



**CALIFORNIA
EDUCATIONAL
DATA
PROCESSING
ASSOCIATION**

**THE
DATABUS**

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County Offices Consortium

What Are the Three Southern Regions?

Harry "Skip" Sharp, San Diego County Office of Education

Actually, it is a consortium of the 10 southern-most County Offices of Education in Southern California, and consists of Chief Business Officials (CBO) and Information Technology (Data Processing) officials working cooperatively toward the common goal of saving resources. Although the consortium and associated projects were conceived by the CBOs, it was the intent from the inception to do things that would benefit both the Business and the Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) communities.

The Three Southern Regions are working in several key areas. The first is establishing an electronic 'highway' to serve several purposes including: passing messages and data among the County Offices of Education; allowing access to the Internet (a protocol for accessing a large network of other networks) particularly for the C&I community; and to find ways to be able to commonly build and share software and avoid duplication of effort. Many of the county offices develop their own software to support a myriad of functions ranging from student information systems to payroll systems to financial accounting systems. Since much of the software in the County Offices of Education is similar, an initial emphasis among the Three Southern Regions has quickly become the development and use of common

software. Additionally, the use of compatible hardware platforms made the goal of sharing software more practical, thus came the idea of using common hardware where it made sense. The effort is not necessarily a quick fix, but rather a long term commitment on the part of all involved. Since the nature of the project is long term, no participants have been encouraged or required to scrap existing equipment or software for the sake of the project. Rather, evolution to common platforms over a period of time, is the preferred method. Among the things that are currently underway are efforts to devise ways to develop and transmit student information data and business and finance data. To that end, the Three Southern

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CEDPA Information

CEDPA is an association of Educational Data Processing Professionals within the State of California. Founded in 1960, the major emphasis of the association's activities are directed towards improving Administrative Information Processing in public education within the State of California.

CEDPA is a California non-profit corporation, as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.

As cited in CEDPA's bylaws, the purpose of this organization shall be:

(a) To provide information to the California public educational community concerning educational data processing via dissemination at an annual conference and through periodicals and special interest seminars.

(b) To foster the exchange of knowledge of educational data processing concepts, systems and experiences between educational data processing installations and other associations both at the state and national level.

(c) To inform the association membership of important information concerning educational data processing.

(d) To provide recommendations to the State Department of Education, State Legislature, school districts, County Offices of Education and other public educational organizations concerning educational data processing.

(e) To develop professional standards for the Educational Information Systems Community within the State of California.

Yearly membership in CEDPA is granted to attendees of the Association's annual conference. Individuals interested in the Association's mailings may request to be added to CEDPA's mailing list by writing to the address below.

The Databus is published bimonthly by the California Educational Data Processing Association and is distributed without charge to all members of the association and to other selected individuals within the State of California that are interested in information systems processing in education. Correspondence and address changes should be sent to:

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Presidential Bits and Pieces

By Judy Acosta, Ventura County Office of Education

What's New?

Would it make it easier for you to attend the CEDPA Conference if you could tell your boss that your lodging was paid for? Well, if you're a full conference registrant at the 1993 Conference in San Jose, and you are present at the business meeting on the last day of the conference, you may well be able to tell your boss just that. CEDPA will be presenting a door prize at that business meeting and that door prize will be two nights' accommodation at the Long Beach Sheraton during the 1994 CEDPA Conference. Obviously, we are hoping to keep conference attendees around for the complete conference. Also, we'd like to reward those who stay for the entire conference, and you will have to be present to win.

SISNET News

Please be sure and register early for the April 13 meeting in Sacramento. Seating is limited, and the topics to be discussed are very timely. Kathleen Barfield will be presenting a CSIS update. The project is still coming along despite the lack of funding. Speaking of funding, John Gilroy, the guru of attendance accounting, will be on hand to tell you everything you ever wanted to know about attendance. Joan Gargano of the University of California, Davis, will tell you all what Internet is and how to connect to it. The meeting will take place at the Host Airport Hotel and will be extremely convenient for those of us flying in. Be sure and check the flyer in this issue of the DataBus.

What's In A Bag?

