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The Board of Directors of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is pleased to announce the launch of an inter-organizational User Group that will focus on utilization and development of standardized, electronic transcripts. While many colleges, universities, and software and systems providers are using the EDI versions, many are also either currently using the XML versions or plan on implementing them in the very near future. Use of both the high school and college transcript standards can be tracked throughout the United States and into Canada.

"Having worked on the PESC XML high school transcript standard work-group since its inception in 2004, we at Docufide are pleased to see the growing use of this standard by many of our clients and the level of interest in its potential throughout the educational community," said John Reese, CEO, Docufide. "Delivering transcripts for high schools nationwide, we see not only how it addresses current needs for transcript data exchange, but also, by sharing "lessons learned" with others in the PESC Transcript User Group, how we can help it evolve and increase its adoption."

"We [at the National Transcript Center] applaud the development of the PESC XML high school transcript standard and are now using it with our clients. While extremely flexible and comprehensive, we have noted a few areas where the PK-12 community has some additional data needs," states Barbara S. Clements, Ph.D., Chief Standards Officer for the National Transcript Center and PESC Board member. "This is common when a new standard gets used in a variety of circumstances. We are looking forward to working with the PESC Transcript User Group to further enhance the high school transcript standard," Ms. Clements continues.

The launch of the transcript user group will take place during PESC's Fall 2008 Member Summit being held Monday October 6 - 7, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City. The tentative schedule for the overall Summit is posted on the PESC website at www.PESC.org. In addition to the launch of the transcript user group, the Summit includes meetings of: the Steering Committee of the Standards Forum for Education, the Change Control
Board (CCB), the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), the EA2 Task Force, the Seal of Approval Group, and the PESC Board of Directors. Additionally, PESC is also launching a PDF Transcript Workgroup. More information about this workgroup will be announced shortly.

For the transcript user group, attendees are encouraged to submit issues, problems, and requested enhancements to the PESC office prior to the Summit. All issues will be compiled and then presented to the User Group for review. All issues from the high school, college, XML and EDI transcripts are welcome for review and discussion. Going forward, most work will be conducted via teleconference call meetings facilitated by a chair who will be appointed by the User Group itself.

User Groups will serve as the development vehicles for future releases once a standard (v 1.0) has been established. PESC is pleased to offer participation in User Groups free of charge for members of PESC. Non-members interested in participating should contact PESC Executive Director Michael Sessa at 202.261.6516 or at michael.sessa@pesc.org.

Detailed information about the Fall Summit, including registration and hotel information is available in the article below or by visiting the PESC website, www.pesc.org.

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**FALL SUMMIT**

Plans for our Fall 2008 Member Summit are well underway. We’ll be meeting at the Hyatt Regency in Crystal City October 6 - 7, 2008. The tentative schedule is attached and includes meetings of: the Steering Committee of the Standards Forum for Education, the Change Control Board (CCB), the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), the EA2 Task Force, the Seal of Approval Group, and the PESC Board of Directors. Additionally, PESC is launching a USER GROUP for Transcript Processing and a PDF Transcript Workgroup. For the Transcript User Group, members are encouraged to submit issues, problems, and requested enhancements to the PESC office prior to the Summit. All issues will be compiled and then presented to the User Group for review. All issues from the high school, college, XML and EDI transcripts are welcome.

User Groups will serve as the development vehicles for future releases once a standards (v 1.0) has been established. PESC is pleased to offer participation in User Groups free of charge for its members. Non-members interested in participating should contact PESC Executive Director Michael Sessa at 202.261.6516 or at michael.sessa@pesc.org.

Registration for the Fall 2008 Member Summit (which includes the transcript user group) is available by completing the the registration form on page 6, and submitting it along with a check for $150 (for Members).

**PESC Member Summit, October 6 - 7, 2008**

Hyatt Regency Crystal City  
Group Name: Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council - PESC  
Group Rate: $189 single/double  
Hotel Cut-Off: September 13, 2008  
Phone: 703 418 1234  
Address: Hyatt Regency Crystal City at Reagan National Airport  
2799 Jefferson Davis Highway,  
Arlington, Virginia, USA 22202
COD Out for PESC Member Vote

The XML Common Origination & Disbursement (COD) candidate was presented by the Standards Forum for Education to the Members of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) for a vote as an official PESC Member-Approved National Education Community Standard on July 30, 2008. Ballots were issued by the PESC office to the primary representatives of Member organizations.

