



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Spring 2010

Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS)

*By Cindy Coon
Bureau Director Office of Educator Licensure*

In the summer of 2007, the Office of Educator Licensure (OEL) at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) submitted a request to the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) to approve an RFP for a new online web-based licensing system for Mississippi educators. OEL had been issuing K-12 school teacher and administrator licenses on the old legacy database system for 25 years.

Our Licensure study committee began meeting with ITS RFP facilitator Cheryl Yelverton in early 2008 to establish the RFP. When the RFP was released in the summer of 2008, we had three vendors that offered proposals. The contract was awarded to Hupp Information Technologies (HIT) of Springfield, Illinois. HIT had experience in building online systems in educator licensing in several other states. Hupp began building the new Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS) for Mississippi in January of 2009. The new system would include a new license format, a web-based system, a virtual online license look-up, online application process, online license renewal process with district approval, electronic receipt of transcripts and test scores, electronic verification of new degrees and approved teacher preparation programs and an extensive reporting feature for data retrieval.

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HIT spent the first few months learning our business rules or state board approved licensure guidelines. They began building an online licensing system based around the requirements for every type of teacher and administrator license that are approved for Mississippi accredited K-12 schools such as traditional teacher education graduates, alternate route program completers, reciprocity candidates from other states, vocational teachers, administration program completers and all special types of licenses.

Preparation for Online Process

The Office of Educator Licensure began issuing licenses on our new ELMS system in September of 2009. The license had a new format. For several months, we have continued to accept paper license applications and documentation such as transcripts, test score and certificates. We are now receiving transcripts electronically from the registrar's offices of many colleges and universities that have that capability. We will also now only receive test scores directly from Educational Testing Service. We conducted extensive training for our state schools

Educator Licensure Management System

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of education certification officers giving them administrative capability in ELMS to submit electronic approval of new degrees and coursework. We also held trainings for representatives from each Mississippi K-12 school district in the new process for online renewal. District superintendents were all granted instructions with a User ID and password to grant approvals for online license renewal to teachers that are employed by their school district.

Virtual License Look-up

HIT, along with ITS also implemented the virtual License Look-up. This is a public portal, accessible from the MDE homepage or the Licensure homepage, where any educator, any school district personnel or parents of students can view an educator license. The virtual license does not contain any private information, such as address, phone number or social security number. It does show the class level (bachelor's, master's, etc.) of the license and what subject area endorsements are held by that educator. It also shows the validity period of the license.

The State Auditor's office has assured OEL that the virtual license is an official record of the teacher's certification and can be used by the school districts for auditing purposes. As licenses are issued or renewed, the virtual license reflects the change in real time. Educators can check the License Look-up site and know as soon as their license has been issued and print a copy from the virtual site.

Also, from the ELMS public site, each educator can set up their own ELMS license account. They can update their own profile and receive any notices regarding updates on their license. Thousands of Mississippi educators have already set up their ELMS accounts and they are entering continuing education or coursework for the renewal of their licenses in their professional development file.

Additional Applications

The next phase of the ELMS implementation process will include additional online

license applications to be made available within the next few weeks whereby educators can file a license application electronically and receive immediate feedback on their status. The turnaround time for online renewal is two days.



As we move through each new implementation phase of ELMS, the Office of Educator Licensure is more excited about the possibilities of this new system. We are currently negotiating with HIT about the extensive data that can be collected from ELMS and the reports that it will generate. This will be helpful as MDE and the Mississippi Legislature makes decisions about K-12 public education and higher education.



Health Information Technology (HIT)

By Kevin Gray
Mississippi Department of Information Technology

ITS has been actively involved with the Mississippi Health Information Infrastructure Task Force (the Task Force), established by Governor Haley Barbour in 2007. The purpose of the Task Force is to improve the quality and safety of healthcare delivery by means of the expedited adoption and implementation of Health Information Technology (HIT) and Health Information Exchange (HIE) across the state. Work accomplished by the Task Force lead to a recommendation that Mississippi implement a “proof of concept” HIE project. Soon thereafter, the Office of the Governor was able to secure funding to establish the Mississippi Coastal Health Information Exchange (MSCHIE). The primary goal of the MSCHIE is to establish a restructuring effort to improve patient care delivery in Mississippi’s six coastal counties that were most affected by Hurricane Katrina.

