

eTech Ohio Commission Meeting Minutes
35 E. Chestnut Street, Columbus, Ohio
March 14, 2013

Present: Commissioner Andrew Bowers, Commission Chair Designee John Conley, Commissioner Designee Katrina Flory, Commissioner Bruce Hawkins, Commissioner Jan Osborn, Commissioner William Sams and Commissioner Glenn Watts.

Staff present: Laura Bryson, Chief Information Officer, Kimberly Christopher, Education Technology Resources Director, Katy Coy, Communications Director, Elizabeth Coulter, Legislative Liaison, Greg Davidson, Interim Executive Director, Ted O’Flaherty, Chief Operating Officer, Sandy Paxton, Chief Learning Officer, Kathryn Shipley, Administrative Assistant, Jill Grier, Legal Counsel, Attorney General’s Office, and Mitzi Dunn, Administrative Assistant, Ohio Board of Regents (OBR).

I. Opening and Roll Call

Commission Chair Designee John Conley opened the eTech Ohio Commission (eTech) meeting and asked that the roll call be read. Administrative Assistant Mitzi Dunn called the roll and stated there was a quorum present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Commission Chair Designee Conley noted the January eTech meeting minutes for the record as this was not an official meeting. Relating to the November 8, 2012, eTech meeting minutes, Commissioner Hawkins asked that one correction be made to the first paragraph of page 2 to clarify the intent of his motion per Roberts Rules of Order. As amended, Commission Hawkins made a motion to approve the November 8, 2012, eTech minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Sams. All of the Commissioners voted in favor of the motion and the minutes from November 8, 2012, were approved as amended.

As it relates to the November 7, 2012, Executive Committee meeting minutes, Commission Chair Designee Conley asked for a motion to approve these minutes. Commission Osborn made a motion to approve the November 7, 2012, Executive Committee meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins. All members of the Executive Committee voted in favor of the motion and the minutes from November 7, 2012, Executive Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

III. Reports and Administrative

A. Chairman’s Report

Commission Chair Designee Conley began by saying that there is a new Interim Chancellor. Stephanie Davidson was appointed a few weeks ago and was most recently the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the OBR and is a former faculty member of The Ohio State University. She is very familiar with what they are doing at the OBR and very close to what is going on from an academic perspective. She is out of the state right now or she would have attended the eTech meeting.

Commission Chair Designee Conley congratulated Dick Ross on being named the new State Superintendent for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). He said he believes this is a great step as he has worked with him as have some of the Commission members. Mr. Ross will strive to create more cross-functional teams moving towards a common P-20 goal now that the OBR is co-located with the ODE.

Commission Chair Designee Conley said he had the honor to serve as the kick-off speaker for the annual eTech Technology Conference on all three days. He commended the staff on a fabulous job with the conference. He said 760 respondents completed and returned a survey related to the annual eTech Technology Conference and the results were that there was a 95% approval rating. He said there were two national speakers related to the distance learning field as well and the audience was really engaged and attentive. Commission Chair Designee Conley congratulated the staff on a pulling together a great conference while being short-staffed. He said this is something they should be proud of.

Commission Chair Designee Conley said the Chancellor's Distance Learning Clearing House was launched at the annual eTech Technology Conference. The launch of iLearn Ohio is pursuant to HB 153. This is in conjunction with the Ohio Resource Center (ORC) and The Ohio State College of Education. They received overwhelming feedback from districts – 80 plus districts have contacted the ORC about participating in the first Biennial Educational Technology Assessment (BETA) that will release and be piloted for the next school year.

Relating to BETA, Commission Chair Designee Conley said they do have some very good data at this time. The recent BETA survey was returned, however they are waiting on some of the PARCC assessment information to be complete.

The last point Commission Chair Designee Conley mentioned was the budget. He said that they are in the legislative season for the Biennial Budget and in the 'As Proposed Governor's Executive Budget' eTech is being proposed to be shifted between the OBR, ODE and a portion of radio reading services to the Rehabilitation Services Commission. He believes this is consistent with the Governor's efforts to remove overlap and provide the best services to constituents. He wanted to be clear that the functions of eTech are not going away. They will simply be 'housed' in different areas. He also wanted to be clear that this is the beginning of a legislative process that will likely go through June 30th. Commission Chair Designee Conley said the day to day operations will continue at eTech and the staff is doing a great job.

