1. Status and Progress*

What is the status and progress of your continuous improvement plan for this past year? Briefly describe your goals, current status, and an overview of your ITC's efforts towards completion of your plan and activities.

NEOMIN's continuous improvement plan for the 2018-2019 school year was very successful. Goals in each service area were completed, and if a goal was not completed, it was started and we are continuing to work towards achieving those goals.

In the area of Fiscal Services, NEOMIN again had additional districts elect to implement eFinance Plus during the last fiscal year. A total of four districts were signed up and did indeed complete the conversion process and went live on January 1, 2019. Since going live in January, the four districts are utilizing the basic features of the software, and some are in the early stages of implementing more advanced features. Some have implemented the Employee Access Center and/or other automated tools to help advance the typical fund account and payroll procedures.

NEOMIN also had a few districts that chose to implement third party products to interface with State Software. Strategic Solutions was implemented in three more districts that were looking for more of an automated workflow for their internal procedures. NEOMIN staff helped implement the software whenever they were called to do so.

EMIS services was an area last year, and every year, where NEOMIN strives to improve. EMIS Coordinators look to NEOMIN staff for confirmation of EMIS coding, submission dates, and anything EMIS related to get the most accurate data reported as well as funding that goes with that data. NEOMIN added an additional full time EMIS staff member in January 2019 to further help our districts whenever needed. This helps with providing additional training and daily support for EMIS related issues and questions.

One of the goals in Student Services for the past year was to help districts implement DataMap so they could further analyze student data to help improve their overall academic stature. While DataMap was shown to district staff at various meetings, no additional districts chose to implement the product.

Student Services had a goal of providing more Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access training to district staff to help them sort, analyze, and process data more efficiently. These trainings were completed and well received for those who attended.

A Library Service goal for last year was to market libraries and INFOhio resource even more than in past years. NEOMIN's library staff was able to attend a few meetings outside of normal library staff meetings, and resources were relayed to technology coordinators as well as Superintendents at their monthly meetings.

The NEOMIN Technical Services team had a very busy 2018-19 year. Two major changes were implemented during this year and were very successful. The first was a new firewall which enhanced NEOMIN and district security by segregating each district, the NEOMIN office, and datacenter from one another. In past years and in most other ITC/district environments, I believe school districts are all

firewalled together from the public internet, but not each other. Our latest implementation prohibits district to district communication and enhances security. District to district communication now requires VPN software and credentials.

The second major technical enhancement that was completed was a new URL filtering product. The use of the Palo Alto filtering software built into the new firewall has proved invaluable. The product works very well and does not have the inconsistences or problems like past filtering products NEOMIN has used.

The third major technical project for the 2018-19 year was a new server architecture that replaced NEOMIN's ten year old blade server architecture. The new platform has much higher capacity for disk, RAM, and CPU which increases NEOMIN's ability to host district virtual servers as well as increased performance for datacenter virtual machines.

The last goal that helped all of our service areas was an updated website. Though similar to our old website, the new website is mobile friendly and adjusts resolution based on the device. The website update fixed several issues with menu systems, which improves the user experience.

2. Areas of Improvement*

What are the key areas of improvement you plan to address this coming year? Why were these key areas included? Were any needs identified in your ITC's results from the common customer satisfaction survey or your local survey? Provide an overview of the activities and professional development planned to address these key areas and describe what you hope to accomplish this year with those activities.

One of the main projects for the 2019-20 year will be the conversion of three more districts to eFinance Plus. Currently NEOMIN has twelve districts live on eFinance, and these three will be last of our eFinance conversions for the time being. These latest districts chose eFinance Plus after a demonstration of both eFinance Plus and the State Software Redesign. The professional development of our staff would occur through state wide meetings, conference calls, and even national user group meetings. The NEOMIN fiscal staff have mapped out a conversion plan that will convert data from State Software Classic as well as train new district staff on eFinance plus over the course of July through December 2019. We hope to accomplish these three districts going live in January 2020, and then using the remainder of the 2019-2020 year to implement any remaining modules for eFinance plus that our districts would request. The remaining districts at NEOMIN have chosen to implement the State Software Redesign.

