



# A solution to Student Records Exchange that is secure, efficient & easy-to-implement

## Why we need Student Records Exchange

Mobility creates a number of related risk factors for a student, both socio-emotional and academic. One significant hurdle is created by the lack of portability of student information. Student data informs educators about appropriate instructional level, history of and success with academic content, student engagement, and whether the student has been receiving special services. A longitudinal view of these data can help educators make timely decisions about which strategies are and aren't effective, whether the student is on-track to positive outcomes, and where a student may need more intensive support.

When a student moves to a new school, this timeline of critical information is frequently cut off. When student data are provided, they often arrive weeks late, meaning lost instructional time and limited information for critical decision-making. Sending and receiving these data is an administrative burden, so those data that do follow the student are usually just a subset of the overall picture of the student. And these data are often sent via insecure and inefficient means such as fax, snail mail or email.

With annual mobility rates of 25-55% in many states, the scope of this problem, its direct cost to schools, and its long term cost to communities have brought increasing attention to these issues.

## Secure, efficient transfer of student data

Fortunately, technology now exists to solve this problem. Cedar Labs, a Minnesota-based technology company, is focused on solving the data integration challenges faced by today's schools. Boasting a staff with deep experience and understanding of the unique issues facing K-12 education, Cedar Labs has developed a multi-purpose, universal data integration platform that streamlines and standardizes the flow of data across the many siloed software systems prevalent in schools.

This platform takes a "hub & spoke" approach to data integration. Replacing the spider web of security, maintenance and connectivity issues in setups where each individual system talks to each other individual system, Cedar Labs' technology creates a single, central "hub" that manages the flow of data – providing the school with a single point of management and giving them complete control over which systems are provided with which data.

SIF offers a robust and secure workflow for SRE, and Cedar Labs allows this process to be extended to districts using either a SIF backend or an Ed-Fi backend. For SISs implementing Ed-Fi, this integration looks no different than making a typical Ed-Fi call. Cedar Labs handles the Ed-Fi authentication, translation of the Ed-Fi query, and transformation of the result back to the Ed-Fi data model. By integrating with the two most popular open APIs used by SISs, and leveraging the power of the SIF data model and SRE process flow, Cedar Labs hopes to extend the benefits of SRE as widely as possible.

"We provide a broad range of critical student data, perform validations that ensure its accuracy, and transform the data to fit the different formats that software systems need. We can do this all in real time with a secure, easy-to-use, affordable system – these are all reasons why school districts, education software vendors, and

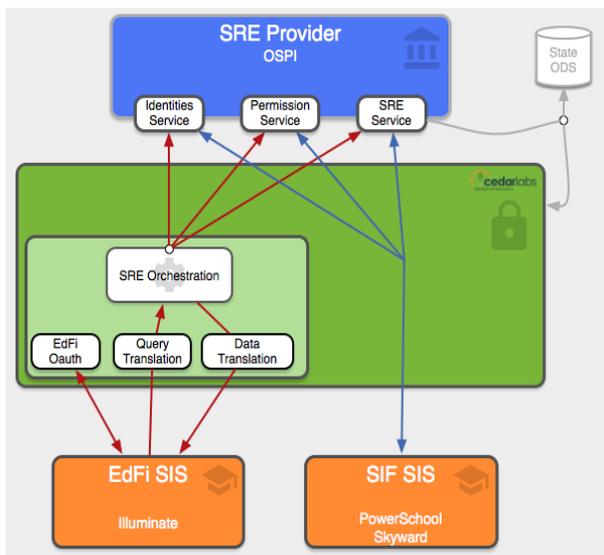


**Purpose:** Improving the portability of critical student information by integrating APIs from various sources to standardize data flows for Student Record Exchange and improve learner outcomes.

state departments of education are choosing Cedar Labs,” reports Mike Reynolds, Cedar Labs’ Founder and President.

## Real-Time Student Records Exchange

By leveraging Cedar Labs’ simple to use and efficient data integration platform, the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is making the idea of real-time, secure student records transfer a reality. In partnership with the Access 4 Learning (A4L) community, OSPI led the creation of an open standard, called xPress Student Record Exchange, to ensure a replicable, interoperable solution. The goal was not just to solve the immediate need, but to make sure that the education community would gain a controllable and an easy-to-implement architecture standard for finding and transferring student records electronically between any two education entities.



The xPress Student Record Exchange tracks the status of moving a student’s full record from an authorized ‘data provider’ (i.e. the school district which the student has just left) to an authorized ‘data consumer’ (i.e. the school district where the student is now educated). In a series of steps, the data consumer can request the relevant access permissions and obtain the student record. No records can be obtained without the appropriate access permission being granted by a representative of the data provider, thereby ensuring that all personal information is kept secure. There is also a ‘Student Locator Service’ which can be used to find a specific student, in order to start the process of requesting transfer of the student record.

All of this functionality is leveraged using the SIF standard, and powered by the Cedar Labs’ data integration platform.

## The Benefit: Extending the value

In addition to an elegant solution that helps solve the problems associated with student mobility, OSPI is realizing the true benefit of implementing Cedar Labs’ hub & spoke model. “Install once, benefit many times is what makes this a unique approach,” explains Dr. Ben Silbergliitt, Cedar Labs’ Founder and Chief Strategy Officer. In the Puget Sound Education Service District (PSESD), schools are able to leverage the existing data platform that is providing Student Records Exchange to also provide access to student data for its own custom-developed software application, called Student Success Link.

Student Success Link allows Community Based Organizations (such as Boys and Girls Clubs) to access student data for kids participating in their programs. This data must be anonymized, combined with data from the CBO itself and transformed into a new format before being consumed by the CBO. Cedar Labs technology enables all this to take place securely and cost-effectively. Using SIF’s straightforward REST-based Application Programming Interface (API), Student Success Link can access and get real time updates to the broad student data it needs, maximizing its value to educators while reducing administrative, infrastructure, and software development costs. By reducing the barriers to implementation of this new software application, PSESD is expanding its partnership with OSPI and looking at an aggressive timeline for state wide rollout, delighting Washington’s constituents with OSPI’s efficiencies and benefits to schools.

For more information about CedarLabs solution, contact: [answers@cedarlabs.com](mailto:answers@cedarlabs.com)

For more information on the SIF standard or the A4L Community, please visit: <https://www.A4L.org>  
To find out more about xPress Student Record Exchange (SRE), please visit: <https://xpressapi.org>

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