B. Interim Executive Director's Report

Interim Executive Director Greg Davidson congratulated the team for coordinating the annual eTech Technology Conference. He said they went the extra mile and had great attitudes. He couldn't say enough about the entire team and it was a real team effort. He said he is looking forward to an even better conference next year.

Relating to the annual eTech Technology Conference, Interim Executive Director Davidson said eTech received excess revenue. This excess revenue was in spite of declining attendance from last year. They considerably decreased the cost of operation of the annual eTech Technology Conference and also sold more than 100% of the exhibition floor space. This resulted in reconfiguring the exhibition floor to make room for these sales. They have already starting planning for next year's conference.

Interim Executive Director Davidson said Sara Luchs, the former Chief Learning Officer, has left eTech to pursue other career opportunities. Sandy Paxton has assumed her position as Chief Learning Officer. Ms. Paxton's most recent responsibilities have been the Quality Matters grants. Relating to these grants, these have all been approved and these funds have been released.

C. Communications Update

Katy Coy, Communications Director provided a communications update for the Commissioners. Her update primarily centered on the annual eTech Technology Conference. She said there were 3,700 attendees and that was due in large part to a great deal of cross-promotional efforts that were conducted with their state partners. They paid close attention to press coverage this year and it was a record year for it. It turned out to be worthwhile for them as they had advanced coverage with Edudemic which was an online blog. Good Day Columbus attended on the first day and Dana Turtle conducted segments from the Mash Lab. The Plain Dealer, State Impact Ohio, the Associated Press, and the Columbus Dispatch also were in attendance and provided some level of coverage.

Ms. Coy also mentioned the social media command. This was the first year they did a 'bricks and mortar' display in the Mash Lab that gave a behind the scenes look at what it takes to bolster or execute social media presence at a large event such as the annual eTech Technology Conference. They contracted with a private group to assist them with this effort and they were able to walk attendees through questions they had including how to incorporate the use of social media into their classrooms.

Ms. Coy shared some statistics with the Commissioners. She said that Twitter tends to be their 'heartbeat' and there were nearly 5,000 tweets generated during the annual eTech Technology Conference. This led to 1.3 million impressions of the OETC 13 hatch tag. They also trended on Monday and Tuesday in Columbus – this means they were either before or behind topics such as the Pope or Mardi Gras. She added that 46% of their followers on Twitter were active during the annual eTech Technology Conference. They also grew their followers, they had just over 2,000 followers before the annual eTech Technology Conference started, now they have 2,640 followers.

Ms. Coy said they sold out the exhibit floor. The conference staff rearranged the exhibit floor to accommodate the additional vendor sales.

Ms. Coy said that the keynote speakers were excellent. Everyone was impressed with the content and quality. Two of the speakers spent additional time outside of their obligation and enjoyed time at the conference and with students. She said the Un Conference was very successful. This is the Tech Coordinator community in Columbus. This was standing room only in some of the sessions.

Ms. Coy said relating to the 760 respondents that completed and returned the survey related to the annual eTech Technology Conference, last year they received only 250 responses. She believes they have heightened the engagement and investment for the attendees this year. This will lead to greater things next year.

Ms. Coy said this year was the first year they attempted to go paperless and scaled back the printing of materials. They guided attendees to their mobile devices to manage their conference experience. They had to print approximately ten copies of the materials.

Ms. Coy also added comments about the Game Base Learning Sessions. She said they were all fully attended and the attendees wish they offered more sessions. They will expand upon this next year because the attendees really seemed to respond to these sessions.

Commissioner Sams asked a question about the attendance of the Legislature at the annual eTech Technology Conference. Elizabeth Coulter, Legislative Liaison, replied that there were no Legislative attendees other than to introduce a featured speaker. This may have been due to the Biennial Budget being released five days before the annual eTech Technology Conference. Commissioner Sams said taking this into consideration how can they educate the Legislature about this incredible resource. Ms. Coulter said she reached out to them quite a bit before the annual eTech Technology Conference and they were provided with a one-page overview of the conference. They are also aware of the economic impact the conference has on Columbus and the impact it has on the teachers as well.

