Join fellow colleagues in the higher education community as we celebrate PESC’s 10th Year Anniversary! While the meeting in which PESC was actually launched took place on August 18, 1997 at the National Center for Higher Education, we’ll hold the festivities during the Fall 2007 Summit being held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Montreal Canada, see attached flyer page 7. In addition to meetings usually scheduled during PESC Summits, including Workgroups and Boards of the Standards Forum for Education, the PESC Board of Directors, PESC Fall Membership, & AACRAO’s SPEEDE Committee, the Electronic Authentication /Electronic Authorization Task Force (EA2) will also convene. Plus we’re hosting a special 10th Anniversary Reception! Final plans along with the agenda of workgroup meetings will be announced shortly. In the meantime, please make travel plans and reserve your hotel room. The Summit begins Monday morning October 15 at 8:30am with continental breakfast and concludes by Tuesday afternoon October 16 at 1pm. The dress code is business casual.

The Ritz Carlton Montreal is located at 1228 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal (Quebec) H3G1H6. Reservations may be made by calling 800-363-0366 or 1-514-842-4212, or emailing reservations@ritzmontreal.com, The cost per room is $179 CAD/night

Get Your Passport Now!

Under the new requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), beginning January 23, 2007, ALL persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document, or an Alien Registration Card, Form I-551, if applicable.

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of over 8,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver’s license.

To renew a passport, you can renew by mail if: Your most recent passport is available to submit and it is not damaged; you received the passport within the past 15 years; you were over age 16 when it was issued; you still have the same name, or can legally document your name change.

For more information, visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html.
Out for PESC Member Vote -
Transcript Acknowledgement and Batch Specifications

The Standards Forum for Education is pleased to present the Transcript Acknowledgement and Batch Specifications to the Members of PESC for a vote as a PESC approved standard.

The six documents that together constitute the Transcript Acknowledgement and Batch Specifications are: CoreMain v 1.3.0, Academic Record v 1.2.0, Academic Record Batch v 1.0.0, Transcript Acknowledgement v 1.0.0, XML Transcript Acknowledgement Implementation Guide 4-22-07, and XML Batch Implementation Guide 2-19-07; and all six are available on the PESC website at www.PESC.org, under Standards and Info, Transcript Acknowledgement and Batch (http://www.pesc.org/workgroups/transcript-batch/).

Members are asked to review these documents then votes to either APPROVE or NOT APPROVE the specifications. Ballots, are available at http://www.pesc.org/workgroups/transcriptbatch/ as well.

In order to be approved as a PESC standard, 80% of votes cast by Members must be favorable. All ballots must be received by PESC by 5pm PDT Monday June 4, 2007.

Email: Sessa@PESC.org
Fax: 202-872-8857
Mail: Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council
One Dupont Circle NW
Suite 520
Washington DC  20036

Public Comment Period Now Open -
Version 2.0 of Data Transport Standard Specification Proposed

The Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is pleased to announce that the Data Transport Standard (DTS) Technical Workgroup of the Standards Forum for Education has proposed version 2.0 as an approved and recognized education community standard.

“We are very pleased to offer this Web Service to the education community,” states Nathan Chitty, Software Architect at Nelnet and co-chair of the DTS Technical Workgroup. “With real-time data transfer capabilities, use of a standard request/response model, and foundation as platform-neutral, DTS version 2.0 is designed for the future so that any type of business can use it as a transport mechanism.” Mr. Chitty continues.

“DTS version 2.0 has enhanced its security to incorporate portions of the OASIS Web Services Security Specification (WS-Security),” adds Mark Malinoski, Web Architecture and Technology Manager of Web Products at AES and co-chair of the DTS Technical Workgroup. “In addition, the “Header” elements have been modified to conform with other Web Services standard specifications. These changes will greatly increase both the security and the ease of implementation of DTS.”

"Datatel is committed to PESC Standards," Pete Nalli, Director of Software Architecture for Datatel and Chair of the PESC Board of Directors, reaffirms. “We feel having the Data Transport Standard is essential to the adoption and implementation of data exchange standards and are excited to see the completion of this standard.”