All ballots must be received by PESC by 5pm PDST

Ballots are also available on the COD page of the PESC

Benefits of Standards

Whether your organization wants to be part of the development and decision-making process or looks to use the standards being developed, there's a role for your organization in PESC. Benefits of standards and of being a member in PESC include:

For Service Providers
- Reduced cost
- Simplified integration
- ROI
- Reliability
- Voice at the table
- Influence on how standards get built

Colleges/Universities
- Cost savings
- Voice in the process
- Influence in how standards get built
- Time savings
- Alignment with industry
- Streamlined processes
- Risk aversion
- Coordination of activities
- Competitive advantage
- Ability to compare
- Time to degree

States
- Costs savings
- Degree completion/completion rates
- Economic Development
- Transfer and retention w/in the state
- Transition from high school to college
- Unit record systems
- Graduating in time
- Workforce development
- Data quality
- Performance and accountability

Software Providers
- One interface
- Cost/benefit
- On top of what's going on in the industry
- Costs of not participating
- Enhanced services to customer
- Lower TCO over prospect
- Long term investment
- Cost savings/ROI
- Delivering value
- Brand/marketing recognition

Join PESC now! Review our dues and benefits online at http://www.pesc.org/interior.php?page_id=84 or complete the attached forms to join.
Federal Student Aid Prepares for COD System Changes

During the period March 27-29, 2009, FSA plans to implement Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System functionality that will support the processing of Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant), National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant), Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, and William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) awards for the 2009-2010 Award Year.

In conjunction with this implementation, they will begin using a new version of the COD Common Record Extensible Markup Language (XML) Schema. The new schema version is 3.0b.

Effective upon completion of the March 27-29, 2009 COD System implementation:

• All 2009-2010 Common Record documents must be sent by schools and will be acknowledged by the COD System using COD Common Record XML Schema Version 3.0b.

• All 2009-2010 unsolicited system-generated responses will be sent by the COD System using COD Common Record XML Schema Version 3.0b.

• COD Web Activity responses for all award years will be sent by the COD System using COD Common Record XML Schema Version 3.0b.

• All available school reports, including data requests, will continue to be sent in formats other than XML.

In the June 4, 2008 posting of COD Common Record XML Schema Version 3.0a, FSA informed the financial aid community that schema version 3.0a would be required after the COD System implementation for the 2009-2010 Award Year.

The guidance FSA is providing now regarding schema version 3.0b and its required use after the COD System implementation for the 2009-2010 Award Year supersedes our earlier guidance. This posting of schema version 3.0b is the authoritative source for the schema version that will be required after we complete the March 27-29, 2009 COD System implementation.

For complete information about the new schema version, refer to "COD Common Record XML Schema Version 3.0b."

If you have any questions, contact the COD School Relations Center at 800/474-7268 for Grants or 800/848-0978 for Direct Loans. You may also e-mail CODSupport@acs-inc.com.

Member Endorsements of PESC

If you’d like to write an endorsement from your company about PESC, please send it in and we’ll post it to the PESC website. To view current endorsements and to see what other folks are saying about PESC, go to www.PESC.org and click on PESC Membership.
The Federal Student Aid 2008 Software Developers Conference will be held on August 21, 2008, at the Sheraton National Hotel located in Arlington, VA. Agenda may be found on page 6. You may register for the conference at http://fsaconferences.ed.gov/conferences/developers.html. Hotel information is also available at this site.

At the end of this year, Federal Student Aid (FSA) will be implementing the Integrated Partner Management (IPM) solution. This solution will replace current electronic Application (eAPP), eZ-Audit, and Lender Application (LAP) features and will change the way partners submit their eligibility application to participate in Title IV funding, maintain this eligibility, enroll for services and submit their Financial Statements and Compliance Audit data. FSA will continue to update the community about the new solution’s features and cutover information.

