What is SIF?

*Imagine **software that works together** as well as they do...*

SIF® is READY – are you?

SIF (Schools Interoperability Framework®) is a set of industry developed and supported technical blueprints that enable pK-20 software to work seamlessly together as a single, efficient system. These open access, free to use blueprints – SIF Specifications – make it possible for diverse applications to interact and share data, now and in the future. The SIF Association, the non-profit organization dedicated to interoperability between educational applications, has been working toward this goal since 1997.

> **interoperable** (ˌɪntərˈɒprəbəl) [?]
>
> — *adj*
> of or relating to the ability to share data between different computer systems, esp on different machines: *interoperable network management systems*
>
> **interopera'bility**
>
> — *n*

SIF Specifications, developed by SIF Association members, identifies a set of common definitions for school information (data objects) and a set of rules for data sharing (infrastructure). By creating these interoperable standards, SIF ensures that all vendors can use SIF Specifications and that all educational systems will be able to implement them regardless of the technology. Guaranteeing that SIF is an open, vendor-neutral and platform independent standard is the important guiding principle of the SIF Association.

The SIF Specification allows for systems to be developed so data can be more effectively maintained at all levels of the learner's lifespan, from early childhood through the workplace.

Software purchasers are increasingly asking for SIF Certified products that allow them to leverage their local resources more effectively without surrendering control over access to their sensitive data.

SIF is designed specifically for technology providers and educators. It is not a product, but a 'data transfer' standard for software that:
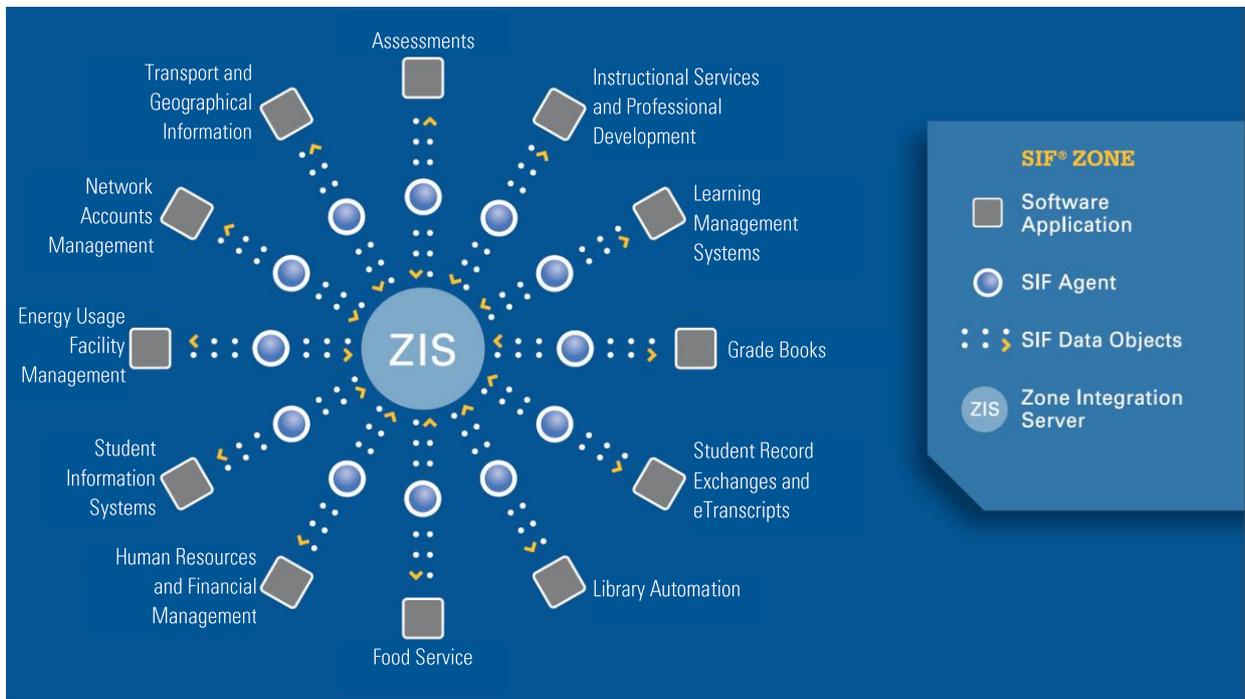
- enables your current applications to share data seamlessly in real time
- manages your current educational data
- works cross-platform
- allows automated reporting

Implementation Benefits *(Educational Organizations)*

➢ Reduces redundancy of data entry
➢ Improves student services
➢ Increases student achievement
➢ Improves interoperability between applications
➢ Enhances data reliability and consistency
➢ Simplifies reporting capability

Development Benefits *(Vendors)*

➢ Offers significant competitive advantage
➢ Defines an open specification that includes a data model and infrastructure
➢ Reduces long term application integration costs
➢ Provides companies with the opportunity to be part of fully interoperable solutions

SIF® Association

How does SIF Work?

SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS are selected by educational organizations to manage information, administer school systems, and convene teaching and learning.

SIF AGENTS are the liaison between an application and the ZIS. The SIF Agent recognizes the application's business logic and data structure, allowing data sharing between applications; receiving and translating SIF messages and submitting data changes to the ZIS.

SIF DATA OBJECTS are a set of common data definitions shared by applications detailed in the data model of the SIF Specification.

ZONE INTEGRATION SERVERS serve as the central communication point in a SIF Zone. The ZIS tracks all SIF Agents in the Zone, distributes all SIF messages, implements security rules, and enforces what a SIF Agent can and cannot do within the Zone.

SIF Certification Program

The SIF Certification Program is a program undertaken by the SIF Association to confirm that a SIF Agent application pair or ZIS adheres to the SIF Specification. The program includes a series of tests that validate whether the SIF agent application pair or ZIS conforms to the rules and definitions of a particular SIF Implementation Specification release. Successful completion of the program warrants the ability to display the 'SIF Certified' logo of that release. SIF Certification guarantees that a product can successfully communicate and share information with other SIF Certified applications.

To learn more, please visit our website: www.sifassociation.org