With the development work completed and submitted on April 13, 2007, the DTS Specification is now immediately ready for public comment period. The complete submission can be accessed at http://www.pesc.org/workgroups/datatransport/. The public comment period begins Monday, May 21, 2007 and will be thirty (30) calendar days. Public comment period expires at the close of business on Wednesday, June 20, 2007. All comments, from the PESC Membership and the public, shall be made in the form of an e-mail to the PESC Executive Director at:

See Data Transport, Page 3
Development Work Continues for Online Loan Counseling Workgroup

The PESC Online Loan Counseling workgroup will next meet via conference call on Wednesday, June 6 at 2 p.m. Eastern. We’ll use the Mapping Your Future conference line: (888) 355-1195, Access code 185667#

Below is a tentative agenda item for discussion during the call:

- Revisions (Additions) to the Schema (There are new counseling types already plus a request to add a new data element.)

- Representation on the Change Control Board

- Development of a Detailed Implementation Guide. The PESC membership was interested in a more detailed guide. We’d like to develop one guide—hopefully all of the loan counseling providers can agree on the majority of the information. We’ll determine required elements for each counseling type, for example.

Data Transport, from Page 2

Sessa@PESC.org. The comment e-mail should clearly identify the:

1) Responder name and appropriate contact information;
2) Source of the comments, i.e., whether the comments are individual or represent those of a group the responder represents;
3) Nature of the responder's interest in the standard (what is the issue and why is it important?);
4) Element(s) of the proposed standard with which issue is taken;
5) Changes suggested to resolve the issue(s).

The 2.0 Specification and Change Document outlining the improvements in version 2.0 from version 1.1 are posted on the PESC website at http://www.pesc.org/workgroups/datatransport/.

The Process

Within 30 calendar days after the close of the public comment period, the Change Control Board (CCB) of the Standards Forum for Education will address and consider all public comments and make, in consultation with the DTS Technical Workgroup any necessary revisions. All public comments will be posted to the PESC website during the review process. The CCB's consideration/revision period expires on Friday, July 20, 2007 unless extenuating circumstances exist which require further deliberation.

Once any changes resulting from the public comment period have been incorporated, the CCB will recommend to the Standards Forum's Steering Committee and the PESC Board of Directors that the Specification be submitted to a vote by the PESC Members. The Board will have seven (7) calendar days to approve the submission or refer it back to the CCB with specific instructions for further work. The PESC office will issue electronic ballots to the official contacts of voting Member organizations.

Completed ballots, including the reason(s) for any rejection, shall be returned to the PESC office via e-mail attachment, fax, overnight delivery, or U.S. Postal Service within ten (10) business days. PESC staff is responsible for the tabulation of the ballots; acceptance of the Specification as a standard requires an affirmative vote of at least 80% of all votes cast. Once the Members accept the Specification, the Board of Directors will within seven (7) calendar days ratify the vote, publish/post all necessary documents and communications, and implement version control on all documents. Approved standards are freely accessible on the PESC website (www.PESC.org).
The Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is pleased to announce that the Transcript Workgroup of the Standards Forum for Education has proposed Request and Response specifications as approved and recognized education community standards.

“Although the vast majority of student/alumni transcript requests are currently fulfilled manually via security paper and the U.S. postal service, an increasing number of institutions have chosen to provide web-based, self-service ordering either internally or through outsourced transcript ordering and tracking services,” states Doug Falk, CIO of the National Student Clearinghouse and Chair of the development workgroup.

“The manual process suffers from the usual inefficiencies associated with any manual process: data entry errors, the need to re-key data, limited visibility of order status, consumption of valuable staff resources and cost associated with security paper and mailing. The proposed schemas support the automated request and response process for both institution and student initiated requests,” Mr. Falk continues.