While much work will be done for eFinance this year, NEOMIN still has a goal of helping districts implement any third party tools for programs that may be requested by districts still using the State Software Classic system. Products such as Strategic Solutions, Time Clock Plus, RAM, and others may still be requested and implemented by our districts, which NEOMIN fully supports. This goal is included so all of NEOMIN's districts can utilize software they deem valuable in their environment. NEOMIN's goal is to do its best to offer products and support that is requested no matter what the system. Fiscal staff will work with software vendors and developers to implement these products and attend any meetings for training necessary to support the products.

Another goal of NEOMIN's is to expand its EMIS support and trainings. Due to high demand for EMIS support, NEOMIN added a full time EMIS support position in January 2019. The goal is to get the new person adequately trained during the 2019-20 year to provide outstanding support as well conduct additional trainings that districts request. NEOMIN hopes to accomplish even better support by having two people in the EMIS support and training area. A component helping to provide this improved support will be the EMIS Alliance training attended by NEOMIN staff like in years past. These training topics will be passed onto NEOMIN district staff to help improve their knowledge and processes.

Similar to the EMIS goal for this year, the Student Services has added an additional full time person. Adding this additional staff member will allow NEOMIN to plan for a future retirement of a staff member in the next year or two. Currently, NEOMIN has one staff member whose main focus is scheduling and gifted data. This position works with districts, often times one on one, to fulfill all of their scheduling needs. The new person will work side by side with our retiring person over the next year or so to ensure a smooth transition once the veteran staff member retires. Seeing how highly dependent NEOMIN's districts are on student service staff, especially scheduling, makes this goal a necessity for this year.

Student Services has another large goal of Google Sync integration for the upcoming year. This goal is included for the high number of teachers that currently use Google Classroom as one of their main teaching tools. With the announcement of Google Classroom sync in the latest version, our districts are excited to learn and use the Google Sync capability. Google Sync will help them be more efficient when it comes to GradeBooks and classroom planning. NEOMIN plans to pilot the new tool with a district or two for the first few months of school. Once the tool is working well, the remaining districts will be trained on the tool and be able to use it if they choose. NEOMIN staff will attend any necessary trainings, calls, or meetings to become efficient and knowledgeable on the new tool and its capabilities.

For the upcoming year, NEOMIN library services will continue to focus on the marketing and distribution of INFOhio materials along with overall library materials and resources. Our plan is to attend meetings with Principals and Administrative teams to provide them the knowledge of the great tools available through INFOhio. NEOMIN feels even though library staff may by aware of these resources, other personnel in the building may not be, so NEOMIN wants to help relay the message and these tools district wide.

For NEOMIN's technical team, one of the first goals for the upcoming year is greater redundancy. We plan to install two new VMware hosts. Last year NEOMIN implemented a new server architecture to replace equipment that was nearly ten years old. At that time, 4 hosts were purchased and implemented successfully. By adding two hosts this year, it will allow for the failure of two hosts with no service interruption. Having so many critical virtual machines for NEOMIN and its districts, the ability to lose multiple hosts and still be operation is crucial. No professional development was needed for this goal, as technical staff are very familiar with the environment and how to add additional resources.

Another area of redundancy that is being implemented is new power distribution units. The current units are very antiquated and incapable of actively switching between redundant UPS systems. These new PDUs will allow active switching in case one UPS has a failure. The goal is for uninterrupted service in case of a power outage while the natural gas generator is powered up.

The other goal of the technical team is greater security. While working with the MCOECN security officer over the past year, like other ITCs, NEOMIN is trying to increase security on any front possible. We recently upgraded the firewall to its latest software version. This latest release has additional features

and security such as DNSSEC. NEOMIN subscribes to the US-CERT security emails and looks for any firewall vulnerabilities that may be found and needing correction.