Ms. Coy shared that they did see an increase in Higher Education attendees. This is approximately 15% of the attendees and in the past it has been approximately 10% of the attendees. She said that all of the counties, with the exception of Harrison and Vinton were represented at the annual eTech Technology Conference. They also had both out of state presenters (not including the keynote and featured speakers) and attendees as well. This included states as far as California, Washington State, and the bordering states of Ohio.

Commissioner Hawkins posed a question relating to it being a P-20 annual eTech Technology Conference and asked if the Proposed Governor's Executive Budget passes what will happen to the conference staff and where will they end up. Commission Chair Designee Conley replied that they are early in the Legislative process but the conference staff would likely move to the ODE building at 25 S. Front Street. He said with this there will be more collaboration with ODE and OBR.

Commission Chair Designee Conley asked a question about the reactions of the vendor community. Ms. Coy said that they reacted very positively. Ted O'Flaherty, Chief Operating Officer, said they have over 100 vendors that have already signed up for next year's annual eTech Technology Conference. Ms. Coy said that the vendors stayed through the last day of the conference and this has not happened in past years. She said next year's annual eTech Technology Conference will be held January 27 – 29, 2014, and registration will open May 1st.

D. eTech Ohio Fiscal Year 2013 Financial Update

Ted O'Flaherty, Chief Operating Officer provided a financial update. He discussed an excel spreadsheet outlining eTech budget information as well as another document outlining important annual eTech Technology Conference revenue and cost information with the Commissioners that was provided in their meeting materials. Relating to the annual eTech Technology Conference, Mr. O'Flaherty said that there is a small excess. This is because they were able to find some excellent outside contractors that came in and worked with them. He said everyone in the entire organization worked diligently from August on to make the conference a success. He added that they are developing a conference manual that will be able to be utilized for future conferences.

Commission Chair Designee Conley asked a question about the annual eTech Technology Conference revenue. Mr. O'Flaherty said that there is an \$11,000 profit and he said that they believed that they were going to have a loss.

Relating to the budget, Mr. O'Flaherty shared information for the General Revenue Funds (GRF) and Non-GRF funds, as of March 12th, 2013. He said that the available cash for Non-GRF is \$1.367M (including every encumbrance for the rest of the year) and the GRF balance is \$3.745M.

Commissioner Sams posed a question relating to the annual eTech Technology Conference revenue and how it was split between exhibitors and attendees. Mr. O’Flaherty replied that the revenue was split approximately 70% attendees and 30% exhibitors. They only counted paid attendees this year and did not count volunteers.

Commission Chair Designee Conley asked a question about the vendors registered for next year’s annual eTech Technology Conference. Mr. O’Flaherty replied that there are over 100 vendors registered for next year’s annual eTech Technology Conference. They either signed up the day of conference or the same week of the conference. Commission Chair Designee Conley followed up with another question and asked about the total number of vendors this year. Mr. O’Flaherty replied that there were approximately 1,100 total vendors this year.

Commissioner Sams commented that this is one of the biggest professional development efforts in the state and 30% is subsidized by the vendors. Mr. O’Flaherty added comments about the teaching community and them being on summer vacation during the months of registrations. Also some of the teachers have already made plans for what their intent was for continuing education before school was out for summer vacation. Hopefully, the way the schedule is now they should have more participation from the teaching community.

Commission Chair Designee Conley made comments about the continuing education certificates being mailed to the attendees. Commissioner Hawkins explained the process for approval of continuing education credits. He said that he received three documents and the LPDC determines the continuing education credits. Commission Chair Designee Conley wanted to know how many teachers attended, how many certificates were mailed, and how many continuing education credits were actually offered at this year’s annual eTech Technology Conference. Ms. Coy responded that she would provide this information to Commission Chair Designee Conley.