With the development work completed and submitted on May 7, 2007, the Request and Response Specifications are now immediately ready for public comment period. The complete submission can be accessed at http://www.pesc.org/workgroups/rrxmltranscript/. The public comment period begins Tuesday, May 22, 2007 and will be thirty (30) calendar days. Public comment period expires at the close of business on Thursday, June 21, 2007. All comments, from the PESC Membership and the public, shall be made in the form of an e-mail to the PESC Executive Director at: Sessa@PESC.org. The comment e-mail should clearly identify the:

1) Responder name and appropriate contact information;
2) Source of the comments, i.e., whether the comments are individual or represent those of a group the responder represents;
3) Nature of the responder’s interest in the standard (what is the issue and why is it important?);
4) Element(s) of the proposed standard with which issue is taken;
5) Changes suggested to resolve the issue(s).

All documentation (including schemas, instance documents, and implementations guides) are posted on the PESC website at http://www.pesc.org/workgroups/rrxmltranscript/.

The Process
Within 30 calendar days after the close of the public comment period, the Change Control Board (CCB) of the Standards Forum for Education will address and consider all public comments and make, in consultation with the Transcript Workgroup any necessary revisions. All public comments will be posted to the PESC website during the review process. The CCB’s consideration/revision period expires on Monday, July 23, 2007 unless extenuating circumstances exist which require further deliberation.

Once any changes resulting from the public comment period have been incorporated, the CCB will recommend to the Standards Forum’s Steering Committee and the PESC Board of Directors that the Specification be submitted to a vote by the PESC Members. The Board will have seven (7) calendar days to approve the submission or refer it back to the CCB with specific instructions for further work. The PESC office will issue electronic ballots to the official contacts of voting Member organizations.

Completed ballots, including the reason(s) for any rejection, shall be returned to the PESC office via e-mail attachment, fax, overnight delivery, or U.S. Postal Service within ten (10) business days. PESC staff is responsible for the tabulation of the ballots; acceptance of the Specification as a standard requires an affirmative vote of at least 80% of all votes cast. Once the Members accept the Specification, the Board of Directors will within seven (7) calendar days ratify the vote, publish/post all necessary documents and communications, and implement version control on all documents. Approved standards are freely accessible on the PESC website (www.PESC.org).
How Interoperable Data Help America's Students Succeed

The Data Quality Campaign recently announced its Quarterly Issue Meeting-The Right Data to the Right People at the Right Time: How Interoperable Data Help America’s Students Succeed.

The meeting will report on the current status of district, state education agency, and higher education efforts to seamlessly share data with each other to create an environment for improved P-20 alignment and policy decisions. Attendees will hear from education leaders about the benefits, processes, and challenges of creating and maintaining data systems capable of exchanging information across district and even state lines.

The session will be moderated by Ross Santy, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Data and Information, United States Department of Education, and featured presenters include:
- Bethann Canada, Virginia Department of Education
- Tracy Oliver, Naperville Community Unit School District 203, Illinois
- Ken Sauer, Indiana Commission for Higher Education

This meeting will be held in Washington, DC at the U.S. Department of Education on June 13 from 9-11 am (EDT), and advance registration is required by June 8. Please see the flyer on page 8 for more information about this exciting meeting.

Online registration can be found at www.DataQualityCampaign.org. For those unable to attend the meeting, a live broadcast of the session will be available online, and a video of this session and the policy brief will be available at the campaign’s Web site after June 29.

If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Laird 512-232-0817, elaird@just4kids.org

Technology Tidbits  and Standards Snippets

- The Federal Student Aid 2007 August Software Developers Conference will be held on August 16, 2007, at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. For further information regarding the hotel and hotel room reservations visit http://fsaconferences.ed.gov/conferences/developers.html.

- OASIS members have approved Web Services Transaction (WS-Transaction) version 1.1 as an OASIS Standard. The WS-Transaction OASIS Standard comprises three specifications: WS-Coordination; WS-AtomicTransaction; and WS-BusinessActivity. WS-Coordination enables an application service to create the context necessary for propagating an activity to other services. WS-AtomicTransaction defines agreement protocols for short-lived activities having the all-or-nothing property, and WS-BusinessActivity defines protocols for long-running transactions that require compensation-based agreement. Working together, these specifications enable existing transaction processing, workflow, and other systems to hide their proprietary protocols and operate in a heterogeneous environment.