Another security enhancement also being worked on is in regards to our local domain for authentication to various systems. We are working to align with the NIST 800-53r4 standard by having a completely separate security domain from our districts for any service they authenticate against. We are implementing a domain for the NEOMIN staff and lab, which is outside of any domain that core services use for authentication to any application. Segregating the office staff and districts from hosted applications helps to protect the staff and customers from any potential exploits that may originate from those hosted applications.

3. Input from Stakeholders*

How do you obtain input from customers, governing board, and staff in identifying the key areas improvement ? Did you do anything new or different in developing your new plan?

Active training sessions are a method where NEOMIN tries to gain information on how it can improve. Training surveys are given at the end so attendees can offer opinions on the training material, the trainer, and how NEOMIN can improve to make training sessions more effective.

NEOMIN also plans to participate in the MCOECN common customer satisfaction survey this year. This is a tool used to determine how well NEOMIN is doing in regards to customer satisfaction. NEOMIN has received excellent results in the past and will continue using the survey to help keep our site aligned with our overall goal of great customer satisfaction.

For Governing Board input, NEOMIN holds at least four meetings per year, usually on a quarterly basis. If a special meeting is required, it will be added accordingly to meet everyone's schedule. The Governing Board also has a sub-committee which is titled the NEOMIN Planning Committee. This committee is composed of four members of the ten member governing board which meets to discuss various topics on how to improve NEOMIN and the overall direction of our ITC. These topics are then discussed further when the entire Governing Board members are present at a regular or special meeting. Discussing topics of interest with the Planning Committee and full Governing Board help NEOMIN to keep improving and help provide services that districts request.

Staff members provide input during regular team meetings as well as staff meetings as a whole. These meetings are held to discuss current projects as well as any future projects or areas that need improving. When the NEOMIN staff meets as a whole it gives everyone a time to share their work and projects with other staff members that do not normally work in other areas on a daily basis. Ideas on how things can move forward and how we as a staff can better NEOMIN and its districts is always a goal at our team and staff meetings.

Lastly NEOMIN conducts User Group meetings held in each core service area each month. The User Group meetings with each service area are an invaluable tool that gives user experience feedback. These meetings give district staff the ability to have open discussions on what is working in their service area

as well as what may need improved or expanded upon. Open discussions during onsite meetings also gives district personnel a chance to discuss topics and is a great way to gain input from others who may be looking for similar information.

4. Collaboration Examples*
Highlight examples of new or recent collaboration with other entities, or new products or services where collaboration could be valuable. Do you anticipate these efforts will directly contribute to your ITC's service improvement? If so, explain.

One of NEOMIN's most recent collaboration projects was helping another ITC with E-Rate filing management. For the 2018 Funding Year, NEOMIN helped LGCA with managing the entire process of the funding year. Items included contracted figure amounts for customer Form 471s, Form 471 filing requirements, Form 486 filing requirements, and invoicing requirements. Working collaboratively with LGCA has allowed them to save on a staff member and training them on the LGCA E-Rate practices along with the over E-Rate procedures, or having to consult with an E-Rate firm that would likely be more costly. NEOMIN plans to continue this collaboration with LGCA for the 2019-20 year, which would like help them even more given they have many contracts expiring at the end of the year. I think this helps NEOMIN as well by contributing to its E-Rate process knowledge. Seeing how other entities do things may show efficiencies that can be gained by NEOMIN.

Another area that is likely to be explored is helping districts by contracting with them on projects that may require more in depth knowledge that they may not have on staff, or time to do during normal hours. While NEOMIN does everything is can to support its customers, sometimes projects can't be completed during normal working hours. Most of these projects are technical projects that my include server rebuilds, network rebuilds, or just more in depth troubleshooting that takes more time with the technology coordinator outside of business hours. By collaborating with NEOMIN for these larger scale projects, it saves the district money, builds trust and relationships with district technology staff, and generates money for NEOMIN.