Independent investigator on MiSiS finds flaws from the beginning

Posted on October 14, 2014 9:55 am by Vanessa Romo

The Office of the Independent Monitor, charged with overseeing the implementation of the MiSiS program, told LA Unified yesterday, in great detail, how the introduction of the student data system was a massive failure from start to (un)finish.

The district was forced to develop the computer software program as a result of a 1993 lawsuit to ensure that paper files on students wouldn’t be lost.

But the court appointed monitor, David Rostetter, concluded in his annual review that a vast majority of schools reported problems with MiSiS. Of 201 schools surveyed by Rostetter, the 197 respondents reported problems that impacted their ability to identify students with disabilities enrolled at their schools.

Further, the modules developed by LA Unified concerning attendance, counseling, discipline and grades duplicated functions fulfilled by another system the district was already paying for, but did so in an inferior manner.

Developing those features left little time to conduct appropriate testing of the program.

“During the development of the software it was noted that programming outpaced the MiSiS team’s capacity for conducting quality assurance (QA) work.,” Rostetter’s report reads. "It was also noted that the team lacked the adequate resources for QA testing, which resulted in several software code
freeze dates not being met.”

The report also noted that while the district acknowledged problems with the implementation, “it provided conflicting reports minimizing the impact and portrayed a quick resolution of problems.” And the plan to “train the trainer” on using the new system was ultimately unsuccessful.

Another failing in the MiSiS rollout is that most charter schools have not implemented the program. By law, all LA Unified charter schools are required to track students under the same computer system, but only 58 of 254 are utilizing MiSiS, all of which are affiliated charter schools. The rest are using third party data management systems despite the federal mandate.

“The lack of charter schools’ use of MiSiS calls into question leadership’s failure to implement the system’s use,” the report stated.

The board will hear another update from the Information Technology Division today on how it’s handling widespread software problems.

It is also set to vote on a resolution to spend $3.6 million on buying more than 3,300 desktop computers for staff members at schools who use MiSiS on a regular basis.

Ron Chandler, the district’s Chief Information Officer, has said school computers at most campuses are too old to run MiSiS programs, a problem his office did not consider when developing the software.

SHARE:

This entry was posted in School Report News by Vanessa Romo. Bookmark the permalink [http://laschoolreport.com/independent-investigator-on-misis-finds-flaws-from-the-beginning/].

4 THOUGHTS ON “INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR ON MISIS FINDS FLAWS FROM THE BEGINNING”

Paula Hrdle

on October 15, 2014 7:49 am at 7:49 am said:

Two things that stand out to me in this report is the utter failure of MSIS as a replacement for ISIS and what was the reason ISIS was replaced in the first place. In another article I read that the ISIS system was on the verge of integration and we dropped it. Another thing, public affiliated charters with LAUSD were mandated to have this system and they are totally doing their own thing. Where is the oversight there? DZ has made a mess of this whole process. Fire him now BOE, don’t be scared. Be scared if he is retained. He will only continue to mess up and we will have to clean up.
Les Higger
on October 14, 2014 8:33 pm at 8:33 pm said:

Years ago the district built it’s own sis system. It worked very well for over 20plus years. Those in house educators and IT people knew what to do and what was needed. Those in charge decided not to follow there advise and thus started down the road to over spending and two non working systems.
The district needs to hire in house staff to program a system that only the district people at school sites and other district departments understand. No outside vendor can understand the complexity of the size and scope by just talking to upper administration.

Carl Petersen
on October 14, 2014 1:06 pm at 1:06 pm said:

“I can’t remember the last time we got an update on the program…and we don’t supervise anyone who works for the superintendent, which is who was running it”
- Tamar Galatzan

Perhaps if the Board was doing its job and supervising the Superintendent and his staff millions of dollars would not have been wasted and the education of thousands of students would not have been interrupted.

Ellen Lubic
on October 14, 2014 10:00 am at 10:00 am said:

This failed program, MiSiS, was under the control of John Deasy from the beginning. He made the decision to use it, and to implement it this Fall, knowing that it had many flaws, and against the advice of the district IT people.

Deasy should be a bad memory by the end of today if the elected LAUSD BoE is at all responsive to the electors.