- The OASIS ebXML Technical Committees will host a week of free webinars devoted to the ebXML OASIS Standards (ISO 15000). A different standard will be featured each day, Monday through Thursday, 4-7 June, at 3:00 PM GMT. For more information, www.oasis-open.org/events/webinars/ebxml-2007.php

- The National Science Foundation
announced that its test bed for Internet redesign would be run by BBN Technologies Corporation, the firm that led the 1969 effort to connect computers at four universities, a linkage that became ARPAnet, the original backbone of today's Internet. BBN will build NSF’s Global Environment for Network Innovation, or GENI, up and running. GENI's focus is to allow researchers "to experiment with radical network designs in a way that is far more realistic than they can today. Researchers will be able to build their own new versions of the 'net.'"

- OASIS, has expanded its PKI work to encompass the full identity and trusted infrastructure marketplace. The new OASIS IDtrust members will focus on validating and building trust paths. They plan to catalog implementation projects, publish adoption reports, and conduct studies on costs, benefits and risk management. The Member Section will also oversee the work of two OASIS Committees: Enterprise Key Management Infrastructure (EKMI), which defines symmetric key management protocols; and PKI Adoption, which advances the use of digital certificates as a foundation for managing access to network resources and conducting electronic transactions.

- Attached to this edition of The Standard, please find the Data Quality Campaign newsletter on page 10 and a press release regarding the School's Interoperability Framework Association's 10th Anniversary on page 14.

**PESC IS MOVING!**

Effective July 2, 2007, PESC will be located at 1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036. While our email addresses will remain the same, all correspondence beginning on July 2, 2007 should be addressed as follows:

Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC)
1250 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036

We are looking to keep our phone numbers the same, but will communicate that once finalized. PESC thanks AACRAO for 10 years of providing office and administrative support.
International Traveling Information — Under the new requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), beginning January 23, 2007, ALL persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document, or an Alien Registration Card, Form I-551, if applicable.

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of over 8,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver’s license. To renew a passport, you can renew by mail if: Your most recent passport is available to submit and it is not damaged; you received the passport within the past 15 years; you were over age 16 when it was issued; you still have the same name, or can legally document your name change. For more information, visit [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html).
The Right Data to the Right People at the Right Time:
How Interoperable Data Help America's Students Succeed

Wednesday, June 13, 9-11 am (EDT)

**Join us in person or via an interactive webcast**

As part of the Data Quality Campaign’s goal to provide a national forum for conversations about
the power of longitudinal data, this Quarterly Issue Meeting will report on the current status of
district, state education agency, and higher education efforts to seamlessly share data with each
other to create an environment for improved P-20 alignment and policy decisions.

Demands to provide information about an increasingly mobile student population require P-12 and postsecondary
institutions to collaborate around not only their data systems but also coordinate their data standards, so the
meaning of course codes, ethnicities, grades, etc. easily translate across institutions and systems. Please join us to
hear from education leaders about the benefits, processes, and challenges of creating and maintaining data systems
capable of exchanging information across district and even state lines.

Refreshments will be served at the beginning of the meeting to enable informal networking, and the panel
presentation will be followed by a discussion between the presenters and the audience. A policy brief on this issue
will also be released at the meeting.

Featured presenters will include:

- **Bethann Canada**, Virginia Department of Education
- **Tracy Oliver**, Naperville Community Unit School District 203, Illinois
- **Ken Sauer**, Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Time:  Wednesday, June 13, 9-11 am (EDT)

Location:  United States Department of Education
FB6 Departmental Auditorium
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

In order to attend in person, please complete the online registration form under Upcoming Events on the homepage of
the campaign’s Web site, www.DataQualityCampaign.org, by June 8, 2007. **Advance registration is required** and
seating is limited, so please sign up early.

For those unable to attend the meeting, a live broadcast of this session will be available online and a video of
this session and the policy brief will be available at the campaign’s Web site after June 29, 2007. To view the live
webcast, advance registration is not required, and specific participation instructions will be emailed soon.

