

March 4, 2008

**Agency Name** - Educational Service Unit #10

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**NITC Standards and Guidelines** - NITC Policy 7-403

Subject - Request for Exemption From State Scheduling System

**Description of the problem:**

ESU 10 currently provides distance education support for 29 schools in ESU 10, 9 schools in ESU 11, and 4 schools in ESU 7. As part of the statewide upgrade, the ESU 10 supported schools have made contractual agreements with transport vendors to upgrade existing networks to allow all of our member schools to operate in an IP based video network which will allow us to join Network Nebraska.

At the February 26 Distance Education Council (DEC) advisory meeting, we were made aware of NITC policy which contradicted the DEC distance education policy regarding the responsibility of all Network Nebraska member schools to have all codec devices scheduled.

As part of the NITC policy Section 1-103, it does state that a waiver exemption could be filed which we wish to do regarding NITC Policy 7-403. As ESU 10 is responsible for providing support for our area schools, we would like to be exempt from this requirement for the upcoming year of 2008-09.

The following is a brief overview supporting why we would like to be exempt from scheduling using the Renovo system.

- Renovo is the scheduling/reporting system selected to support the existing 3 and 1 codec solution and any bridge system. The southwest and the northeast distance education networks are supported for controlling their devices.
- ESU 10 has chosen to use a different technology solution in that each codec has an internal multiple connection unit (MCU). The reason we chose this solution was we felt it was less proprietary and would allow for a more mobile solution for locating the technology. Additionally the setup and purchasing cost of the 3 and 1 codec solution was at least twice as much as the mobile cart solution.
- In discussion with Renovo, they have indicated that their current scheduling solution was designed for the 3 and 1 codec solution or working as a scheduler for point-to-point devices. In early discussion, Renovo also indicated that they were not aware of an interest or need for multipoint device control.
- In November of 2007, Renovo shared that they were working on an upgrade of their scheduling system that would allow them to schedule multipoint devices. Renovo is aware that we are not planning on using the 3 and 1 codec and yet they have not demonstrated or shared that they are now capable of supporting this type of device.

At ESU 10, we believe that the vision for distance education services will continue to evolve to a portable multi-device system. In addition to being able to purchase additional codecs, we also believe that software based codecs become additional options.

Future questions that need to be answered related to the policy and the current service would include:

- Will all of these different codec systems need to be scheduled?
- Will all entities that wish to connect to a scheduled codec have to also be a licensed device or could this be a clearinghouse only cost?
- Do all higher institutions have to schedule all of their devices?
- Is the Renovo system the only solution for meeting the guidelines as stated in the scheduling standard for synchronous learning and video conferencing?
- Does Renovo even meet the defined standards?
  - Section 1.1 “Controlling the network and end point hardware and bandwidth...”
  - Section 1.1.1 “Control all hardware in a network”
  - Section 1.1.1.6 “Have a defined quality of service”
  - Section 1.1.1.15 “Capable of controlling all specific equipment...”
  - Section 1.1.1.16 “Facilitate various types of events”.
- Are there more cost efficient ways for the same or better services?

We at ESU 10 believe that the intent of the standards and guidelines are an admirable way to support a unified state system. Although we respect the intent, we believe that there is too many unknowns for the coming year including what devices the service can support, the cost of those services, the extent to which all codecs might have to be part of this service, and does this one service provide for future technology options or just take care of how we are used to doing things.

**Preferred Solution** - At minimum we would like our schools to have at least a one year option regarding licensing devices as outlined in the policy. The long term and best solution we believe is that K-12 schools should be allowed to make their own decision regarding the licensing of codec devices.

Educationally yours

John Stritt  
ESU 10 Distance Education Director