One of my assignments as a member of the CEDPA Board is to research bags. No jokes, please!!! This is no laughing matter! Each year at the annual conference, each full conference registrant receives a bag with the CEDPA logo imprinted on it. Inside this bag are several "goodies". The "goodies" may vary from year to year depending on the generosity of the vendors, but my problem this year is "what kind

of bag do we want?" There are so many different types of bags on the marketplace that it will be hard to make a decision. The bags that have been handed out the last three years have been quite distinctive because of their noticeable colors. Some people have asked that we move on to other bags and less conspicuous colors. I personally think the colors have been great. I've met people for the first time and noticed one of CEDPA's bags hanging from a door knob or placed on top of a piece of furniture and right away you know you have something in common. I will continue to research "bags" during the months of March and April. If you have a suggestion or two, write or call me with your ideas. You'll find my address and phone number on the second page of the DataBus.

COMING EVENTS

- SISNET SIG Meeting (North)
April 13, 1993
Host Hotel, Sacramento Airport
- Microcomputer SIG Meeting (North)
Date TBA
Location TBA
- SISNET SIG Meeting (South)
Date TBA
Location TBA
- MIS Managers SIG Meeting (South)
July 16, 1993
Location TBA
- Microcomputer SIG Meeting (South)
Date TBA
Location TBA
- Annual Conference
October 20-22, 1993
Red Lion Hotel, San Jose

Next Meeting: April 13, 1993

SISNET News

By Greg Lindner, Yolo County Office of Education

The first SISNET meeting of 1993 will be held at the Host Hotel at the Sacramento Airport on Tuesday, **April 13, 1993**. The meeting will start at 9:30 am and end approximately 3:30. The Host is a convenient 2 minute walk from the airport for those flying in from out of town. For those driving the Sacramento Airport is a quick 10 minutes North of Sacramento on I-5.

This meeting is expected to be well attended because of the topics being discussed. We are fortunate to have **John Gilroy** and **Kathleen Alarid-Barfield** from the Department of Education attend our meeting. John will discuss the latest developments and implications of Attendance accounting - aka *minimum day accounting*...and Kathleen will discuss the latest developments of the California Student Information System. If you have not heard, this project is designed to allow easier sharing of student data across the state (there's a lot more to it than that, but I'll save that for Kathleen).

After lunch, **Joan Gargano** from UC Davis will discuss the *Internet - what it is and how do I connect?* Joan is the Network Administrator at UC Davis and is an expert on the Internet. She is asked to speak to community organizations and schools across the country about the Internet and what effect it can have on our students and our schools. It is truly inspiring to think about the positive impact technology is having on our students. Joan will discuss some of the ways that the Internet is being used to improve the lives of our students. She will also discuss how we can implement this positive learning tool in our own districts and schools.

Space is limited so please sign up early!

Did you know that....

- There were 47 MIS directors at the CEDPA conference?
- 47 people experienced the CEDPA conference for the first time?

January San Jose Meeting

MIS Managers' Meeting Summary

Perry Polk, Mt. Diablo Unified School District

Most of you who are MIS Directors missed a good forum on a dark and stormy Thursday in San Jose. The faithful few had a good exchange of information. With major developments and system overhauls at Ventura and San Mateo, Paul Bewley and Dan Trade briefed us on the changes occurring in their County Offices. Paul is about to go to bid for equipment, but Dan already has selected Sun Microsystems as his hardware platform.

Chargeback factors and systems were discussed especially among the Santa Clara, Ventura and San Mateo County Offices. A hot topic was the various methods being used to affect budget reductions, such as, unattended backups, shortened operations hours, page printing, job scheduling and third party maintenance services effects on primary hardware companies.

Vince Madden from the State Department of Education talked about progress toward the California Educational Network and the initiative among the ten southern counties to link their communications. Russ Brawn is involved in writing a document describing the network and its functions for each level of involvement. Vince mentioned a good book for school construction called the Virtual Schoolhouse. Vince is also working with the Board to set up a CEDPA BBS via CSUNET. You'll be seeing more about this in the next few weeks.

Other topics discussed were student body accounting, ADA accounting changes in the Governor's budget, Novell pricing and implementation, CASE tools and their use, imaging systems and alternative software for Transportation.

The MIS Director's Meeting is a valuable experience to share issues, get an update on what others are doing and build that all important personal network. The next meeting will be in Southern California on July 16. You'll see the announcement later.