We look forward to your participation in this dialogue.

*Upcoming DQC Quarterly Issue Meeting: Putting the P in P-20 Data Systems: Linking With Early Childhood
and Health and Human Services, September 2007, Washington, DC*
About the Data Quality Campaign

The Data Quality Campaign is a national, collaborative three-year effort to encourage and support state policymakers to

- improve the collection, availability and use of high-quality education data, and
- implement state longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement.

The campaign provides tools and resources that states can use as they develop quality longitudinal data systems and also will serve as a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among like-minded organizations.

MANAGING PARTNERS:

Achieve, Inc.
Alliance for Excellent Education
Council of Chief State School Officers
Education Commission of the States
The Education Trust
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of System Heads
National Center for Educational Accountability*
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
National Governors Association Center for Best Practices
Schools Interoperability Framework Association
Standard & Poor’s School Evaluation Services
State Educational Technology Directors Association
State Higher Education Executive Officers

The campaign is managed by the National Center for Educational Accountability* and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Quarterly Issue Meetings are made possible through the Council of Chief State School Officers’ National Education Data Partnership, generously funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Broad Foundation.

For more information, visit the campaign Web site at www.DataQualityCampaign.org

DQC Interoperability Subcommittee

The Data Quality Campaign would like to thank the following organizations for their collaboration on shaping the policy brief and session: Schools Interoperability Framework Association, Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Docufide, Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Midwestern Higher Education Compact, Northwestern Educational Service District 189, Stupski Foundation, TetraData Corporation, and Virginia Department of Education.
A major but often overlooked positive outcome of No Child Left Behind has been the acceleration of the development and use of longitudinal student data systems by states and local school districts. Where they are in place, these systems are creating a rich picture of student progress and school, district, and program performance. Better information in education is valuable to the extent that it is used, directly or indirectly, to improve students’ education. To add clarity to discussions of data use, we have developed a taxonomy of six key ways that longitudinal data can be used by policymakers and practitioners to improve schools and assist individual students.

**Progress Monitoring.** Longitudinal data can be used to keep track from an early age of students’ progress towards graduating from high school ready for college and skilled careers. The same applies when monitoring the progress of a school or school district instead of an individual student. Longitudinal data at the student level are needed to see if the school or district is improving its ability to produce the academic growth needed to get students onto the “college and skilled career readiness ramp” in elementary school and keep them on the path to success in middle and high school.

**Diagnosis and Prescription.** Monitoring progress is not enough – if the data show that the student needs help, a diagnosis of the cause of the student’s condition is needed and appropriate assistance reflecting that diagnosis needs to be provided. Longitudinal information on individual students’ academic histories can be valuable in making these diagnoses. For example, a student may be having difficulty in two-digit multiplication because he or she did not master the concept of place value in the previous year.

**Internal Benchmarking.** Longitudinal data can be used to identify the areas of greatest success within one’s own school or school system in search of better practices. For example, “lesson study,” in which teachers both model and practice successful teaching strategies, requires the identification of which lessons were most effective at helping students learn. Yet the effectiveness of the lesson may depend on the prior knowledge of the student: some lessons may be more effective at helping students who have had trouble in the past, whereas other lessons may be more effective with previously well prepared students.

**External Benchmarking.** The search for better practices should extend outside of one’s own school or district to embrace the study of success wherever it can be found. Once longitudinal data is used to identify success stories, further investigation can be conducted to identify successful strategies and practices.

**Predictive Analysis.** Longitudinal data can be used to examine the historical relationship between earlier and later outcomes for groups of students followed over time – for example, the odds that a student will be successful in high school based on the content the student mastered in elementary and middle school. This makes it possible to assess when and where students are “on track” to later success, and to set goals and targets for student achievement and academic growth. As we monitor students’ progress, predictive analysis tells us what achievement levels and rates of progress we should be looking for.

**Evaluation.** This use encompasses the evaluation of programs by comparing results for students receiving particular services compared to those who don’t, the evaluation of policies by the study of the relationship between their implementation over time and longitudinal indicators of student success, and evaluation of schools and teachers using “value-added” analysis that controls for prior student achievement and growth.

