

Eric Neal: Hello and welcome to the State Support Team 11 podcast. I'm Eric Neal. Today we're joined by Adrian Stevens. How are you, Adrian?

Adrian Stevens: Hi, Eric. I'm wonderful. How are you today?

Eric Neal: I'm doing well. Can you tell us a little bit about the work you do here at the State Support Team?

Adrian Stevens: Absolutely. I am the early literacy specialist for region 11. I predominantly work with elementary teachers, kindergarten through third grade, and I help them improve their practices in the classroom, as well as their knowledge for literacy and language development.

Eric Neal: That sounds really interesting. Today I'm really excited to be talking with you about a great resource that you brought to my attention, INFOhio. What is INFOhio?

Adrian Stevens: In a nutshell, Eric, INFOhio is a free digital library. It's offered to all of Ohio's students that's preschool through grade 12, their parents and their teachers. It is a program of the management council, which optimizes the delivery of INFOhio through 18 information technology centers throughout the state.

Eric Neal: That's interesting. When I looked up the website myself, they had this cool timeline talking about from the beginning when they first thought about it, it was a way to just digitize the libraries, but it's really turned into a lot more than that.

Adrian Stevens: Oh, absolutely, yes. It has been in the works for over 20 years. Part of it is their initial vision was to provide each and every student from preschool through 12th grade equal access to high quality digital resources. Since we have increased with our technology and digital ability, they wanted to make sure that everybody could access it. Wherever the parents, teachers or students access INFOhio because they're geolocated then they have no passwords or usernames to remember. The website is actually [www.infohio](http://www.infohio.org), that's I-N-F-O-H-I-O, dot-org.

Eric Neal: Great. That's awesome. You were talking a little bit about who is this for. You mentioned students. Who else is this for?

Adrian Stevens: It's for teachers. One of the really neat things about INFOhio for teachers is it's a one-stop resource. It has three services that teachers can use. One is the digital content like we talked about, web tools and professional development. Teachers do not have to work more by using info resources. The purpose of the digital content and web tools is to help with the integration of technology and adoption of strategies that positively impact student learning. In fact, the resources are organized according to grade bands from preschool through 12th grade. The professional development that I mentioned before is a way for

teachers to learn and increase their knowledge at their own pace and in their own time.

Eric Neal: You were telling me before, we were talking just generally about this, that you've actually had some schools or teachers that had success with this. Can you give us an example of that?

Adrian Stevens: Absolutely. I worked with a first grade teacher at the end of last year in the spring, and she was looking for some ways to help her students increase their reading and to have fun at the same time. We use this program called BookFlix. With BookFlix, what the students do is they have a fiction book as well as a nonfiction book on a specific topic. Abraham Lincoln, for example. The students can read or have the book read to them about the biography of Abraham Lincoln and then they can read something fun where a cartoon dog or whatever has come into Abraham Lincoln's life, a day in the life of the dog and Abraham Lincoln, for example. They get some multiple exposures to both fiction and nonfiction.

Eric Neal: It sounds like that you've done a good job of making it accessible to all students. No matter what their reading level is if they have a disability or things like that, it's still accessible to students.

Adrian Stevens: Oh, absolutely. They have audiobook versions. They also have adjustments so that if a child has a vision impairment, then they can also enjoy the book.

Eric Neal: Oh, that's great. Tell me about the resources that are there for families.

Adrian Stevens: For families, the two main ones that I like to talk about are the landing page and the help resources. The landing page is a question and answer to provide parents with different ways to help their children. For example, one of the questions is how can I help my child learn how to use a computer to take a test? Of course, this day, with all of the online testing, that is a concern for parents.

Eric Neal: Absolutely.

Adrian Stevens: The answer is actually found on the tech skills for online testing. In this way, parents can work with their children to learn how to actually take the test. The other one for the help resources, one that came to mind was as students are transitioning to work world or to college at the end of 12th grade, and the one that I liked was the ready for college, ready for work, and ready for life area. Parents can go there. They can look to help their child with getting ready for the ACT, for example. There again, it's in very everyday language so parents don't have to know any technical vocabulary to be able to understand and use the resource.

Eric Neal: That can be so helpful because I know navigating that transition from high school out into the real world, that can be a scary thing for a lot of people.

Having something there that is easy to understand and easy to navigate would be a real helpful resource to families.

Adrian Stevens: Oh, absolutely. We talked about the older students as well. The INFOhio has a section for middle school and high school to do research projects, for example. If they are researching something on Pompei, they have very good quality resources that they can go to, to help them increase their knowledge so that they can create things like a podcast or a presentation, anything that will help them in the classroom.

Eric Neal: Right. Those are 21st century skills that will help you, even if you don't go on to college, in your daily life and your job. I think that's an awesome resource. What about students at the lower level? Are there things out there for kids at that pre-K, K, fourth grade levels?

Adrian Stevens: Absolutely. One that I mentioned already was BookFlix. The other one is Storia. That one I did a little bit of extra research on. It's actually a collection of over 350 eBooks for the support of students in fourth and fifth grade. Sometimes they need something a little extra in their science or in their social studies. With Storia, they have those opportunities to either read the books, research within the books or have the books read to them, and they can use them not only in the classroom but in their own time like on a Saturday or Sunday.

Eric Neal: That sounds great. How much does this amazing resource cost? This sounds like a really valuable thing, a really big deal. What is it going to cost for people to get into this?

Adrian Stevens: Eric, the best part about INFOhio is it is absolutely free to all parents, teachers and students in the state of Ohio.

Eric Neal: That is great news. Adrian, I want to thank you again for joining us today and sharing this great resource for students, teachers and families. How can people get ahold of you if they have any more questions?

Adrian Stevens: Eric, anybody can contact me at adrian.stevens@escoco.org. My name is spelled A-D-R-I-A-N S-T-E-V-E-N-S.

Eric Neal: Great. That is really helpful to people to be able to reach out if they do have further questions on this because I know a lot of people, they really are going to be interested in this topic. Please reach out if you do have further questions about this. I just want to thank you again. This wraps up this episode of the State Support Team 11 podcast. If you would like to know more about who we are and what we do, please check us out on our website, that's sst11.org. Contact us by phone at (614) 445-3750 or follow us on Twitter [@sstregion11](https://twitter.com/sstregion11). Until next time, I'm Eric Neal, and thanks for listening.