Access 4 Learning Community

Powered by: **SIF**

Simple. Secure. Scalable. Standard.

NEWSLETTER

December 2018

IT'S TIME TO FOCUS ON USING DATA TO IMPACT LEARNING…

It's the holiday season!

by Larry Fruth II, PhD – Executive Director / CEO

Congrats on making it this far with all the trappings and the somewhat stressful situations we place ourselves. We all have those traditions that we observe each year but many times we seem to bring in some "changes" into this celebration season – liking change or not!

This issue is full of "changes" either in process or soon to hit your inbox. On the technical side we are readying the release of our groundbreaking next set of Implementation Specifications – "Unity". It takes the best of the best from the 2x and 3x data models, details tight alignment with the US Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) model and adds changes to the infrastructure to support greater student data privacy controls. It also matures our processes to re-visit possible global data model work and the development of tools and effective practices in usage of multiple technical specifications no matter where they originate from to enable real solutions development.

But that is just a start. We also have the exponential growth in the work of the Student Data Privacy (SDPC) Special Interest Group growth in the number of state Alliances being formed, increase in tools development, and technical work around the development of a Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS).

Add to these two major drivers numerous continued partnerships (PESC, Project Unicorn, Future for Privacy Forum, etc.), new partnerships (top secret!), international activities and upcoming Annual Meetings and you have a LOT to scan through in this edition.

But remember, those traditions of family should be top of mind this time of the year for you and yours. And our tradition of "community" will continue well into 2019!

Happy Holidays from all of us to you!

Happy Holidays! from the A4L Community

Global Community News

Find out what the NEW "buzz" is all about…

Save time, save money, save headaches, and get the data in the right hands!

In early 2019, the A4L Community will be releasing a 'new' SIF Specification...

Introducing SIF Unity, an enhancement to the SIF data model you already know, combined with the best of today's communication technologies. Unity streamlines integrations for users and developers and creates a unified experience from the student to the IT staff to the administrator and beyond.

SIF Unity enables you to choose the best tools for the job. We recognize that one standard cannot fix all your integration headaches, so the A4L Community and its members have developed Unity to enable integration with other standards and methods to exchange data. With the inclusion of modern technologies, like APIs, Unity is easier to implement and manage. Following the privacy work, led by the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC), Unity has been developed with improves data privacy and security, helping you to comply with FERPA & COPPA.

More information coming early 2019...

Update: PESC/JSON enters public review

by Michael Sessa, President & CEO, PESC & John W. Lovell, Technology Director, A4L Community

Over the past year, members of PESC and the A4L Community have been working together on a Joint JSON Task Force. Following a productive collaboration, we are delighted to publish the following announcement:

"PESC Compliant JSON v 1.0" is being proposed by the Standards Development Forum for Education as a PESC Approved Standard. As part of PESC's process and procedures for Standards Development, Approval and Maintenance, proposed standards are shared with the public, a necessary and critical step, prior to approval and ratification.

In asking the public for comment now, we seek the public's opinion on the proposed Standards to ensure that when used and if implemented according to how it they are described,

they will serve the need that is envisioned. Public comments can recommend improvements and/or additions or present questions for clarification on one or both, so that the Standards once finalized and released are that much more improved. PESC Approved Standards, made available openly and free of charge, identify key data elements needed, how data should be packaged and include supporting rules and documentation that describe specific design and technical requirements.

PESC Compliant JSON – Public Comments Requested

- Public Comment Period Open **December 11, 2018**

- Public Comment Period Closed **January 14, 2019**

- Provide Public Comment Online at www.pesc.org

The A4L Community requests that all interested members review this PESC DRAFT standard as we are already in the process of adopting it globally.

For further information, please contact John Lovell, Technology Director.