For more information, go to http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Publications-Six_Key_Uses_of_Longitudinal_Data_021307.pdf
Growth models attempt to determine whether students are growing as fast as they should to reach a desired goal. These models are an excellent example of the power of longitudinal data. However, as of the 2006 DQC annual survey, only 28 states have the longitudinal data elements required to calculate academic growth, based on comparing individual student performance across at least two years.

For the purposes of meeting NCLB requirements, three general types of models have been developed to identify whether sufficient numbers of students are achieving adequate growth:

**Trajectory models:** These models identify the gap between each below proficient student’s score and proficiency, and establish standards for how much of the gap must be closed each year in order for the student to reach proficiency by the indicated deadline. For example, if the student has three years to close the gap to proficiency, he or she may be expected to close a third of the gap in the first year, half of the remaining gap in the second year, and the remaining gap in the third year. Arkansas, Florida, and North Carolina are examples of states with trajectory models that have been approved by the U.S. Department of Education for use in NCLB AYP calculations.

**Projection models:** These models examine whether the combination of a student’s current and prior test scores predict that the student will be proficient at a later date – based on past history of the relationship between prior and subsequent test scores. For example, do a student’s third and fourth grade scores predict that the student will be proficient in sixth grade? Tennessee’s growth model is an example of an NCLB-approved projection model.

**Value table models:** Students are divided into achievement level bands (e.g., far below basic, below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced) and points are assigned to students based on their year-to-year movement between bands. Students staying in the bands at or above proficiency receive “full credit” (e.g., 100 points if the goal is an average point score of 100 points per student). Non-proficient students moving up towards proficiency – say, by moving from below basic to basic – receive partial credit. A value table describes the number of points schools receive for each student based on that student’s movement, or lack of movement, across achievement bands. The model requires the school to receive closer and closer to the full-credit average number of points per student as the NCLB deadline of 2014 approaches. Delaware’s value table model has been approved for use under NCLB.

These three types of growth models may be contrasted with value-added models, which are also based on student growth but which ask different questions. The growth models ask the question, “Are the students growing fast enough?” whereas value-added models ask, “Is the student growing faster than would be predicted by his or her prior test scores?” and “Which schools, teachers, or programs show the greatest evidence of effectiveness?” Students could be growing faster than predicted, yet still not rapidly enough to reach the desired goal.

Designing a growth model for NCLB requires states to address many specific issues. One of the most important is predictive validity: How many of the students judged to be “on track” to proficiency actually end up proficient? Does the model systematically over- or under-predict the number of eventually proficient students?

The adoption of growth models has not produced substantial increases in the percentage of schools meeting AYP requirements. However, the value of these models is not to remove schools from “the list,” but rather to focus educators on whether individual students are growing as they should.

Dr. Dougherty was a recent participant in a U.S. Department of Education Growth Model Peer Review.
“Growth models” can be defined as any analysis or measurement of the progress of individual students over time. A typical growth model might attempt to answer the following question: Is the student growing fast enough to be “on track” to reach the desired goal by the chosen deadline? For example, is a sixth grade student progressing well enough to be ready to handle rigorous high school coursework by the time he or she leaves eighth grade?

Measuring academic growth requires not only an assessment system that measures student performance levels in a given subject area in successive grades, but also a data system with a unique student identifier, the ability to match student test records over time, and the ability to keep track of untested students to avoid bias (three of the DQC’s Ten Essential Elements). Growth can be measured using tests administered in successive grades, as long as the test scores are in some sense comparable across years and grade levels – so that a score of 280 in third grade mathematics is comparable to a score of 280 in fourth grade math.

One approach to establishing a comparable scale across grades is “vertical equating,” which involves across-grade testing of the same general content. The assumption underlying vertical equating is that even though math tests in Grades 3 and 4 cover different content, they are covering the same general skill, so the test scores can be compared. Thus third and fourth grade scores that represent comparable levels of accomplishment can be identified.