CSIS Project Holds Forth

Kathleen Alarid-Barfield, California Department of Education

(Internet: kalarid@eis.calstate.edu)

We are nearing completion of the feasibility study for the California Student Information System. As you may recall, we formed a collaborative in late 1991 between the California Department of Education, the Far West Laboratory and CEDPA to examine the readiness of schools and school districts to engage in this type of effort, determine standards for sending and receiving student records, evaluate the cost effectiveness of electronic record transfer, and explore the legal and programmatic issues related to the confidentiality and privacy of student records. Reports for all these projects are in various stages of completion. We will be holding three regional meetings during the next couple of months to go over the data handbook we have created that helps make ExPRESS more understandable, we hope.

The next phase for the project will be to conduct some small scale pilots to further flesh out the real issues of what it's going to take to do this at the local level to accomplish all this record sharing. In other words, we have studied this thing to death now and we are ready to really "do" something.

We are now planning two pilots, one involving Migrant Education in a pilot of individual record transfer, the other involving what has been called the "Tri-County" pilot (Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles with the new addition of San Diego) to prototype some methods for on-line access to a "student directory" to determine a student's last school of attendance and to determine how we can streamline state reporting of student information using electronic file sharing.

As you can see, our goals have not changed but how we talk about them certainly has evolved. Now that the Technical Advisory Group has become comfortable with ExPRESS as the preferred method for sharing records, we need to talk more now about the communication wall that must be scaled to realize the benefits of electronic record sharing. A year ago

none of us knew much about the Internet. Now we all have login names and some of us are "GOPHERing" all over the country. Even at the national level, people are beginning to realize that administrative data sharing experiments rely heavily on the building of the high performance computing network, called the NREN. The decision by the ten southern counties to become "Internet-worked" through CSUNET by June, 1993, is a bold move in the right direction and will go a long way towards establishing the necessary infrastructure for all types of information sharing among educators in California.

I guess you can say that fools often do rush in where angels fear to tread, but I think now if we in the CSIS project had really understood the complex web we were entering known variously as "EDI", interoperability, Internet, TCP/IP, client/server, to name a simple few, we might not have had the courage to boldly step out in front of the train. As it is, we are now in the thick of it and enjoying every minute of it. At a time when there are such high levels of uncertainty relating to our politics and budgets, I have to say it is refreshing to work on a project with so many dedicated people.

We will provide an update on the project at the next SISNET meeting on April 13th in Sacramento. I look forward to sharing more details with you at that time. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the project.

I would also like to take the opportunity to say "Thank YOU" for the continued support the CEDPA Board of Directors and members have shown us throughout this effort, and upon which we rely. This has always been, and I hope will always be, a community effort that benefits students and schools more than it benefits bureaucrats in Sacramento. To parody a campaign expression, "It's the kids, stupid!"

Kathleen Barfield is the Project Manager for CSIS. She may be reached at (916) 657-4293 or on Internet.

My Dinner with Eldo: CEDPA '92 Survey Results Revealed

By John McBrearty, Contra Costa County Office of Education

It was late; the night was dark, but inside the 24-hour Colonial Donuts on Lake Shore Avenue in Oakland's Lake Merritt district, the fluorescents glowed brightly. My statistical informant, Eldo Grimp, was haranguing me, as usual.

"Well, we finished some charts from your survey," he said, speaking for himself and his fellow weekend elves, who had agreed to tabulate the results of our annual CEDPA Conference survey in exchange for "professional recognition." A few crumbs of recognition, in the form of his fourth chocolate glazed old fashioned, clung to my friend's beard. "But don't expect me to believe that you CEDPA members are rational. Look at this. You've got well attended breakout sessions with so-so ratings, and sparsely attended ones with high ratings. Don't you DP professionals know what you want?"

I pointed out that it wasn't all that way. Phil Branstetter's talk on Downsizing a Data Center was one of the best attended of the breakout sessions and among the highest rated. Two of the plenary sessions, especially Dave Master's keynote address, got strong ratings. "Yeah, but the top five scores apart from Phil Branstetter and Dave Master went to C. L. Zuk (Personal Finances), Milton Dooley (ADA Accounting) and George Gumbrecht (Phone Systems). Those sessions were only moderately well-attended."