Project Unicorn

In case you were not aware, a growing community developed to support interoperability and student privacy has been established and is currently gathering steam as a major advocacy and resource aligned source – Project Unicorn. This Project has gathered some of the heavy hitters in policy and technology promotion to focus on district and school data management and policy needs. *Project Unicorn 's aim to create a community of innovators who make the broader case for secure interoperability by determining shared*

priorities, working in partnership with school systems and vendors to understand its importance and benefits, creating a demand side push for interoperability through partnerships, and educating buyers to consider the total cost of ownership through informed comparison of vendors

The Access 4 Learning Community is thrilled to be a member of the Steering Committee for the Project and we are working with the Unicorn Team to ensure all of the Community's resources,

expertise and members are aware of our collaborative work and opportunities for win-win promotion and growth.

Check out the work at: https://www.projunicorn.org/

2019 Annual Meeting: International meetings schedule

Come join local, state, federal, government and international peers

focusing on secure data to impact learning with the **Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community**!

Listening to end user conference "pain points", A4L is partnering with CoSN to hold our meetings at the same locale to streamline your conference planning and help you in securing resources. Just add another day and a half to your travel plans and hit both!

This event will showcase real-world examples of how schools, states and vendors are overcoming challenges facing the education sector, including data privacy, the use of common standards and adoption strategies. In addition, we will also be holding a series of **international meetings**, with members of our global Community in attendance.

To find out more information, please click here.

Welcome new members!

A4L Community & Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) members:

Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) members:

SIF Certification News

by John W. Lovell, Technology Director, A4L Community

ITG Seeks Second Certification

Integrated Technology Group (ITG) who first certified EduWave to SIF 3 in September of 2016 has just this month successful completed formal testing for SIF 2 Certification.

Once the SIF 'Unity' Specification has been released, we expect many End

Users to ask for renewed support of existing SIF 2 Data Objects as they gradually head towards a REST based SIF 3 Infrastructure. ITG finds themselves in a strong position to support these expected market moves, and we congratulate them on their successful testing of SIF 2!

SIF 2 Infrastructure headed towards Legacy Support

While the SIF Data Model Implementation Specification (North America) 2.8 release opened the door to officially supporting the SIF 2 Data Model over the SIF 3 Infrastructure, the move to Unity embraces this as our official direction with long term support and more features.

With this direction set, we are starting to make plans to wind down support of the SIF 2 Infrastructure. Currently we are trying a new Test Suite on the newer Test Harness for SIF Data Model Implementation Specification (North America) 2.7 with support for TLS 1.2. Once this has been established as a solid alternative to the existing Test Suite, we

plan to wind down all previous SIF 2 Test Suites.

We would like to thank COMPanion Corporation for their ongoing help in trying out the new Test Suite and providing feedback.

Watch this space for further news in the new year!

2019 A4L Privacy and Interoperability Sponsorship

Is your organization ready to be "front and center" of the fastest growing global educational non-profit community with thousands of potential customers?

In conjunction with April CoSN meetings, the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) and the Future of Privacy Forum (FPF), with the Access 4 Learning Community, will be hosting two days of "tactical" data interoperability and privacy conversations with real-world work products.

This is a great opportunity to get in front of players as we:

- Deliver a joint SDPC and Future of Privacy Forum '**Student Privacy Boot Camp**'

- Convene and **celebrate 22 SDPC State** Alliances!

- Get a **sneak peek at the new SIF** Specification release bringing the 'best of the best from 2x and 3x data models together' - aligned to CEDS

- Have **international strategic conversations** with representatives from AU, NZ and UK Communities

- Convene **over 100 stakeholders** in three tracks as CoSN **representatives**

Need more information on this great investment/commitment/support? Please contact us ASAP - things will fill fast!

Sponsorship Opportunities:

- ➢ **'Advocate' Sponsorship: $1,000**
- ➢ **'Leader' Sponsorship: $2,500**
- ➢ **'Legend' Sponsorship: $5,000**

Download the 2019 Annual Meeting Sponsorship flyer >>

News from the Australian Community

Announcement: 2018-2019 Election Results

News: A4L Community AU announce 2019 Leadership

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community in Australia is proud to announce the AU Management and AU Technical Boards for 2019. The Management Board brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in education, data management, technology and business acumen. The Board will oversee management of the SIF Specification and guide development of the A4L Community in Australia as well as contribute to the development of strategies for the global Community.