E. Annual eTech Technology Conference Update

Kimberly Christopher, Education Technology Resources Director provided an update regarding the annual eTech Technology Conference. She said there were nearly 4,000 attendees and they received over 700 responses to the survey. This far exceeds the responses they have received in the past. She shared a 2013 Conference Demographics document that was provided in the Commissioner’s meeting materials.

F. Information Technology Update

Laura Bryson, Chief Information Officer, provided an update regarding Information Technology. As it relates to Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP), she said that they have had discussions with Cincinnati Bell and other interested parties about migrating over to the new state telephone system. The migration is currently underway and they just need to submit paperwork. They will likely transition in May and this includes the North Star facility as well. Interim Executive Director Davidson added that none of the telephone numbers will change.

Commission Chair Designee Conley posed a question and asked if there would be a cost savings. Ms. Bryson replied there is that expectation because they are currently paying \$81,000 a year on telephone related expenses.

Ms. Bryson discussed the document outlining the final BETA Building Survey Completion Statistics that were provided in the Commissioners meeting materials. She said that they granted extensions to certain districts due to extenuating circumstances for submitting their data survey

numbers. They received twenty additional applications and they were reviewed. The final BETA results are based on all the information that has been received to date.

Commission Chair Designee Conley asked if the applications were submitted and approved. Ms. Bryson replied that the districts that completed the applications by January 22nd should have already received their first payment. They sent the last batch over to be processed yesterday. These districts will receive the first and second payments together.

Commission Chair Designee Conley made comments about funding for the ‘last mile’ in the Biennial Budget and wanted to ensure that Commissioner Hawkins was aware of this. Commissioner Hawkins replied that the Governor addressed all of the Superintendents during a speech before the budget was released and mentioned the funding. He said there may be approximately 70% of the funding for the middle mile and approximately 30% of the funding for underserved districts. The language doesn’t specifically appear in the legislation. This funding can be carried over into the next fiscal year.

Commission Chair Designee Conley asked about the North Star facility and wanted to know if the satellites were working properly. Ms. Bryson replied that they did have a repair issue arise and they had two satellites evaluated. They plan to go before the Controlling Board for the repairs. The signal for the state of the state was pushed to another satellite without an interruption to users.

G. Blended Learning

Sandy Paxton, Chief Learning Officer, provided an update regarding blended learning. She discussed the Quality Matters Professional Development Grant and said they awarded ten grants. These grants were awarded to either Regional Service Agencies or Consortia Regional Service Agencies. She discussed the document outlining the Quality Matters Professional Development Grant Recipients that was provided in the Commissioners meeting materials. The grants are well underway and the goal is to build capacity for the schools in either selecting or creating online learning. She continued and said the awardees are taking a series of courses in Quality Matters. She explained the rest of the grant program process which included a rubric. There will be approximately 1,600 teachers taking this course this summer.

Relating to the Blending Learning Grants, Ms. Paxton said these are going well. They began a pilot this year. The awardees received the grants last summer and received professional development last fall. These grants will be active for another full year. Two of the Blending Learning Grants award recipients were presenters at this year’s annual eTech Technology Conference.

Ms. Paxton said that the Digital Learning Day (DLD) was a very successful day. In the afternoon, the Administrators had a panel discussion relating to Blending Learning. The discussion was really rich and covered topics such as the barriers they were facing and solutions they uncovered. The session was recorded and will be rebroadcast by WOSU on April 5th, April 12th, April 19th, and April 26th at 9 p.m. respectively. She said that they set a record on DLD because 29,370 students participated in an interactive lesson on nutrition. This was as a result of various agencies working together – ODE, OBR, and eTech, to name a few.

As it relates to Speak up, Ms. Paxton said that in regards to the BETA survey for teachers, they worked with the Speak up national survey to assist with getting valuable classroom level information. Working with Speak up also enabled them to get responses from parents, students and administrators as well. They received 53,834 responses in Ohio – the national survey received 466,000 responses. The raw data results are posted on the eTech website.

Ms. Paxton said the Mobile Learning initiative was launched a few weeks ago. This is a guide and toolkit for any district that may want to pursue any type of mobile learning and she gave examples of those. She directed the Commissioners to eTech's website for further information.

