

TO: Theresa Klebacha; Amanda Rockwell
FROM: Bill Piotrowski (Leon County Schools), K-12 CIO Rep to Sunshine Connections
DATE: September 28, 2007
RE: Input for Sunshine Connections Committee

Theresa, et al:

I am very pleased to see the Sunshine Connections Advisory Board back together, and hopefully interpret that as a broader commitment to continue with the initiatives well underway. A family member's surgery precludes my personally attending the session Tuesday, so I request that this update and input via this email be some measure of substitute in representing the K-12 CIOs statewide. These comments also reflect the input of 14 or so other school district CIO's who participated in specific discussions on the Sunshine Connections project during last week's FAEDS conference in Orlando.

Myself, and many of my cohorts whom I represent, recognize the significant tasks and potential benefits to all school districts that Sunshine Connections can provide. In the latest meeting of the FAMIS (K-12 CIOs) Board, and also in the meeting of the FAMIS Database Advisory Committee – both of which occurred last week - there was strong support for benefits that relate to the specific products and services targeted, including:

- expediting the availability of FCAT results to teachers for all currently enrolled students, & providing FCAT analysis and strategies for improving performance for current students;
- providing an IEP option for all schools that meets state and federal requirements and the DOE initiatives for improved services for special needs students; and
- enhancing each teachers ability to access resources and participate in collaborative activities that will directly improve instructional options, methods, and educational experiences for students.

Also, and as significant, are the advances in database infrastructure, systems, and user support prompted by the Sunshine Connections initiative that will be significant to all school districts statewide. The Sunshine Connections project has forced advances in database design and communication systems that are beyond the scope of what could be taken on by even our largest districts; and which will provide levels of data access, integration, and security that can only be accomplished via a state-wide initiative such as Sunshine Connections. Specific capabilities that were discussed included: having statewide directory services and a system for lifecycle identity management for students, teachers, and staff positions; having a method to manage and responsively update access authentications and access/change authorizations at state, district, and school site levels; having reliable and secure data-to-browser architecture and systems in place that will support the potential concurrent user load imposed by active use by all teachers and staff – in all districts... these are enormous design and system tasks which this major initiative has enabled.

In short, the FAMIS Board endorses the continuing development of the Sunshine Connections projects, recognizing that the scope of this effort dictates a continuing, multi-year series of projects, with phase-in where selected districts bear the brunt of initial development and field trials before these are released to all districts; recognizing the state-level leadership and commitment it has taken to oversee and guide

this project; and recognizing that the success of these projects requires a continuing commitment of state- and district-level resources, and is something that can not be borne by contributed vendor resources alone. (Note: repeatedly commended throughout the discussions, were the efforts of Bambi Lockman in directing and creating the necessary consensus for the IEP project, and the overall leadership by Ms. Klebacha, Mr. Jay Pfeiffer, and other key state staff; and the extraordinary talent contributed by Microsoft through the technical and design team resources and leadership as represented by Mr. Bob Pfeiff and others on the Microsoft team...).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. That the Sunshine Connections projects continue via a phased approach involving trial sites, with various project initiatives distributed across multiple districts, allowing input and sharing as the development progresses with all district program and technical staff and leaders. Working with state-side groups such as FAMIS and FCITL via update, JAD and drive-in sessions on particular issues. Having user training and support systems developed and in place being as well as the product and technical aspects.
- b. That the initiative must continue to involve state leadership who understand the technical and programmatic requirements, as well as the school and district environments. That the involvement of such resources as Ms. Bambi Lockman and Mr. Ron Lauver are essential to the design, gap analysis, and user support planning; in addition to the direct involvement of teachers (such as those represented on the Advisory Council), and test coordinators/psychometricians familiar with the FCAT assessment.
- c. That the initiative needs to involve resource commitments and support at state, district, and school levels. Vendor- contributed efforts will not be enough to complete and roll-out this effort to all schools and teachers.

Respectfully submitted,

William D. ("Bill") Piotrowski

K-12 CIO/CTP representative to the Sunshine Connections Advisory Board