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is receiving a lot of attention because of the new business model that on-demand software enables. One major technological factor in advancing the new development models might be the rise of service-oriented architecture (SOA) and Web services standards. SaaS technology takes advantage of a one-to-many SOA-enabled architecture that can offer customized services to different customers, and even different branches of the same enterprise. For more information, visit http://dsonline.computer.org/portal/pages/dsonline/2008/07/o7003news.html.

Two new W3C Recommendations will make it easier for people to browse the Web on mobile devices. "Mobile Web Best Practices 1.0" helps content authors develop content that works on a wide array of mobile devices. With the publication of the "XHTML Basic 1.1" Recommendation recently, the preferred format specification of the Best Practices, there is now a full convergence in mobile markup languages, including those developed by the Open Mobile Alliance (OMA). For additional information, visit http://www.w3.org/2008/07/mwbp-pressrelease.

XML Schema design benefit strongly from Agile methodologies, but it needs to be understood that whereas the end point of agile development for imperative code is a working (and dynamically adaptable application), the end point for declarative schema development is ultimately a solid data model first and foremost, according to a post on an O’Reilly blog. To read the entire discussion, visit http://news.oreilly.com/2008/06/understanding-xml-thoughts-on.html.

Nearly one out of five students who enrolled for the first time at a four-year college in 2003-4 were transfer students, according to “Descriptive Summary of 2003-04 Beginning Postsecondary Students: Three Years Later,” a National Center for Education Statistics report. The report also revealed that about 25 percent of the students earned college credit while in high school.

The Council of Chief State School Officers will host two opportunities for a WebEx information session for states planning to apply for Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grants (http://ies.ed.gov/funding/). Thursday, August 7, 2008 from 2:00-3:30pm EST and Friday, September 5, 2008 from 2:00-3:30pm EST. To participate visit, https://ccsso.webex.com/ccsso/j.php?ED=107392022&UID=0.

President Bush has named Cheryl A. Oldham to be the Education Department’s acting assistant secretary for postsecondary education. Oldham served previously as executive director of the education secretary’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Before her appointment to the commission, Oldham served as director of the Office of White House Liaison, serving as the White House’s contact to the department on matters of personnel and political affairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>8:30 – 8:40 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target State Vision Technical View</td>
<td>8:40 – 9:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portals</td>
<td>9:00 – 9:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise Service Bus and Federal Student Aid Gateway Strategy</td>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Record Management System and PIN Re-engineering</td>
<td>10:00 - 10:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>10:30 – 10:45 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Keyboard, Two Factor Authentication and Active Confirmation</td>
<td>10:45 – 11:15 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Student View and Information Server</td>
<td>11:15 – 12:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch on own</td>
<td>12:00 – 1:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Origination and Disbursement and Central Processing System Update</td>
<td>1:15 – 3:15 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>3:15 – 3:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Family Education Loan Re-engineering</td>
<td>3:30 – 4:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Table</td>
<td>4:30 – 4:55 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>4:55 – 5:00 pm</td>
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## Fall 2008 PESC Member Summit

**Washington DC**  
**October 6 – 7, 2008**

### Sunday October 5, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>SPEEDE Meeting</td>
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### Monday October 6, 2008

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30 am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
</tr>
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<td>8:30 am</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcript USER GROUP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board Subcommittee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 am</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcript USER GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board Subcommittee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch on Your Own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcript USER GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change Control Board (CCB)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board of Directors Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 pm</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcript USER GROUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical Advisory Board (TAB)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Board of Directors Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>PESC Member Meeting</td>
</tr>
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### Tuesday October 7, 2008

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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PDF Transcript Workgroup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EA2 Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 am</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PDF Transcript Workgroup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seal of Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Registration Form

Attendee Full Name

Title and Organization

Street Address

City, State and Zip

Phone    Fax    E-mail Address

REGISTRATION FEE

☐ $150  PESC Member

☐ $350  Non Member

Please complete this form and send it along with a check payable to:

Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council
1250 Connecticut Ave, NW
Suite 200
Washington DC 20036
Fax: 202-261-6517
PESC’s tax ID# is 52-2179499.

To pay by credit card, please contact Jennifer Kim, Membership Services Manager, at 202-261-6514.
2008 Membership
Greetings from PESC!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to provide you with PESC's 2008 Membership brochure.