A second approach that has also received wide acceptance is “vertical moderation.” This involves comparisons of the percentages of students who can reach a given standard or proficiency level in different grades. Thus, if in some reference year, 60% of students were able to reach the third grade proficiency standard, and close to 60% of students were able to reach the fourth grade proficiency standard, then the two standards would be treated as comparable. Likewise any pair of third and fourth grade test scores attained by comparable percentages of students in the reference year could be treated as comparable. Other approaches can be used – for example, expert opinion can be used to identify performance levels of “comparable” difficulty – but all of these approaches must ultimately be grounded in data on the performance of actual groups of students.

No comparison of difficulty levels across grades is completely precise. For example, when a sample of test items is used to equate scores across grades, imprecision is created by the choice of those items and by the sample of students used in the analysis. Different items and different students would have produced different results. Second, curricular content changes across the grades. This issue is more important when the grades being compared are widely separated – for example, grades 3 and 11 mathematics as compared with grades 3 and 4 – just as new technology makes a comparison of standards of living in 1950 and 2007 less precise than between 2006 and 2007. Third, scales are based on relative difficulty levels of the test items, and these can change if we get relatively better at teaching one topic than another (for example, we improve faster at teaching multiplication than at teaching fractions).

For these reasons, growth models that emphasize large changes – for example, movement across relatively wide achievement bands over time – are likely to be preferable to those that overemphasize small differences in scores.

The Data Quality Campaign is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the collection, availability, and use of high-quality education data, and to implement state longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement. The campaign aims to provide tools and resources that will assist state development of quality longitudinal data systems, while also providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focusing on improving data quality, access and use. The DQC is supported by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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We’re on the Web!
See us at:
www.DataQualityCampaign.org

Send questions to:
info@DataQualityCampaign.org

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**Campaign Partner Activities Related to Data**

**CONFERENCES:**

June 13, 9-11am
DQC Quarterly Meeting
Data Interoperability
US Department of Education
Washington, DC

June 19-20
SHEEO Annual Meeting
Linking K-12 and Postsecondary Data Systems
Boulder, CO

June 22-27
SETDA Emerging Technologies Forum,
Atlanta, GA

July 10-13
Education Commission of the States,
National Forum on Educational Policy
Philadelphia, PA

July 17-20
SHEEO Annual Meeting
Chicago, IL

July 25-27
NCES Summer Data Conference,
Washington, DC

July 29-31
NASH P-16 Meeting
Minneapolis, MN

**PUBLICATIONS:**

Center for Teaching Quality, Performance Pay for Teachers: Designing a System that Students Deserve,
http://www.teacherleaders.org/teachersolutions/

Achieve, Inc., Closing the Expectations Gap 2007,
http://www.achieve.org/node/844

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**DQC wins PESC 2007 Best Practices Award**

by Michael Sessa, Executive Director, PESC

For its 8th Annual Best Practices competition, the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is very pleased to award the Data Quality Campaign with its top honor. The award was put into place by PESC in 1999, shortly after PESC was founded. The primary purpose of the award is to recognize efforts within the education community that promote innovation and ingenuity in the application of standards for business needs.

The Data Quality Campaign includes a number of essential elements and core characteristics - primarily collaboration, interoperability, unique student identifiers, and improved data matching which increases data quality - which the PESC Board of Directors felt best exemplified the purpose and spirit of our Best Practices.

By definition data exchange must include a sender and a receiver - called trading partners. As most organizations have numerous trading partners, collaboration becomes a required practice. In collaborating trading partners quickly realize the need to communicate more efficiently and become more interoperable. Together, collaboration and interoperability create a solid foundation and allow us all to focus on the needs of students - the common purpose every organization within the education eco-system supports.

In a very short period of time, the Data Quality Campaign with its focus to improve student achievement has developed a comprehensive plan that has resonated with and mobilized an entire industry. PESC supports this effort and as the missions of the Data Quality Campaign and PESC are mutually beneficial and work in synchronization, PESC considers the Data Quality Campaign a true collaborator and partner in the mission of education.