In October 2008, MSCHIE began “Phase I” of implementation with three disparate coastal stakeholders. The three provider organizations have begun to share basic clinical information, lab results, and medication history, over the MSCHIE and new data feeds continue to be added. “Phase II”, currently underway, is expanding the MSCHIE by adding more hospital participants and establishing an extensive provider outreach program.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Mississippi has been designated and approved to receive \$10.3 million in funding from the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. The funding covers planning and implementation projects to advance

appropriate and secure health information exchange (HIE) across the United States. With the cooperative agreement funding and additional matching monies, Mississippi intends to formalize an approved state plan and then implement the infrastructure for a statewide HIE, the Mississippi Health Information Network (MS-HIN). The MS-HIN will utilize a technology platform capable of rapid connectivity and be able to interface with providers of care, public health organizations, local and regional health information exchanges (such as MSCHIE), as well as provide connectivity to the National Health Information Network (NHIN).

At the request of Governor Haley Barbour, ITS is serving as the State Designated Entity for the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. In close collaboration with the Office of the Governor, ITS will maintain the day-to-day responsibility for key tasks such as overall project management and monitoring of the project’s ongoing progress, preparation of reports, and communications with other partners and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). With an established history of successful project implementation and oversight, ITS will employ standard project management best practices, effective planning, organizing, and managing resources, to bring about the successful completion of the specific project tasks and objectives of the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program.

While the Task Force structure was to expire December 31, 2009, considering the current events surrounding the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program and the MS-HIN, a decision was made to extend the duties of the Task Force until June 30, 2010. The state was recently approved to receive funding for the planning phase of the MS-HIN and is in the final stages of the

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procurement process of RFP No. 3628 for a vendor to develop and submit the State's strategic and operational plan (SOP) as required by the ONC. Work is expected to begin no later than April 26, 2010 for the State's SOP to be completed on or before August 11, 2010. The current Task Force and forthcoming Governance Workgroups, along with ITS and the Office of the Governor will be functioning in a support role to help facilitate the timely completion of the SOP as well as monitoring the work product and reviewing the final plans before submission to the ONC. Once the plans have been submitted and ONC has granted their approval, the state will move forward with the implementation phase for the MS-HIN, expected to begin early September 2010.

The logo for the Mississippi Broadband Report features a circular emblem with a map of Mississippi in the center, surrounded by stars and a gear. To the right of the emblem, the word "Mississippi" is written in a serif font, and below it, "Broadband Report" is written in a larger, bold serif font.

Mississippi Broadband Report

By Vicki Helfrich

Mississippi Department of Information Technology

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

A total of \$7.2 billion was appropriated for broadband funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The funding is being administered by two federal agencies. (1) The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) was appropriated \$4.7 billion. The majority of this funding will be used to administer the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) which provides grants to fund comprehensive broadband infrastructure projects, public computer centers and sustainable broadband adoption projects; (2) The Agriculture Department's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) will receive \$2.5 billion to administer the

Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) which provides loans and grants for broadband infrastructure projects in rural areas.

The overall purposes of the broadband language in the ARRA are (1) to provide broadband service to consumers in unserved areas of the country and improved broadband service to consumers in underserved areas and (2) to provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, and support to libraries, educational institutions and other organizations to facilitate greater use of broadband, including more use by low-income, unemployed aged and otherwise vulnerable populations.

NTIA currently is considering the State of Mississippi's Round 2 application for a Comprehensive Community Infrastructure grant under the BTOP. This grant includes an enhanced expansion of the Mississippi Wireless Integrated Network (MSWIN) to increase data capabilities. This action benefits public safety by improving the utilization of the system by first responders. The grant also includes a number of funding opportunities to expand "middle mile" broadband availability in the state to community anchor institutions, such as schools, libraries, health care providers and community colleges.

National Broadband Mapping Program

ARRA legislation designates NTIA to develop and maintain a comprehensive nationwide inventory map of broadband service capability and availability, and to make the map publicly available via the Internet by February 17, 2011. The map will educate consumers and businesses about broadband Internet availability, enable broadband Internet providers and investors to make better-informed decisions regarding the use of their private capital for future broadband investment and inform the decisions of Federal, State and local policymakers

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as they work to expand the benefits of broadband to all Americans.

NTIA has awarded grants to assist states or their designees in developing state-specific data on the deployment levels and adoption rates of broadband services. The Mississippi Office of the Governor, the state's eligible entity, received a mapping grant comprised of approximately \$1.5 million for broadband data collection and mapping activities and \$500,000 for broadband planning activities over a two-year period, bringing the total grant award to approximately \$2 million. ITS is spearheading the broadband mapping initiative in conjunction with our mapping vendor, BroadMap, the entity chosen by the Mississippi Broadband Task Force to create a statewide broadband inventory map for Mississippi.