PESC is working to become the voice for the efficient, qualitative, and secure exchange of student data from initial access of the student from high school into the college environment through to completion of one or more degrees from multiple colleges and universities.

PESC drives data systems alignment across sectors and the elimination of incompatible interfaces and processes that present barriers to students and that inflate costs for public and private institutions struggling to keep up with the demands of technology and real-time data exchange while maintaining competitive tuition rates.

PESC's strength is derived from the actions and involvement of its membership and collaborating within the higher education community continues to bring us closer to our mutual goals. By joining PESC, you join the rest of the technology and standards community in this mission.

Please review this brochure and return all completed forms and information. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jennifer Kim, Membership Services Manager, at 202-261-6514 or at Jennifer.Kim@PESC.org.

Sincerely,

Michael Sessa
Michael D. Sessa
Executive Director
Membership Benefits

Valid through June 30, 2009

- Unlimited, active participation available in:
  - all PESC User Groups
  - all national, standards-setting development initiatives
  - the PESC Standards Forum for Education and all PESC workgroups

- Organizational representatives are qualified to serve:
  - as Chair of initiatives and/or workgroups
  - on the Steering Committee of the Standards Forum for Education
  - on the Board of Directors

- Right to vote on:
  - issues proposed by the Membership
  - changes to PESC by-laws
  - elections of the Steering Committee of the Standards Forum for Education
  - elections of the Board of Directors

- Eligible to:
  - propose workgroup topics to the Board of Directors for standards development and/or research
  - submit articles & press releases for inclusion in PESC's monthly newsletter “The Standard”

- Discounted rates:
  - at PESC meetings & conferences
  - for Seal of Approval Program

- Free access to all PESC conference calls

- Linked as a Member on PESC website [with a link to your website], in certain publications, and in promotional materials

- Networking and collaboration with other Membership organizations that support data exchange standardization
Association “Umbrella” Policy

For associations that are members of PESC, payment of dues enables both unlimited staff participation in PESC and extension of PESC member benefits to its membership as well. The first five (5) representatives from an association’s membership can participate at no extra charge. After five (5), a $500 per person fee is assessed. Associations are required to identify and submit the names and contact information for those representatives designated under the umbrella policy on an annual basis. As the association is the member though, official voting remains the sole responsibility of the association.

Referral discounts

For existing members that refer new members, PESC will reduce the existing member’s membership fee by 25% to a maximum of $2,000. The discount is provided once, at the time the new member joins PESC.

Membership Sponsors

Please note that members and affiliates may pay the membership costs for another organization. Such sponsorships are important for those organizations, especially colleges and universities, that have a vested interest in joining PESC but have budgetary restrictions.
2008 Membership Form

Organization Name

Organization Website Address

Voting Member (or Official Contact) Name and Title

Street Address

City, State and Zip

Phone     Fax    E-mail Address

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Category</th>
<th>Organizational Type</th>
<th>Membership Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Member</td>
<td>□ College or University</td>
<td>$ ____________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Affiliate</td>
<td>□ Non-Profit Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Non-Profit Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ State Government Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Bank, Lender, or Servicer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Commercial Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Federal Government Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature   Name (please print)   Date

Please complete this form and send it along with a check payable to:

Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council
1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Fax: (202) 261-6517
PESC’s TIN#: 52-2179499
## Membership Dues

Valid through June 30, 2009

### College or University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Campuses</th>
<th>Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 campus</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 10 campuses</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ campuses</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Non-Profit Association

- **Total: $5,000**

### Non-Profit Organization with Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues Range</th>
<th>Dues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $10 million</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10 million ≤ $100 million</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 million +</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### State Government Agency

- **Total: $5,500**

### Bank, Lender, or Servicer

- **Total: $10,000**

### Commercial Organization with Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues Range</th>
<th>Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $1 million</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 million ≤ $10 million</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 million ≤ $100 million</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 million +</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Federal Government Agency

- **Total: $20,000**
Who We Are

Established in 1997 and located in Washington, D.C., the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (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.

