

OVERVIEW

THE AUDITOR
STATE OF HAWAII

Status Report - Gaining Electronic Access to the Department of Education's Computerized Information Systems

Summary

Act 272 of 1994 directed the State Auditor to prepare annual fiscal accountability reports of the expenditures of the Department of Education. To assist the Auditor, Section 296-92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, directed the Department of Education to provide the Legislature and the State Auditor with electronic access to the department's computer-based information systems. This reports summarizes our progress in obtaining electronic access.

The Department of Education operates three separate information systems: The School Information System (SIS), the Personnel Information Processing System (PIPS), and the Financial Management System (FMS). In addition, data from each of these systems are periodically deposited in the department's Data Warehouse for subsequent historical review by authorized users.

In a previous report we concluded that access to the Data Warehouse should provide the necessary historical information to conduct our fiscal accountability audits. However, to obtain required *current* expenditure information, direct access to the Financial Management System was also required. We initiated steps to find the most cost efficient means to access both the Data Warehouse and the Financial Management System.

Establishing direct electronic connection to the Financial Management System required coordination with: the Department of Education, which controls software access; the Department of Budget and Finance's Information and Communication Services Division which houses the computer that runs the Financial Management System; the Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center, which houses a required controller box in the Kekuanao'a Building where our office is located; and the Legislative Reference Bureau, which provided technical assistance.

At present, requisite cabling and hardware connections have been completed. However, software compatibility persist. We anticipate these problems to be resolved in the near future.

We determined that establishing access to the Data Warehouse could be achieved best through the Internet. We established an Internet account through a local provider and have successfully connected to the Data Warehouse. However, access

through the Internet has limitations. To most effectively produce our financial accountability reports requires downloading of data and report generation capabilities not presently possible via the Internet. Upgrading of the system's software may be necessary.

Our status report concludes with a brief analysis of the type of information that can be obtained through the Data Warehouse. Based on preliminary review, some discrepancies were noted. When access is finalized, we will be able to review the accuracy of the information more completely.

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