The following supplier members will join representatives from State and Territory Departments of Education and non-government school bodies on the A4L AU Management Board during 2019:

- Tim Dawson, Synergetic
- Grant Grosser, SEQTA Software
- Simon Jones, Civica Education
- Antony Mawer, Sentral Education

The AU Community also elected eight supplier representatives for the AU Technical Board (known as the Data Standards Working Group (DSWG)), who provide technical oversight for the SIF Implementation Specification (Australia). The 2019 supplier representatives are:

- Sean Chee, Civica Education
- Lance Duivenbode, SEQTA Software
- James Hamilton, Sentral Education
- Joerg Huber, Systemic
- Rob Mcloughlin, Verso Learning
- James Overell, Synergetic

- Liam Pearce, Timetabling Solutions
- Mark Vanderkley, SIMON Schools

Dave Burns, Chair of the A4L Community AU Management Board and Executive Director, Digital Solutions, at the Department of Education in Queensland commented that "the election results mean that the development of the SIF standard, which is at the heart of the Learning Services Architecture in Australia, has the critical support required from the vendor marketplace of some of the most influential and innovative IT companies in the school education sector".

The AU A4L Community would like to thank the outgoing supplier representatives for their important contribution and commitment to the Learning Services Architecture in Australia: Colin Wood, Verso Learning (AU Management Board/SIFAAMB), Nick Purvis, SchoolEdge and Julian Ridden, Instructure (AU Technical Board/DSWG).

SIF Implementation Data Model Specification (AU) 3.4.4

by Linda Marshall, NSIP

The SIF Implementation Data Model Specification (AU) 3.4.4 is in draft review and will be ratified in the 1st quarter 2019.

A working group is being set up to review the TimeTable Use Case in Australia, anyone interested in contributing should send an email to info@nsip.edu.au

The first meeting will be on line in February 2019.

AU 2018 Community Day: Overview

by Linda Marshall, NSIP

The A4L AU Annual Community Meeting was held in Melbourne on 28th November. The event was hosted by the National Schools Interoperability Program (NSIP) and was attended by 25 vendor representatives and 17 representatives from government and catholic school system authorities.

The keynote address was given by Dr. Peter Goss from the Grattan Institute who spoke on the role of data in supporting the national schools reform agenda which is a response to the recent national review of school education in Australia. The agreement seeks to achieve optimal annual progress for every student and will provide a major focus for schools, school authorities and solution providers in the years ahead.

The meeting also examined privacy and security requirements in school education and included presentations from Anthony Yaremenko from the NSIP Team who is Chair of the A4L Data Privacy Taskforce, William Fleming Cyber Security Specialist, Victorian Department of Education and Training and Steve Baines, Commercial Manager & Data Protection Officer, Groupcall Ltd (UK).

We also welcomed colleagues from the Ministry of Education in New Zealand who reported on their progress in implementing a new national education data integration and exchange program based on SIF.

The program included a review of lessons learnt from national SIF implementations to date leading to proposed changes and developments in both the SIF AU Data Model and SIF Global Infrastructure specifications.

Simon Maizels, Group Director, Teaching and Learning Experience, from the New South Wales state Department of Education and NSIP Chair together with colleague Graham Anning shared their progress on learner centric data management and their digital classroom project.

Matt Farmer provided a preview of updates planned for the Learning Services Architecture which will include support for tracking learner activity, progress and mobility and envisages support for multiple data models and standards.

The meeting concluded with a round table discussion, that provided valuable input to work for the A4L AU and NSIP for 2019.

The meeting was chaired by Dave Burns, Executive Director Digital Solutions, Department of Education and Training Qld who is chair of SIF Management Board in Australia. As usual it provided an opportunity for attendees to meet with members of the Management Board and recently elected Data Standards Working Group (Australia's A4L Technical Board) and for energetic discussion about the opportunities for technologies to advance school education.