I countered with Larson (Networking Multimedia), Eller (Tech. & Classroom) and Bloom (Admin. Tech. Academy), all of whose Wednesday sessions had over average ratings and strong attendance. He came back with Strecker (Parent-pay Busing) on Wednesday and Madden (State Dept. Report) on Friday: good ratings, small crowd. And so it went. "Listen, Eldo," I finally said. The CEDPA Board doesn't expect unanimity on its program. Some topics are important to a certain percentage of our conference attendees, even if they don't draw all that

(see "Survey Results" on Page 10)

Speaker and topic	Est. attend.	Survey resp.	Ave. score
Wednesday 9:30			
Dave Master Keynote	45	34	3.82
Wednesday 10:30			
Bloom Admin. Tech Academy	28	17	3.29
Hoyer Pupil Appointment	10	5	2.80
Eller Tech. and Classroom	25	8	3.38
Barfield CSIS Update	30	8	2.88
Wednesday 1:30			
Carruthers Client/Server Stu. Assmnt.	33	16	3.00
Johnson Fiber Optic Net	28	15	3.00
Clements Intro. to EXPRESS	20	7	2.57
Wednesday 2:45			
Kauble Everything about Records	20	19	3.05
Strecker Parent-Pay Busing	11	4	3.25
Barfield CSIS Data Elements	18	8	3.38
Ligon Student Mobility	23	5	2.60
Wednesday 4:00			
Larson Networking Multimedia	25	15	3.47
Angstadt PC-based Financials	17	13	3.00
Gumbrecht Phone Systems	11	2	3.50
Hanson Managing Student Admin. Sys.	25	62.83	
Thursday 8:30			
Funderburk Teacher Admin. Workstn.	30	11	3.18
Des Forges Scannable Forms	4	1	3.00
Bennett Multi-Track Attendance	18	9	2.56
Towery Escape PC Financials	29	14	3.00
Thursday 9:30			
Abrams Mac Universal Client	18	7	3.14
C.L. Zuk Finances for School Staff	14	6	3.83
Vitamanti Net Mgmt./Bridges	38	24	3.08
Thursday 12:00			
Thurs. Luncheon Jessie Alderson EDI	45	20	2.60
Friday 8:15			
Panel: Economics of Educational D.P.	45	30	3.40
Friday 9:15			
Madden State Dept. Update	12	8	3.13
Dooley ADA Accounting	15	8	3.75
Branstetter Downsizing Data Center	38	20	3.80
Friday 10:30			
Dave Crimmins Wrapup	45	24	3.04

Table 1. CEDPA '92 Speakers including estimated attendance, number of survey responses, and average score from survey responses. (Note: the four plenary sessions were assigned an attendance count of 45 to simplify charting.)

