

Alliance

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LHRIC Unveils Software Planning Service

The Lower Hudson Regional Information Center has launched an ambitious new program designed to help school districts in the region grapple with the flood of instructional technology tools and information now available to them, and to methodically plan for its future use by technology-savvy students.

The LHRIC's "Software Adoption Plan," introduced in December, will help participating districts map out a structured and proactive approach to the purchase of instructional software. The LHRIC will help districts in the content planning process as they address key curricular goals and areas of academic focus. The process will result in a 3-5 year plan that connects curriculum needs and priorities with instructional software and outlines a 3- to 5-year budget for acquiring software that will help them meet their goals.

In a presentation to the Southern Westchester BOCES Board of Education in November, LHRIC Co-Directors Peter Reilly and James O'Brien noted that the Software Adoption

Plan mirrors the LHRIC's new focus on instructional content and professional development. With so much emphasis placed during the past decade on the acquisition of hardware by the country's schools, little time or attention was paid to the proper use of instructional content that has suddenly flooded the education community, particularly a new breed of web-based programs.

The LHRIC plan will also provide districts with the opportunity to look methodically at the potential costs of building a "software infrastructure" to meet instructional needs. Without a strategic software acquisition plan, districts

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TLI Conference Promotes Value of E-Learning

A recent TLI conference on expanded opportunities in e-learning had participants discussing the role students should play in their own education and how teachers can gain the most from this growing educational trend.

Held Nov. 14 at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, the event was part of TLI's 2005-06 series, an ongoing effort to keep school districts up-to-date with trends in educational technology.

The conferences, which feature well-known technology leaders, are organized by the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center in partnership with the Southern Westchester, Putnam-Northern Westchester and Rockland BOCES, as well as with local teacher centers.

Roger Schank, a computer scientist and cognitive psychologist who has worked in the field of artificial intelligence for more than 25 years, began the half-day session. Dr. Schank is also CEO of Socratic Arts, a provider of

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Depending on the LHRIC

School districts throughout the Westchester, Putnam and Rockland County region continue to depend on the LHRIC to provide them with educational technology programs and services that are either not available in the business marketplace, are far more expensive, or aren't tailored to education. Here is a partial list of school districts that signed up for additional programs in 2005-06 to supplement what the LHRIC already provides:

Ramapo School District	Data Warehousing
Rye Neck School District	Data Warehousing
White Plains City School District	Data Warehousing
Mount Vernon City School District	eSchool Plus Districtwide Student Info. System
Greenburgh 11 School District	eSchool Plus Student Info. System
Irvington School District	Data Warehousing; IGPro grade book system for Middle School Teachers
Harrison School District	SASlxp Student Info. System
Ardsley School District	IGPro grade book system for Middle School Teachers
New Rochelle City School District	eSchool Plus Student Info. System
South Orangetown School District	Test Scoring Support
Valhalla School District	Customized Support for Administrative Staff
Port Chester School District	ClassXP Attendance system for the High School
Haldane School District	PowerSchool Student Info. System
Somers School District	eSchool Plus Student Info. System
Eastchester School District	eSchool Plus Student Info. System

The outlook for the LHRIC for 2006-07 looks promising, and already the LHRIC staff is planning new services and programs that will be outlined in the Southern Westchester BOCES Services Guide for 2006-07, which will be delivered to participating districts in January. Here is a look at some of the new services we're planning:

Facilities Management

Software: The LHRIC has partnered with CapProSoft to offer LHRIC hosted, web-based products that include CPPRT, a web-based application that enables districts to track and report on all aspects of their capital projects on a multi-year basis and provides a complete audit trail and history of the project. It addresses capital projects in conjunction with NY State Education Department of Facilities Planning requirements including the Final Building Project Report. CPPRT allows districts to institute strong fiscal controls, maintain and archive project records

and generate timely reports, all assisting the district to sustain community support and trust. FAST provides the school's leadership team with a central database of facilities infrastructure, building types, and health/safety issues, inventory of major systems, site conditions, and fire inspection information. FAST can assist with filing Comprehensive Public School Building Safety Program and associated reports.

Test Scoring for State

Assessments: Test scoring for all state assessments and coordination with the data warehouse is a service that all dis-



tricts belong to. This service is evolving and is now working with the state and data warehousing groups. The LHRIC will use the newly created data warehouse to provide K-12 data to the State Education Department that was previously reported in separate LEAP software.

Chief Information Officer

Executive Briefings: This service will facilitate building a community of school district CIOs and help them coordinate all communication related to data and data requirements. Sharing best practices, meeting quarterly and training will be part of the service.

Data Mentor: Data Mentor is a New York State standards-based web application. This online tool will allow teachers, curriculum specialists or building administrators to have access to many resources that have been peer or group reviewed. Curricular-based content lesson plans, sample test questions, NYS standards, video clips of master teachers and web links correlated to performance indicators are available. The LHRIC has partnered with Data Mentor. Our data warehouse ELA and math reports will be linked to data mentor.

Remote Backup Service: Available this year, the Remote Backup Service will ensure the security of your data by backing it up nightly and securing it at a remote location. It provides districts with "peace of mind" that important information has been protected against possible viruses, accidental deletions or hardware failures. District technical support staff are notified each morning by email about the status of nightly remote backups. The service maintains backed up information for two weeks online, reducing the time required to recover lost files to minutes. Training to use a web-based console to perform restores is included in the service.