To learn more about PESC Best Practices and to see past winners, please visit: http://www.pesc.org/events/best-practices.asp
The Schools Interoperability Framework Association Celebrates its Tenth Anniversary

For Immediate Release

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May 8, 2007 – The Schools Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA®) celebrated its Tenth Anniversary in great style at its conference in St. Louis, Missouri. The Association, which brings together schools, states, federal government agencies, international organizations and software developers to improve the quality of school software applications, was started in 1997 at a technical summit hosted by Microsoft.

“Given the desires of educators around the globe to leverage every tool that aids them in their instruction, the need for effective management and standards-driven interoperability of school data has never been more real,” states Mitch Benson, Microsoft’s Worldwide Director of Education Solutions. “From the public’s rightful demands for transparency, visibility, and measurement of outcomes, to the near universal demand for massive individualization and personalization of instruction, SIFA and the SIF Implementation Specification are helping to drive interoperability among hundreds of applications that assist schools, districts, states, and governments enable their people to more effectively teach, learn, manage, and be involved in the lives of students every day.”

“The organization has shown astounding growth by listening to education leader data needs,” said Larry Fruth, Ph.D., the SIFA Executive Director. “In ten short years, SIFA has grown from seven members to more than 480. Vendors and end users come together via SIFA to develop an openly available ‘blueprint’ for school data interoperability; clearly it’s an idea whose time has come. The SIF Specification has rapidly become THE standard for data interoperability in the pK-12 marketplace.”

The three-day conference drew more than 135 members to St. Louis. New state, district and international end users met to learn more about SIFA while more experienced leaders outlined their current and future needs in data, teaching and learning, and school management software. Developers at the meeting moved forward with changes for the next version of the SIF specification based on these identified needs.

Ron Kleinman, Chief Technical Evangelist for Sun Microsystems, gave the keynote address, which looked back on SIFA’s past and explored its future directions. Patrick Plant, Director of Technology for the Anoka-Hennepin School District and a longtime SIFA member, received the SIF Fellow Award from the Association. The award was given for “his outstanding contributions to the Association and unwavering commitments to the development, promotion and use of standards.” The evening of May 8th, conference attendees were hosted to a Tenth Anniversary celebration party by Computer Power Solutions of Illinois (CPSI), a longtime SIFA member.
SIFA members were also celebrating the release of Version 2 of the SIF Implementation Specification and the SIF Reporting Web Services Specification – first released in October, 2006. Designed to offer increased out-of-the-box interoperability, the SIF v2 implementation specification offers 118 SIF data objects defining the exchange and interoperability between educational software applications and introducing the capability of Student Record Exchange. At the St. Louis meeting, the Association announced the pending finalization of the SIF 2 Certification Program, which will allow software companies to certify that their products meet the requirements of the SIF v2 Implementation Specification.

As SIFA grows, it continues to expand its reach in many different directions. Recently SIFA has initiated many international partnerships, including a SIFA United Kingdom presence with more than 20 vendors and end user members in various UK focused projects. Australia is rapidly following suit with its own SIF-based activities. Plans for SIF implementations are also underway in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Domestically, SIFA has continued to improve its services to members and the greater educational community through SIFA University. This initiative provides online classes about SIFA; ultimately it will include the current general SIFA 101 classes, advanced implementation and technical courses, as well as data quality courses for states and districts that are implementing SIF. Two free overview modules are available to anyone who wishes to understand SIFA and SIF better at http://www.sifinfo.org/sifau.asp.

Other initiatives include an expanded focus on the teaching and learning aspects of the SIF Implementation Specification as well as a new membership offering that allows state departments of education to purchase SIFA memberships for all of their districts or regional service centers. So far Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wyoming and Alaska have made these bulk membership purchases. Showing their educational leadership, some vendor members are also purchasing these bulk memberships for their clients.

About the Schools Interoperability Framework Association

SIFA is a unique non-profit collaboration of over 480 schools, districts, states, the U.S. Department of Education, international government entities, software vendors and consultants collectively defining the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. SIFA enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably and securely regardless of the platform hosting the applications. It 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 further information, visit http://www.sifinfo.org.