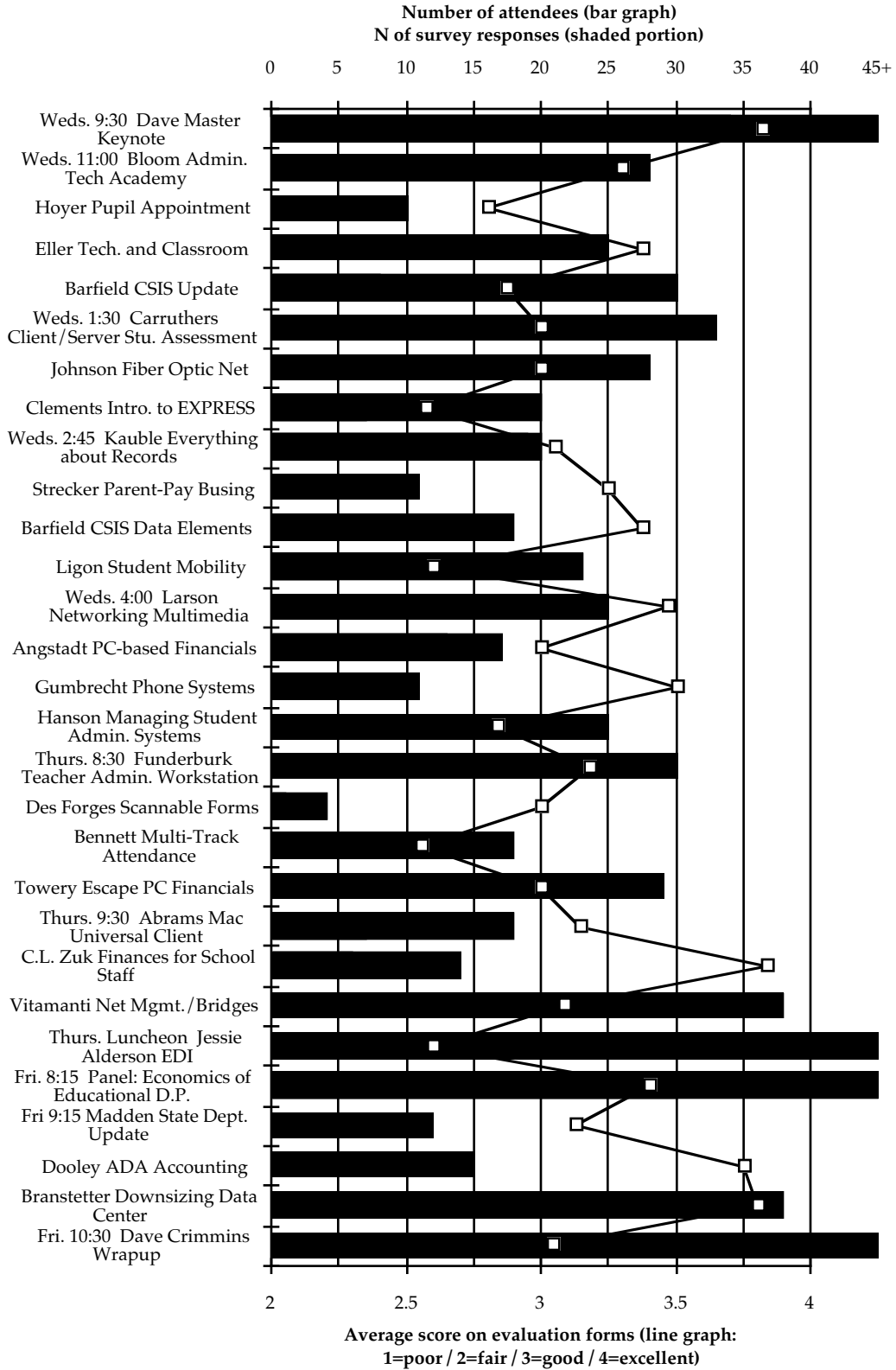


Figure 1: CEDPA '92 Conference Survey Results

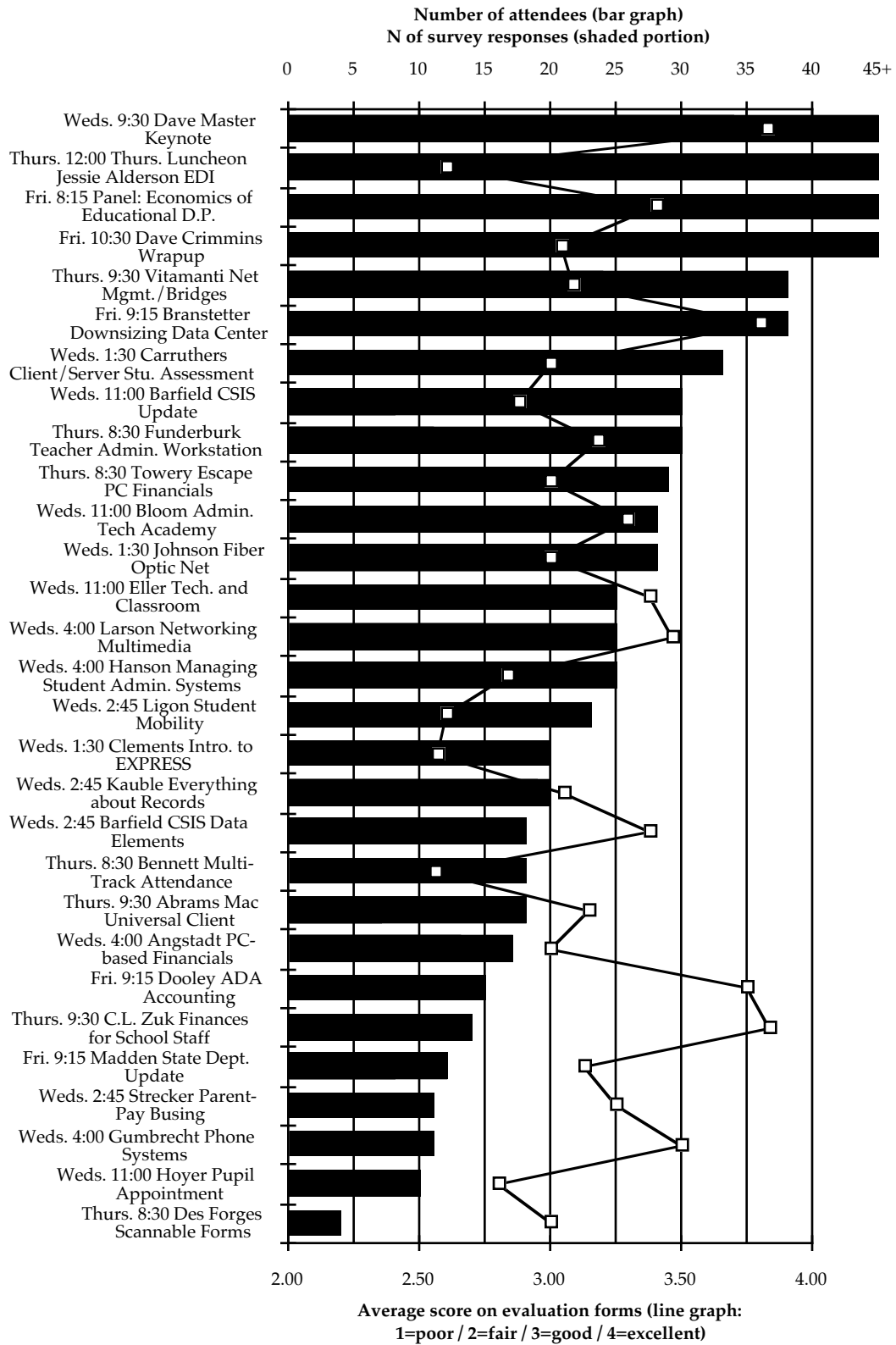


Figure 2: Speakers by estimated attendance

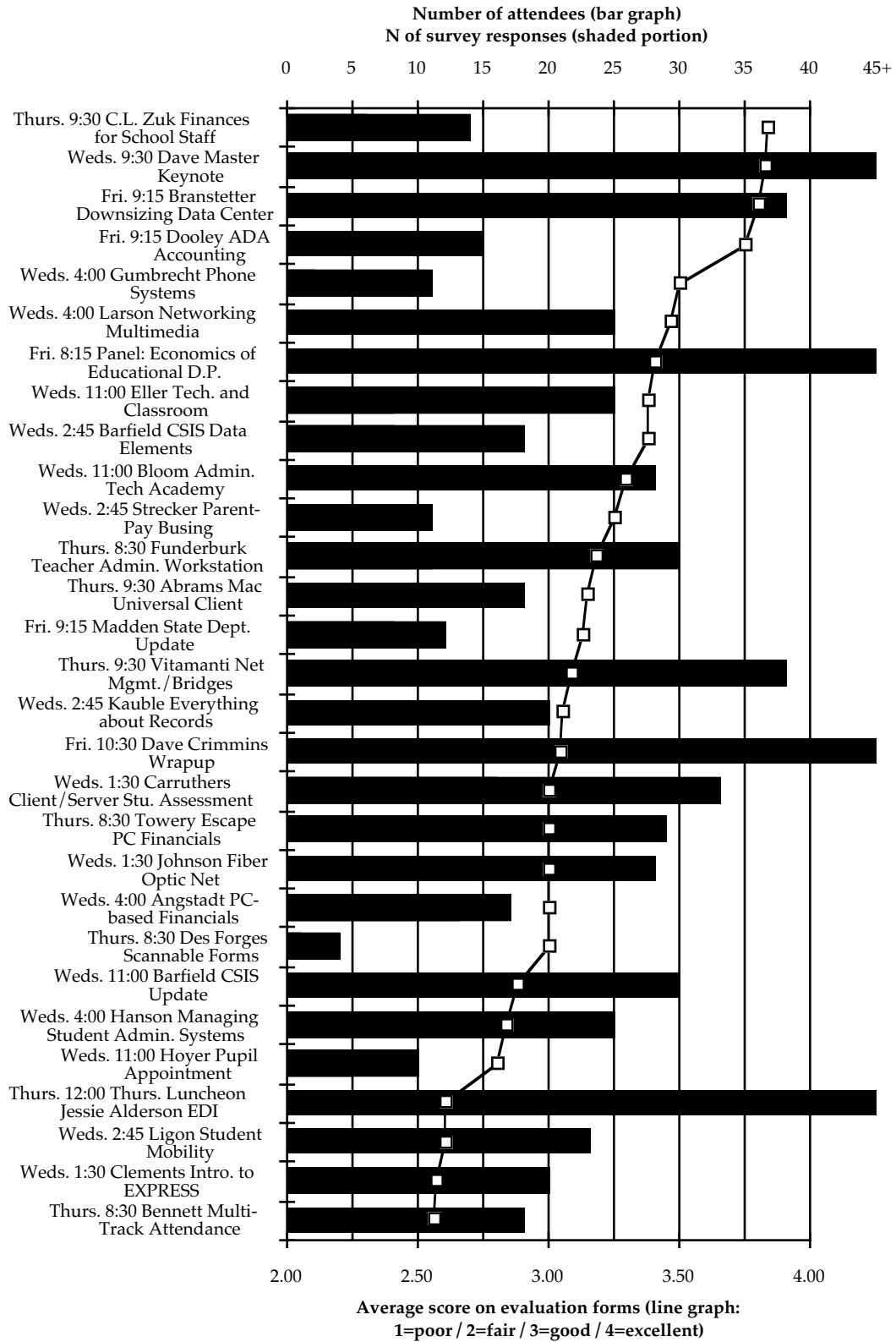


Figure 3: Speakers by survey score

Survey Results

(continued from page 5)

well. The conference is never going to please everybody."

Eldo shrugged slightly and nodded. I was surprised that he gave up the argument so easily. "Are you feeling all right?" I asked him. "It's just that sign," he said, pointing to a large sheet of paper hung in the plate glass window. Its words could be read dimly from our side of the glass. "Espresso/Latte/Mocha/Cappuccino" it spelled out in large block letters. "You know me," he said. "I hang out here a lot, especially in the middle of the night. What do I have in common with Cappuccino-drinking Yuppies?"

I looked around Colonial Donuts. The Cappuccino-drinking Yuppies seemed to have all gone home, if they had ever arrived. "But Eldo," I said, trying to make