Relating to the Summer Summit for Tech Coordinators, Ms. Paxton said that this has been scheduled for June 17th and 18th. This provides peer training and the Tech Coordinators come together to network for two days.

Ms. Paxton said ISRE, the GIS related software that eTech has a license for was released at this year's annual eTech Technology Conference. They also conducted training as well. They have had fifty schools request a license. She directed the Commissioners to eTech's website for further information.

Relating to E-Rate, Ms. Paxton said that Ohio has received \$67 million in funding for the 2012 funding year. They have not completed all of the reviews so the 2012 funding amount will increase. Since Ohio has been involved in the E-Rate Program, the state has received \$1.119 Billion. As it relates to the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) training, there have been 500 schools or districts that have registered. eTech has received very positive comments regarding the CIPA training.

Commissioner Sams posed a question relating to the Blended Learning WOSU rebroadcast. He wanted to know if there was a way that could be archived. Ms. Paxton replied that it is her understanding that there will be a link from eTech's website so that it can be viewed.

Ms. Paxton added additional comments relating to Speak Up. She said they are having three seminars with Julie Evans from Tomorrow.org. This organization is responsible for releasing the BETA survey data. She will be discussing online and blending learning as it relates to analyzes Ohio's data. She outlined the three topics of discussion and said that these three webinars will be recorded, archived and available on eTech's website.

Commissioner Hawkins made comments related to E-Rate and said that they need to be very cautious as it relates to this funding. The vast majority of connectivity funding is as a result of E-Rate funding. He went on to say that the less affluent school districts receive more E-Rate funding and the \$1.119 Billion is a great deal of funding. As the transition happens with eTech, this is at the top of the list of priority of things that need to be preserved.

H. Legislative Update Communications Update

Elizabeth Coulter, Legislative Liaison, provided a legislative update for the Commissioners. She said that she has been following the Biennial Budget process and it is currently before the House. She attended the OBR testimony before the Higher Education Subcommittee. Interim Executive Director Davidson was asked one question by a member of this subcommittee relating to whether the services of eTech would continue. His response was that it is his understanding that the services would continue but that they would be under a different capacity either OBR or ODE. Ms. Coulter said this will lead to greater collaboration and better services for the schools and students across the State of Ohio.

It does appear that there will be a Substitute Bill after the legislature returns from spring break the first week in April. This will be followed by a week of public testimony and an Omnibus Bill. The Omnibus Bill will likely go before the House for a full vote in mid-April.

Commissioner Osborn asked about the feedback from the field and being able to continue to get the impartiality of the non-partisan viewpoint if eTech is split between two state agencies as it is proposed. Ms. Coulter replied that they will be still working in the same capacity and the budget outlines these specifics. She went on to say that she would hope that having the benefit of working more with OBR and ODE means they will impact these areas. Commission Chair Designee Conley added that he is not sure if the Higher Education Subcommittee will be calling for more testimony on this legislation. He said this is a continuing legislative process.

Commissioner Hawkins added there needs to be an ability to provide input since there appears that there won't be an eTech (Commission). He asked whether there would be a vehicle for receiving input from the field to the various areas of eTech to ensure that they are aware what the fields needs are as opposed to assuming what the fields needs are. He said the Commission has met the field's needs because they reach across a variety of interests. He believes there should be some sort of vehicle to meet these needs. Ms. Coulter replied that they think that will happen through interaction of staff and involvement of higher education. Commission Chair Designee Conley added with the new State Superintendent for ODE in place, he will be very active in the field.

Commissioner Watts said that the concern is that one channel of communication that has been effective is being eliminated. This has been a 'safety valve' when some of these other channels have not worked. That is a concern for him. Commission Chair Designee Conley said this is a legislative process and he has heard the thoughts of the Commissioners and will communicate those to OBR leadership.

Discussions continued relating to the need for a way for the field to provide feedback to eTech. Commission Hawkins said there should be an Advisory Group as a means to stay 'in touch' with the field. He also made comments relating to a SchoolNet report that was released in the early 2000s relating to P-20 and Higher Education. Commission Chair Designee Conley added that he believes that they have taken a step in the right direction being in the same building with ODE. They are able to have immediate interaction and he is encouraged by this. Commissioner Designee Katrina Flory said that she is as well.