Our Mission

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.
BALLOT

Common Origination & Disbursement (COD)
July 30, 2008

The XML Common Origination & Disbursement (COD) candidate is presented by the Standards Forum for Education to the Members of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) for a vote as an official PESC Member-Approved National Education Community Standard. Please indicate your vote by checking one of the boxes below and submitting your ballot to PESC:

☐ APPROVE

☐ NOT APPROVE

If not approved, please indicate reason(s) below. Attach more sheets if necessary:

__________________________________________

Your Name: ________________________________

Your Organization: __________________________

Date: ______________________________________

All ballots must be received by PESC by 5pm PDST Wednesday August 13, 2008.

Email: Michael.Sessa@PESC.org
Fax: 202-261-6517
Mail: Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council
      1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW
      Suite 200
      Washington DC  20036
United Kingdom Agencies DCSF, DIUS and Becta Release Statement of Intent on
the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF)®

Washington, DC, July 22, 2008 - The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and Becta, the government agency for technology in learning in the United Kingdom released a statement of intent recommending the adoption and use of the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF).

“Over the past two years the UK has been researching and implementing Proofs of Concept using SIF,” states Paul Shoesmith, Director of Technical Strategy at Becta. “These successful implementations of SIF have made it clear that SIF has proven potential to deliver benefits at local and national levels. We are pleased to recommend SIF as a preferred solution and will continue to work with our partners to develop the necessary business case for wider adoption.” The SIF Specifications focus on interoperability between educational applications, regardless of the technology or vendor and are developed in an open, neutral forum within the educational community.

The initial Proof of Concept in the UK deployed a specific configuration of SIF within a defined group of schools in Birmingham, implemented and developed SIF Agents, moved data horizontally and vertically independent of the application platform and facilitated data movement between the local authority and the DCSF. Just completed, the second successful Proof of Concept focused on data interoperability for assessments, moving relevant pupil data from schools, completing assessment records dynamically transmitted from Northern Ireland schools to vendors and moving marked assessment records to facilitate a rapid method of intervention with learners.

“The SIF Association is thrilled to work closely with the educational entities and suppliers within the UK,” claims Dr. Larry Fruth, Executive Director for the SIF Association. “The Association strives to collaborate and develop relationships with other countries by providing a model to establish local governance and share effective practice processes to meet local interoperability needs. The leadership of these agencies in the UK is providing real solutions to data challenges at school, Local Authority and national government levels.”

As additional Proofs of Concept are established and implemented, it is anticipated that the SIF Specifications will be adopted and implemented by the local authorities within the UK and vendors over the next 18 months.

About the SIF Association
The SIF Association is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of over 1900 schools, districts, states, US Department and International Ministries of Education, software vendors and consultants who collectively define the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. The SIF Implementation Specification enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably, and securely regardless of the platform hosting those applications. The SIF Association 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 additional information about the SIF Association, please visit http://www.sifinfo.org. Information about SIFA UK can be found at http://www.sifinfo.org.uk.

About Becta
Becta is the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. It is Becta’s ambition to utilise the benefits of technology to create a more exciting, rewarding and successful experience for learners of all ages and abilities, enabling them to achieve their potential. For more information about Becta, visit http://www.becta.org.uk.

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For almost three years now, the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) has been advocating for student-level longitudinal data systems that allow the state education agencies (SEAs) to track the academic and performance histories for individual students across grade levels (Pre-K through grade 12), even if they change campuses during that time frame. Ideally, these longitudinal data systems should also be able to connect student-level data across the P-12 and postsecondary sectors to provide the most complete picture of students’ educational experiences and the most comprehensive data for educational research.

Student-level academic data (courses taken, schools attended, services received) and performance data (statewide assessment scores, grades earned, end-of-course exam scores, college-readiness scores) can provide tremendous information for stakeholders at all levels to use in decision-making. Parents, of course, should receive academic and performance histories for their children in order to provide oversight and support. Teachers use historical student data to determine the best instructional activities for the child. Principals and district administrators need historical data on all their students to determine if individual teachers need professional development, schools need to change practices or the district needs to revise their curriculum, among other options. State policymakers need longitudinal data to better determine where to make the most cost-effective expenditure.

The case for longitudinal data systems has been made in many presentations and publications by the DQC partners. As pointed out in the recent Diploma Counts publication by Education Week (Education Week, Vol. 27, No. 40, June 5, 2008, www.edweek.org), many states have begun to address the issue of connecting the P-12 and postsecondary data systems.