conversation, "the Cappuccino-drinking Yuppies are probably good for the Grand/Lake area. You know, stimulate the local economy and all that." Eldo glowered at me. "You sound like Bill Clinton," he said. A sparkle came into his eye. "Don't get me started on the Democrats . . ." he began.

* * *

Some time later, I managed to steer the conversation back to the CEDPA survey. "What about the other survey questions, like preferences for conference sites?" I asked Eldo. He glanced significantly at his empty cup and plate. Fortunately, the staff at Colonial Donuts had just put out a fresh tray of chocolate glazed old fashioned.

When we were back in our seats, Eldo said, "Of the choices the Board included on the survey, Monterey was tops with 21 check marks out of 43 surveys returned. San Diego was next with 20. But hey, since you're so generous with the donuts and coffee tonight, I'll throw in two free tables. (Shown below).

John McBrearty, former CEDPA director, was speaker chairperson for the 1992 CEDPA conference.

Monterey	21
San Diego	20
San Francisco	14
Santa Barbara	12
Sacramento	10
San Jose	9
Orange County	9
Los Angeles	6

Table 2. Counts of areas preferred for future conferences (among choices listed on conference evaluation form)

Palm Springs	5
Fresno	2
Tahoe	2
not Palm Springs	2
Napa	1
Newport	1
Ontario	1
Reno	1

Table 3. Counts of areas preferred for future conferences (write-in suggestions)

"As for, 'Do you plan to attend the 1993 conference at the Red Lion Hotel in San Jose?', 60% of your survey respondents said 'yes,' 2% said 'no' and the rest said they didn't know. And, by the way, almost one third of the surveys contained additional written comments."

"Any chance you can get those to me in machine-readable form for a future issue of the Databus?" I asked Eldo. He was noncommittal. I didn't want to press my luck. After he ambled off into the early hours, I gathered up the sheaf of charts and tables he had left, miraculously free of coffee stains. I finished the last of my decaf Cappuccino and headed home.