Commissioner Osborn made further observations about the field and his interactions with an organization relating to PARCC assessment funding. He said this is the value of having a diverse group of individuals that has backgrounds in different areas that are involved in day-to-day operations. He has confidence in the new State Superintendent for the ODE but he believes there needs to be an Advisory Board of some kind – some formal mechanism for sharing information.

IV. Miscellaneous

1. Commissioner Osborn posed a question about the status of eTech lease situation and wanted to know where that stood. Interim Executive Director Davidson replied that the situation is completely resolved and it was a billing error on the part of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). The Chief Financial Officer of DAS figured out the billing error as it relates to a percentage of eTech's non-GRF funds. This applies to everyone on the floor.

2. Commission Chair Designee Conley made a comment about the State Chief Information Officer releasing the Video Conferencing Report to the Legislature and posed the question to Commissioner Designee Katrina Flory. She replied that the report was released and she would provide a copy to Interim Executive Director Davidson for distribution to all of the Commissioners. Commission Chair Designee Conley added that K-12 was included in this report and they are looking at video conferencing from an enterprise perspective.

3. Commissioner Watts posed a question about the T-1 rates that were changing and wanted to know if that had been resolved. Interim Executive Director Davidson replied that he believes this has been resolved. A representative from DAS Office of Information Technology had been invited to present to the television station channel managers. The last status is they are a few days away from extending the current contract at the current rate. Commissioner Designee Katrina Flory said this discussion took place yesterday. Discussions began to center on the replacement of the T-1 lines with newer technology and whether or not the infrastructure was in place.

Interim Executive Director Davidson added that the upgrade was easier for the K-12 community than the television stations and explained this. Commissioner Designee Katrina Flory said they have a solution and she provided comments and said it was the Somax contract. Commissioner Hawkins said it may be cheaper to go with newer technology but it seems to be a question of availability.

4. Commissioner Osborn posed a question about the North Star facility upgrades and the grants. He wanted to know if they were moving forward with the equipment purchase. Interim Executive Director Davidson replied that a few weeks ago the met with all of the television station managers and he explained that they have hired an outside consultant to spend these funds before going to the Controlling Board for more funding. A few stations would be negatively impacted by the plan that was presented. Ms. Bryson added that there are options that range from \$3M-7M in capital funding that are needed to implement whichever option they may choose. Commission Chair Designee Conley added the \$3.1M in capital funding is still available.

5. Commissioner Osborn posed a question about the public broadcasting and wanted to know where they would there would go after the split. Commission Chair Designee Conley replied that the way it is being proposed now calls for the public broadcasting to be shifted to the OBR with an Advisory Board over this area. He added that the Ed Tech area would be funded through the grants office at the ODE. Interim Executive Director Davidson added that INFOhio is funded by ODE.

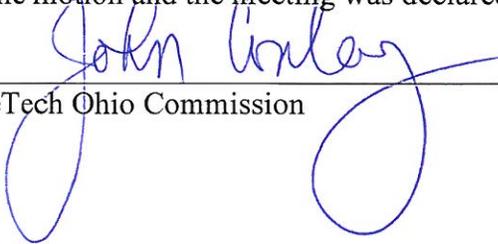
V. Unfinished Business

Commission Hawkins asked about the agenda for the last meeting as it related to the Executive Committee Meeting and wanted to know if the issue had been resolved. Interim Executive Director Davidson replied that the issue has not been resolved. Jill Grier, Legal Counsel, for the Attorney General's Office said the issue was tabled. There are no updates to give. The plan is to have an Executive Session at the next meeting.

VI. Adjournment

Commission Chair Designee Conley finalized by saying he was heavily involved with the last annual eTech Technology Conference and he was thoroughly impressed with this year's conference. He also added they still need to go through the entire legislative process and if are any questions please feel free to contact Ms. Coulter.

Commission Chair Designee John Conley asked if there was any further business. There being no further business before eTech, Commissioner Sams made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins. All commissioners were in favor of the motion and the meeting was declared adjourned.



eTech Ohio Commission

April 11, 2013
Date