7-205. Scheduling standard for synchronous distance learning and videoconferencing.

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this standard is to establish and define the needs for scheduling to be addressed when purchasing and maintaining scheduling coordination systems. The objective of this standard is to enable all existing and future synchronous distance learning and videoconferencing facilities in Nebraska to achieve interoperability and maintain an acceptable scheduling of services through recurring and ad hoc event coordination.

(2) Standards. This subsection consists of a list of five components and accompanying features that must be available in any software system that is developed for use in scheduling of synchronous events using videoconferencing technology. It is the intent that any and all such scheduling systems defined by the specifications below be accessible either through the internet or within a defined intranet as decided upon by the system administrators. The following sections describe the various levels and types of scheduling or coordination that must be accommodated.

(a) Hardware Control Component. When attempting to link two or more sites electronically, a system must have the capability to coordinate the connectivity between/among the sites. This includes controlling the network and endpoint hardware and bandwidth necessary to cause a successful connection. A hardware control system must be able to control hardware in a network and be capable of linking into other systems listed in this standard to enable the following: (i) browser-based access; (ii) locate devices by IP address [both static and DHCP]; (iii) locate devices by MAC address; (iv) facilitate far-end control in endpoint devices with the capability; (v) display a call list that is understood by non-technical staff using plain English site descriptions; (vi) hardware and software systems must work such that the scheduling system is available for use at least 99.9% of the time; (vii) automatically accumulate log data that may be searched by system administrators using multiple search variables; (viii) maintain security in ways that can be defined by system administrators including providing an identity management system that allows for multiple levels of user access as defined by system administrators; and (ix) facilitate various types of events, such as broadcast to all, broadcast to some, 2-way point-to-point, and 2-way multipoint.

(b) Event Logging Component. A system coordinator must have the ability to track information about events. This may include knowing the number of people at a site, the minutes an event runs at any given site, or the number of events a specific organization schedules. An event logging system must be able to automatically store data and permit reporting and be capable of linking into other systems listed in this standard to include the following: (i) browser-based access; (ii) store data in an ODBC compliant relational database; (iii) provide fields for logging various pieces of information; (iv) permit system administrator defined fields [no fewer than 64]; and (v) local contact and facility arrangement information.

(c) Facilities Coordination Component. If an event will include locations for which more than one person/organization has responsibility, then some mechanism must exist for coordinating use of facilities. There may be technical or administrative limits as to the number or types of sites that can participate in any given event. This could be as simple as users coordinating times over the telephone or through email, but for some applications there may be a greater need for pre-scheduling and coordination among multiple administrators. A facilities coordination system shall enable access to facilities based on defined permissions, resolve conflicts based on pre-determined policies and be capable of linking into other systems listed in this standard to include the following: (i) browser-based access; (ii) system editable user access, including: (A) building level admin such that the facilities at a specific location can set policies for that site and permit use by others; (B) regional admin such that a group of facilities can set policies for all related sites and permit use by others; (C) sector admin such that groups of groups of facilities can set policies for all related sites and permit use by others; and (D) user account directory service with definable permissions for each account; (iii) facilities information to be posted, including: (A) identify technology available by site; (B) physical site location; and (C) local contact and facility arrangement information; and (iv) permit system administrator defined fields [no less than 64] that would provide for event information to be posted.

(d) People Coordination Component. If a specific location is to be used, this implies that operational support will be available to support the success of events. Since there will be a variety of site designs and equipment configurations, then there may be a variety of demands on staff time. Finally, there may be limitations as to the total number of participants allowed. A people coordination system must enable interaction of people based on policies set by system administrators and be capable of linking into other systems listed in this standard to include the following: (i) browser-based access; (ii) allow for multiple permission levels including: (A) view schedules, (B) request systems/facilities, and (C) approve systems/facilities use; (iii) provide information about instructor/facilitator and their availability; (iv) allow for predetermined maximum number of attendees; (v) track and display count of committed and remaining attendees; (vi) allow for predetermined maximum number of sites; and (vii) track and display count of committed and remaining sites.

(e) Event Clearinghouse Component. As system users see a need for pre-scheduled events coordinated among a large number of facilities and administrators, the concept of a virtual location for brokering of events becomes attractive. Such a clearinghouse should serve as a way that event coordinators might let others know the specifics of events they are planning [e.g., a certain class with a specific sort of content will be offered on a certain schedule for a certain period of time or a specific event will happen one time on a specific day at a specific time]. Such an event clearinghouse should also serve as a way for interested parties to find events that meet their specific needs [e.g., a school administrator has a certain number of students who need a specific class that is not offered locally]. Availability might also include information about participant or site number limitations [e.g., the total seats/sites in the class/event, the number

requested/registered so far and the number remaining of the total]. An event clearinghouse system must enable online interaction for publishing of event information and be capable of linking into other systems listed in this standard to include the following: (i) browser-based access; (ii) posting of one-time single events; (iii) posting of sequenced or cyclical events; (iv) posting of costs to participate in an event; (v) permit system administrator defined fields [no less than 256]; (vi) provide for automated multiple time zone accommodation; (vii) use an ODBC compliant relational database; (viii) user defined search/reporting capability; and (ix) provide for automated email notification of site requests/confirmations.

(3) Applicability. This section applies to the purchase and maintenance of synchronous distance learning and videoconferencing software systems used by educational institutions. The governing board or chief administrative officer of each organization is responsible for selecting and using a synchronous distance learning and videoconferencing software system that is in compliance with these standards. It is the intent of the Technical Panel and Commission that the guidelines and policies for usage of such scheduling and clearinghouse systems be determined by the administrative entities that oversee such distance learning and videoconferencing.

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