Riding Piggyback

Addison Ching, Newport-Mesa Unified School District

California Education Code specifies that all service arrangements in excess of \$15,000 and all supplies and equipment purchases in excess of \$21,000 must be let to public bid. Large equipment purchases (scanners, desktop computers, etc.) and many turn-key processing systems (transportation scheduling, work order processing, etc.) usually require going out to bid. While designed to help agencies in obtaining the most cost-effective solution that fits their specifications, the process is sometimes hampered by the required timelines that must be acknowledged as a part of the bidding process. Consider the following:

- Permission must be requested from and granted by the Board of Trustees prior to commencing the bid process. This is usually done on the consent calendar at one of the regularly-scheduled board meetings;
- Bid specifications must be prepared. Care must be taken to ensure that the specifications clearly define the needs of the organization but not be written so specifically that potential vendors are excluded from participation in the bid process;
- Bid packets must be prepared by the agency's Purchasing department;
- Bids packets must be issued to prospective vendors;
- Notices of Public Bid must be published;
- Bid responses must be evaluated and a recommendation for award issued; and
- The bid award must be approved by the Board of Trustees, again at a regularly-scheduled board meeting.

This process requires the resources of MIS and Purchasing personnel. Considering the normal scheduling of board meetings, the time required to draft specifications, Purchasing timelines (bid packet preparation, going to bid), bid response evaluation, and eventual awarding, it is not unreasonable for a bid process to require 2-3 months to complete.

The concept of "Piggybacking" allows agencies to acquire services and/or purchases by utilizing a successful bid executed and completed by another agency in lieu of actually conducting the bid process. In order to be able to piggyback on a bid, several conditions must be satisfied:

- The other agency's bid must accurately describe the *exact* service or product to be acquired. Quantities and configurations must be identical to those awarded in the bid;
- The other agency's bid must specifically *allow* piggybacking; and
- The bid can be piggybacked on only if all of the other agency's bid constraints are satisfied.

In addition, this action must be supported by your purchasing department and by board resolution.

Many agencies have formed purchasing consortiums with other agencies in order to maximize the payback of the resources expended in the bid process. If contemplating a service or equipment purchase, be sure to check with other agencies to see if there is a bid that can be piggybacked on. If preparing a bid specification for a service or product, be sure to inquire if your purchasing department would consider including a piggyback clause in the bid.

The Databus can act as a piggyback clearing-house by publishing a list of computer service or equipment bids that can be piggybacked on. If you have such a bid, please drop a note to CEDPA indicating the exact service or equipment purchased, the configuration/model/quantity, and time, geographical, or other constraints placed on the piggyback. This information can then be published in each issue for the benefit of CEDPA's readership.

Piggybacking can help to make the service and equipment acquisition more efficient by eliminating the necessity of a formal bid process. Please consult your agency's Purchasing department for additional information on using this procedure.

Three Southern Regions

(continued from page 1)

Regions are working closely with the California Department of Education, so that any gains made in these areas might possibly be used as a solution to statewide problems in these areas.

Although the goal is savings over the long haul, it quickly became apparent that there were some short term benefits to be realized as well. The initial focus has been on four functional areas: networking, contract awareness/sharing, hardware and software architecture, and data standardization. The CSUnet has been chosen as the network backbone. It meets the criteria previously mentioned, and is already in place. Equally important, it offers the opportunity for districts to tie in to the county offices to access CSUnet and the Internet on a relatively inexpensive basis. Contract awareness and sharing is something which can benefit the entire information technology community. Early efforts are geared toward finding out what is currently available, making sure that 'piggy back' wording goes into contracts where

appropriate, and keeping each other informed in a timely fashion with 'futures' or proposed contracts.

For the short term, in the computer architecture arena, attention is being paid to applications that run on micro computers, since those applications seem to be the most easily shared. There is also a belief that future information technology support will be oriented toward the client/server lines. Focusing on micro computer applications now will make the transition to the future that much easier. Mainframe type of application sharing will be a target a little further down the road. As this project grows in scope, standardization, both of data and the ways to transmit the data, will become increasingly important. This concept is one of the mainstays of the Three Southern Regions.

There is a long way to go to meet the objectives of all this, and the objectives may change along the way. The first step has been taken though and that is usually the most difficult one.

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