What has also become apparent in all of these discussions is that many of us in the education arena still view education as a linear process, which for many students couldn’t be more different than the actuality.

Given the high rates of mobility in many, if not all, states, the large high school dropout rates, and the rates at which students delay entry into higher education or drop out of higher education and re-enter later, the linear concept does not work for many students and, as a result, for some of the data systems. It is difficult to envision building an academic and performance history for students who drop out of high school, get a GED and five years (or more) later go to a community college. What about longitudinal data for the student who finishes high school and goes to college 10 years later after his or her youngest child has gone off to first grade?

Instead of an education pipeline, some people have proposed talking about educational swirls — since many students come in and go out of the education system multiple times over the course of their career. Others have proposed the term ‘knowledge supply chain’ as a way of
Pipeline, Swirl or Knowledge Supply Chain (continued)

conveying a direction of movement through educational systems, but not necessarily mandating that all students follow the same path.

Whether you imagine the educational process as a pipeline, a swirl or a supply chain, some things are essential to be able to track students’ academic and performance histories across their entire career. In order to compile a complete educational history, there needs to be a way to connect individual student records across Pre-Kindergarten, K-12 and higher education and training (whether that is 2-year, 4-year, or technical institutions). Either all entities need to use the same student identifier or they need to collect enough of the same demographic variables (names, date of birth, gender, social security number) to create a matching algorithm to ensure they are matching the correct records across institutions.

We increasingly hear that state policymakers are asking for information about such things as:

- the number of students with associates degrees who go on to get bachelor’s degrees (even with a break of years between degrees), or
- the percentage of high school graduates who go to another state for higher education.

Without the ability to track individual students as they swirl in and out of education’s interconnected pipelines, we will have a difficult time assessing whether the knowledge supply chain is meeting our future economic needs.

New Round of IES SLDS Grants Announced

A request for applications for a new round of grants to states to help build statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) was published in the Federal Register on June 26th. State applications will be due on September 25th. The application package will be released around August 4th. This will be the third round of grants provided to states since 2005.

The grant program is operated by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under the U.S. Department of Education (http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/). As stated on the IES website, the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) Grant Program is designed to aid state education agencies in developing and implementing longitudinal data systems. These systems are intended to enhance the ability of states to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The data systems developed with funds from these grants should help states, districts, schools, and teachers make data-driven decisions to improve student learning, as well as facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.

In November of 2005, the first year of the grant program, IES awarded grants to 14 States. In June of 2007, IES awarded grants to an additional 13 States.

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To provide educators with the data they need to improve student achievement, states must have more than a series of one-time snapshots of student performance. They need a system that collects high-quality data about how individual students are doing over time, from prekindergarten through 12th grade and into postsecondary education. Longitudinal data—which follow individual students over time—enrich snapshot data and make it possible for educators to compile an academic history for each student, often including but not limited to such indicators as the courses a student has taken and his or her grades, assessment results, and enrollment information. Because longitudinal data follow students and trends over time, more robust analyses are possible. Ideally, teachers and principals could employ multiple types of data, including snapshot and formative assessment scores in addition to longitudinal data to differentiate instruction and monitor overall school progress respectively. Because of a lack of data infrastructure at the local and state levels, however, teachers and principals have sometimes been forced to create time-consuming mechanisms to house and use student data, such as manually entering student information into a spreadsheet, tracking student progress by hand, or repeatedly updating their own graphs and analyses. Although some districts have created their own data warehouses to track students within the district, many districts lack the resources or capacity to do so. Statewide longitudinal data warehouses can ensure greater efficiency as well as have the capacity to facilitate data sharing across districts when a student transfers to another district. Educators often have access to various summative and formative assessment results, but leaders at all levels must demand, understand, and use longitudinal data to improve instruction and management. To that end, the complete toolkit provides examples of how both longitudinal and snapshot data can help school leaders, along with a list of recommended action steps, as follows:

- **Advocate for the 10 Essential Elements of a Longitudinal Data System.** Annual surveys have captured the development of state longitudinal data systems and have shown that the number of states reported to have each of the 10 essential elements has increased from the year 2005 to 2007. However, much work still needs to be done to continue building these systems and to provide user-friendly access and training to teachers and principals who make daily decisions that affect student achievement.

