

magazine

Helping children to achieve their potential is your job—helping you to be more organized and have more time to do it, is ours.



Where Are We Going?

There is an old saying, “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.” This month we thought you might be interested in knowing where the AOIS and Corporate Computer ship is headed. Our vision is:

- To support AOIS users in all 40 states that have public charter schools. We just added our first school in Pennsylvania, so now we have AOIS running in 8 states with 32 to go.
- Growing from 275 schools using AOIS to 1,000 within the next three years.
- The development of additional software products that augment AOIS or function stand-alone in new areas such as:
 - › School mapping linked to State standardized test results with the ability to show the best performing schools in any radius on a map
 - › Mapping systems that show where a particular school is drawing students from by displaying student addresses.
 - › Teacher and staff applications that automatically keep track of permits, endorsements and certification expirations.
 - › Similar data for your current and past school board members, terms and vacancies with automatic alerts of term expirations ahead of time.

Next month we will discuss our strategic plan that has been designed to help us achieve our vision.

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MAY 2008

Make this the year that you “get it under control!”

2008

- How many times have you heard State politicians call for “more charter school oversight”? It’s easy to continually call for more oversight—it’s much harder to prove your actions are consistent, measured and applied equally to all schools. If you want to start your next school year firmly in control of a proven oversight program that documents every compliance action, provides an easy-to-use user interface and has been audited by multiple State Auditor Generals and declared a “Gold Standard” call us now.

Compliance

AOIS tracks the compliance status of each school authorized, and reports this instantly in a graphical interface that is easy to use.

Electronic Filing

AOIS is also an electronic filing system, so every document associated with schools is immediately available and can be accessed from any location.

Workflow

AOIS also incorporates a workflow system that informs employees when it is time to perform a specific task, and flows documents from employee to employee electronically, ensuring the work is done consistently among all schools.

Performance

AOIS also includes a performance module that tracks and reports student and school achievement.

Why AOIS?

School Visits More Productive

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation conducts evaluations of its sponsored schools twice yearly while classes are in session and once annually prior to school opening, as required by state law. Schools are evaluated once in the fall and once in the spring. Each evaluation, depending on number of records and scope, lasts one to three days.

Fordham has shifted the focus of their evaluations from compliance to evaluations focused on delivery of the Education Plan as set forth in the contract (a.k.a. charter) between the school's governing authority and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. The main reason Fordham is able to do this is because Fordham sponsored schools use the Authorizer Oversight Information System (AOIS). AOIS houses the majority of the documentation that comprises what was formerly the compliance component of the site visit. The Fordham

Foundation understands that school leader and staff time is valuable.

The Foundation also believes that site

visit time is better spent conducting classroom observations, reviewing student work, and interacting with staff and school leadership (as opposed to conducting a document check).

Kathryn Mullen Upton, Director of Sponsorship at The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation stated that "AOIS is a key component of Fordham's sponsorship operation. The ability to monitor compliance electronically makes our monitoring and oversight work more efficient. The result is not just a savings in terms of staff costs, but also a savings in terms of staff time that can then be devoted to other sponsorship work such as research or other technical assistance for schools." AOIS was recently featured in the Ohio Education Gadfly, Fordham's bi-weekly publication of news and analysis (available here: <http://www.edexcellence.net/institute/gadfly/issue.cfm?edition=Ohio>).

The next step for Fordham is introducing the new AOIS Document Submission Tool (DST) to their school users. The new DST allows users to submit all documents directly to the AOIS system, which is much more efficient and time saving than the old fax or email methods of submitting documents to AOIS. By August 2008, the Fordham Foundation will have transitioned all of their sponsored schools to the DST.



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FYI Education Sneak Peak

This is a research and development project we have been working on for over a year. It will be a web-based system having specific application modules that "plug-in" to a foundation module. It starts with a base module with appropriate security to support all FYI Education modules.

The other modules that have been of most interest to our clients include a staff & teachers module and a school board module. These were discussed in the page one article "Where Are We Going?"

If you would like to see a presentation on FYI Education, contact Meghann Murphy by calling 616-988-3215.

EMO's use AOIS for Diversification

The growth of Education Management Organizations (EMOs) has paralleled the exponential growth of Charter Schools. EMOs operate as corporations and capture the rewards of efficiency and effectiveness resulting from economies of scale and learning curves. EMOs are able to provide a variety of services and resources to help their contracted schools to run more efficiently and promote overall increased student performance. For profit EMOs have been under much scrutiny stating that their status promotes the incentive to spend less on services. Yet, this same for profit status also gives EMOs the desire to attract and retain customers by offering better services than their competition. Offering state of the art data storage systems and compliance monitoring systems can give EMOs an edge over its competitors.

Corporate Computer has also reaped the rewards of economies of scale and has eight years of experience with custom software used by charter schools, charter school authorizers and EMOs. AOIS is able to meet the dynamic needs of EMOs by providing one central location to view compliance performance requirements by State or by school. AOIS can be used as a diversifying resource to track clear performance measures and provide contract monitoring allowing EMOs to perform adequately.

Document Submission Dashboard User Responses

The new Document Submission Dashboard was implemented into AOIS in order to make submitting documents to AOIS faster, easier and more efficient. We have received a great amount of positive feedback from various users:

“Congratulations on this upgrade, I love it! I just submitted some financial documents, and it cut my time significantly; plus when a document was accidentally re-submitted, it notified me immediately.”

“I trained a few people this morning on the new document submission tool. There were lots of happy people about getting rid of the control sheets – this will be another great improvement for AOIS.”

“This is so cool! The DST is being well received.”

“I just logged in and saw it!! WOW, that will make my life less complicated.”



“Software is not gold, it is lettuce – it is a perishable good. If the software is not in a place where it is getting improved over time, it will rot.”

*Brian Behlendorf, Developer,
Apache of Netscape, Inc.*

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