SIFA and PESC Develop Systemic Data Partnership for Education

Washington DC ~ The Boards of Directors of the Schools Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA®) and the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) are pleased to announce a new cooperative partnership. These two member-driven associations generate technical standards and specifications to enable interoperability among educational software applications—with SIFA’s core competency in pK-12 schools and PESC’s core functionality geared towards postsecondary institutions. Building on these competencies, this partnership will create clarity along the entire education data pipeline by addressing the data needs within and between pK12 and postsecondary education. This agreement clarifies the roles of each organization and sets a new paradigm for the entire education community.

Despite the historical data gap between pK-12 and higher education, what the sectors have in common is their focus on student level information. This partnership seeks to leverage that shared focus in the different sectors and respond to the growing desire to bridge the data gap; working toward comprehensive pK-16 or pK-20 student level data systems.

In the jointly developed white paper entitled “Leveraging the Power of Interoperability for a Comprehensive Educational System,” SIFA and PESC outline their core competencies, emerging partnership activities, and the educational marketplace impact. Collaboration between SIFA and PESC is the first step to enabling comprehensive interoperable data systems. The partnership will also seek to collaborate with state departments of education and the U.S. Department of Education, to ensure that all educational data interoperability needs are met.

“This partnership bridges pK12 and higher education and concentrates our attention on the holistic success of the student,” said Pete Nalli, Director of Architecture and Software Development at Datatel and Chair of the PESC Board of Directors. “When you include additional stakeholders such as the U.S. Department of Education which has continuously supported both organizations, we’ve created a foundation on which we can now support that goal,” Mr. Nalli continued.

Each Association is celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2007, and each organization has been built through open processes and a collaborative spirit. This partnership between SIFA and PESC will extend these open processes and expand the spirit of collaboration to generate bi-directional, comprehensive record exchanges between pK-12 and postsecondary institutions. Leveraging the prior and future work of each organization will only make the implementation of specifications and standards stronger. SIFA and PESC recognize that each organization’s intended audience is different and therefore requires unique specifications and standards;
however, leveraging these established tools will further enable the vision and mission of each organization.

“Together SIFA and PESC will be able to better address the needs of students as they move within pK12 systems and transition to higher educational opportunities. This is an ideal partnership for education as a whole” says Doug Hamlin, Co-Chair of the SIFA Board of Directors.

About SIFA
SIFA is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of over 400 schools, districts, states, the U.S. Department of Education, international government agencies, software vendors and consultants who collectively define the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. The SIF Specification enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably, and securely regardless of the platform hosting those applications. SIFA has united these education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach. For more information, visit [http://www.sifinfo.org](http://www.sifinfo.org).

About PESC
PESC is a non-profit, community-based, umbrella association of colleges and universities; professional and commercial organizations; data, software and service providers; and state and federal government agencies. PESC’s mission is to lead the establishment and adoption of data exchange standards in education. The goals of the mission are to enable the improvement of institutional performance and foster collaboration across educational communities in order to lower costs, improve service, and attain system interoperability. For more information, visit [www.pesc.org](http://www.pesc.org).