- **Support leadership efforts to provide timely and user-friendly access to longitudinal data.** Student- and teacher-level longitudinal data systems that are maintained at the state level are imperative to maximize economies of scale and accommodate high student mobility. For teachers and principals, these data can be translated into information to make informed decisions only if the data are of high quality, comprehensible, and timely. These criteria can only be accomplished through supportive and strong leadership at all levels.

- **Encourage a culture change so that teachers and principals use data as a school improvement tool.** Education data coming from the state education agency have not historically been very timely, user-friendly, or helpful to educators. As states make progress toward creating longitudinal data systems designed for the end user, however, a change in culture is required so that data collection and analysis are viewed as positive ways to illuminate areas of success and improvement.

- **Participate in and provide professional development on using data to improve student achievement.** As the culture surrounding data use evolves, the professional development and teacher training must also change. There is no shortage of research demonstrating the importance of teacher preparation to improving student achievement, so as data use becomes an increasingly important tool for educators, professional development on maximizing it to tailor instructional and management decisions is essential.

- **Seek and share best practices as identified through longitudinal data analysis.** One of the principal values of longitudinal data is the ability to follow trends over time because school comparisons that take students’ prior achievement and length of enrollment into account are more informative than those that do not. Longitudinal analyses account for random fluctuations over time and are more likely to pinpoint best practices as they follow student progress, rather than compare disparate cohorts of students.

- **Incorporate data information the education process to improve student achievement.** Data only become information when they are used to make better decisions. Many high-performing schools have discovered and embraced the value of longitudinal data to make improved decisions and have reaped the benefits as illustrated by increased student performance.

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Campaign Partner Activities Related to Data

June 28-30
SETDA
Emerging Technologies Forum at NECC
San Antonio, TX

June 30 – July 3
ECS
National Forum on Education Policy
Austin, TX

July 11-14
NGA
Annual Meeting
Philadelphia, PA

July 15-19
SHEEO
Annual Meeting
Boston, MA

July 24
DQC/NEBHE
Regional Meeting
Aligning P-12 and Postsecondary Data Systems
Waltham, MA
(Invitation only – contact Nancy Smith for information)

July 29, 2-4pm (EDT)
Data Quality Campaign
Quarterly Meeting
Data Governance
Washington, DC
To register, please visit the DQC’s Web site:
www.DataQualityCampaign.org

September 8-10
CCSSO
2008 Education Leaders Conference on Using Data to Improve Instruction
Milwaukee, WI

New Endorsing Partners

New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) - http://www.nebhe.org
The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) was founded in 1955, when six visionary New England governors realized that the future prosperity of the region rested upon higher education and that their six small states could do more working together than working alone. The six committed their states to the shared pursuit of academic excellence. Soon thereafter, NEBHE was approved by all of New England’s state legislatures and authorized by the U.S. Congress. Today, New England’s future is inextricably linked to the innovation emanating from the region’s approximately 270 colleges and universities and the intellectual potential of its people. NEBHE’s capacity to expand educational opportunity and strengthen the relationship between higher education and the region’s economic and civic development is more critical than ever.

American Society for Quality (www.asq.org)
The American Society for Quality has been the world’s leading authority on quality for 60 years. As champion of the quality movement, ASQ offers technologies, concepts, tools and training to quality professionals, quality practitioners and everyday consumers, encouraging all to Make Good Great®. ASQ has been the sole administrator of the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award since 1991.

Pre-K Now – (http://www.preknow.org)
Pre-K Now collaborates with advocates and policymakers to lead a movement for high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds. Pre-K Now’s vision is a nation in which every child enters kindergarten prepared to succeed. Our highest priority is advancing the pre-k agenda within individual states through public education and high-quality nonpartisan research. This pursuit is buttressed by efforts to build strong federal support and to increase the number and capacity of organizations working on the pre-k issue. We provide key policy information to early childhood advocates and policymakers in order to improve the availability and quality of state-funded pre-k programs.

About the DQC
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 an enthusiastic supporter of the State Education Data Center and SchoolDataDirect.org. The DQC is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Casey Foundation, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and the Lumina Foundation.