As part of the mapping initiative, Mississippi will be implementing an interactive map for viewing, analyzing and validating broadband data in the state. The map will also be searchable by address and show the broadband providers offering service in the corresponding census block or street segment.

BroadMap, in conjunction with ITS, will work with all broadband providers in the state to create these detailed maps of broadband coverage in order to accurately pinpoint remaining gaps in broadband availability in Mississippi.

National Broadband Plan

Through ARRA, Congress directed the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to develop a National Broadband Plan to ensure every American has "access to broadband capability." The plan, released on March 16, 2010, moves forward with

the goal of enabling adequate broadband access to every person in America.

Congress ordered the FCC to include (1) "analysis of the most effective and efficient mechanisms for ensuring broadband access" by all Americans, (2) "a detailed strategy for achieving affordability of such service and maximum utilization of broadband infrastructure" by the public, (3) "an evaluation of the status of deployment of broadband service, including progress of projects supported by the (BTOP and BIP) grants," and (4) "a plan for use of broadband infrastructure and services in advancing consumer welfare, civic participation, public safety and homeland security, community development, health care delivery, energy independence and efficiency, education, worker training, private sector investment, entrepreneurial activity, job creation and economic growth and other national purposes."

The plan aims to fulfill these directives through recommendations to itself, the executive branch, Congress and state and local governments, including these long-term goals:

Goal No. 1: At least 100 million homes should have affordable access to actual download speeds of at least 100 megabits per second and actual upload speeds of at least 50 megabits per second.

Goal No. 2: The United States should lead the world in mobile innovation, with the fastest and most extensive wireless networks of any nation.

Goal No. 3: Every American should have affordable access to robust broadband service, and the means and skills to subscribe if they so choose.

Goal No. 4: Every American community should have affordable access to at least 1 gigabit per second broadband service to anchor institutions such as schools, hospitals and government buildings.

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Goal No. 5: To ensure the safety of the American people, every first responder should have access to a nationwide, wireless, interoperable broadband public safety network.

Goal No. 6: To ensure that America leads in the clean energy economy, every American should be

able to use broadband to track and manage their real-time energy consumption.

The FCC will undertake more than 60 key actions, proceedings, and initiatives over the next year and beyond to implement the recommendations of the National Broadband Plan.

State Data Center Technology Updates



2010 Mississippi Geospatial Clearinghouse Upgrade

By Debra Brown

Mississippi Department of Information Technology

The Mississippi Geospatial Clearinghouse (MGC) serves as the state's premier portal for the Geographic Information System (GIS) community to search, discover, share, and use a comprehensive warehouse of Mississippi's geospatial resources. Moreover, the MGC is the primary location for the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM). The MGC is housed in the State Data Center at the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS).

The requirement to provide operational storage and dissemination of high-resolution digital contour maps from recent MDEM data collection activities and the development of new technologies has prompted the need for a major software

upgrade and updated design to the MGC. The scheduled completion date is June 30, 2010.

The planned upgrade will reflect a new information delivery interface utilizing up-to-date software releases that will lay the groundwork for future upgrades as needed. The design will provide the user with simple and easy routes to the three delivery mechanisms: visualization, information search, and data download. The visualization will utilize the web-browser add-on, Adobe Flex. This easy to navigate and responsive viewer will access ESRI map services and ITS-hosted map and image services. The viewer will retain or improve on available user tools to allow for locating, drawing graphics, measuring, printing, and exporting maps as seen by the user. The information search mechanism will be made more user-friendly by differentiating between MDEM and Non-MDEM datasets allowing for a natural flow to data download. GIS data will be available in "Quick Download" packages or through custom online requests.

Active Directory

By Steve Patterson

Mississippi Department of Information Technology

The Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) has completed the design and implementation of the Windows Server 2008R2 Active Directory infrastructure in the State Data Center. The new Active Directory infrastructure was designed with the help of Microsoft engineers and architects. It's certified by Microsoft for enterprise design, flexibility, and scalability. From the start, the new Active Directory was created to be the directory services backbone for use in a hosted environment like the State Data Center. At the core of the design is an Organizational Unit (OU) structure dedicated to each agency, where local administrators have full control over all of their AD accounts, group policies, and objects.

Additionally, the two forest design allows for external applications to authenticate users who may not be state employees, while protecting internal systems from external users.

DFA has completed implementation of their new Stimulus 360 funds tracking project on servers in the new external Active Directory. This allows the DFA Stimulus 360 administrators a centralized point for administering accounts for state employee access, and external user access.

ITS has begun transitioning internal server infrastructure over to the new Active Directory to simplify administrative tasks and increasing security.

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