for online assessments. Commissioners Hawkins and Childs inquired as to how the field is being prepared and what the standards for executing the assessments might be. Commissioner Conley stated that Ohio has not received standards yet, but he has been told they are coming. Luchs indicated that the agency is hoping to utilize Conference as a platform to communicate about online assessments.

Communications Director Katy Coy reported on the launch of several new initiatives. A press release and supplementary roll-out activities are planned for the statewide internet training provided by learning.com. Activities for the Speak Up launch will begin in the final weeks of September. The Communications division is also launching several new initiatives, including an eTech Ohio blog and webinar/Google Hangouts series. Conference communications are on track and a registration brochure is planned for mid-October.

Chief Information Officer Laura Bryson reported that 236 applications for K-12 network funding are in process. She, along with Director Davidson, indicated that based on self-reported data from applicants, the state might need to anticipate bandwidth issues because of current network configurations. Additionally, Bryson stated that the BETA building survey will be launched at the same time that Ohio begins the Speak Up surveys.

Commissioner Watts asked if the planned MPEG 4 conversion led by PBS had been made. Bryson reported that the deadline had been extended to September 24, and that it should be completed on time.

VII. CIPA Award

Program Director Lorrie Germann reported that the Controlling Board approved eTech Ohio to enter into a contract with Learning.com to provide statewide internet safety training. Initial response from the field has been very positive. Since new E-Rate requirements mandate the administering and documentation of internet safety training, districts are pleased to have help in meeting those requirements. The tool, EasyTech Online Safety, allows for a blended, self-paced approach and provides flexibility. It also allows for differentiated instruction. The tool is available on an opt-in basis and Learning.com is handling the logistics of sign-up and implementation.

Commissioner Hawkins inquired as to when the new E-Rate requirements began. Germann stated that this is the first year that CIPA compliance is required, though the CIPA law came out in 2008 and some districts implemented training early. Commissioner Hawkins asked how the documentation of training is audited by the FCC. Germann explained that if and when districts state that they are compliant, they are accountable to provide proof of compliance. Learning.com's tool provides reports that document training and compliance.

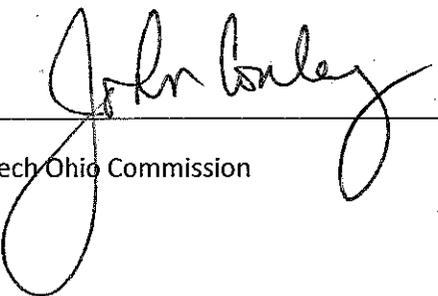
There will be a progress report on the initiative at the October meeting, and guest accounts will be provided to Commissioners interested in exploring the tool.

VIII. Miscellaneous

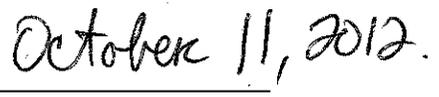
Commissioner Conley closed by reporting that this would be Commissioner Rosemary Herpel's final meeting as a Commissioner, as her term will expire. He thanked her for her time on the Commission and expressed that she has been a great asset to the work of eTech Ohio. Commissioner Herpel expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Commission and wished the staff and Commission the best.

IX. Adjournment

There being no new business before the Commission, Commissioner Hawkins moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Watts seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor of the motion and the meeting was adjourned.



eTech Ohio Commission



Date