The program and presentations are available on the NSIP website here.

News from the North American Community

2019 Annual Meeting

Registration: Registration is required prior to attending this event. On-the-day registrations are not permitted. Registration closes on March 8, 2019.

Conference Rates:

A4L & SDPC Member:
$425 conference package – *$375 early bird rate valid until December 31, 2018!*

Non-Member:
$475 conference package – *$425 early bird rate valid until December 31, 2018!*

Accommodation: A limited group block has been reserved at the Hilton Portland Downtown hotel at a negotiated rate of $209++ per night. Further details on how to obtain this rate will be sent via your confirmation email once you have registered.

Come join local, state, federal, government and international peers focusing on secure data to impact learning with the **Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community**!

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This event will showcase real-world examples of how schools, states and vendors are overcoming challenges facing the education sector, including data privacy, the use of common standards and adoption strategies. In addition, we will also be holding a series of **international meetings**, with members of our global Community in attendance.

Come join your peers at the **Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) Meeting**! The SDPC event starts with a 'SDPC Social' on Wednesday, April 3 (straight after the CoSN meetings), followed by updates on the Contract Framework, Digital Governance Tool and a workshop on the SDPC Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS), on Thursday, April 4, 2019 - this event is not to be missed!

We will also be running a Student Privacy Boot Camp for non-SDPC members and will be providing several opportunities for collaboration and connections between the groups.

Agenda: Download a copy of the draft agenda **here**.

Thank you to our 'Advocate' Sponsors:

To sponsor this event, please **click here**

News from the Student Data Privacy Consortium

"Growth and Development" are the two key update words for the work of the Student Data Privacy Consortium – an A4L Community Special Interest Group.

Student Data Privacy Consortium

On the **"Growth"** side we continue to have State Alliances forming each month and interest from marketplace providers continues to grow! The amount of sharing going on in the virtual calls for the three projects, Alliance leads, and even the legal support firms has been great to see, and a wealth of exchanges are taking place. This growth is attributed to the great work of the Consortium, the various partners promoting the work and yes Steve and Larry's virtual and road shows occurring weekly!

"Development" describes the revisions of the current SDPC Application and Digital Governance Tool, but the major area of development is occurring within the great work of the Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS) work. With the great adoption of the common contract clauses across states – benefitting schools and providers and addressing the "what" – the next logical pain point was to address the "how" to implement those contracted terms. So those common clause legal-ese is modified to a pool of contract obligations and then matched to technical control benchmarks outlining the often-used "industry best standards' to allow the immediate 'kick off' of data exchange to get that tool in the school ecosystems and in practitioner hands! This work will be supported by the "Unity" draft and ready for prime time early in 2019 with the great support of both end users and marketplace provider volunteers.

Student Privacy Boot Camps

Join the Future of Privacy Forum and the Student Data Privacy Consortium as they provide a free 'Student Privacy Boot Camp' for districts.

Are you comfortable in all aspects of student privacy in your role in the classroom, overseeing data management, reporting and communications?

Need some immediate 'tactical' data privacy suggestions and/or tools that you can use immediately when you get back to your school?

This interactive event will outline the various privacy considerations for your role, privacy resources, and strategies that you could easily employ to protect students and link you to an international network of practitioners that are doing the same each day – just like you!

*PLEASE NOTE: The Privacy Boot Camp is for non-SDPC members. All agenda sessions are introductory pieces and have already been provided to SDPC members via group meetings, introductory calls and training sessions. All SDPC Members are encouraged to attend the **SDPC Meeting on April 3-4, 2019** in Portland, OR.*

Student Data Privacy Consortium

DATES:
January 28, 2019
Future of Education Technology Conference (FETC), Orlando, FL
                                   Register Here

April 4, 2019
Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), Portland, OR
                                   Register Here

June TBD, 2019
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Philadelphia, PA
                                   Register Here

Student Data Privacy Consortium: Annual Meeting & Social

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The SDPC Preferred Provider Program (P³)

The Student Data Privacy Consortium's (SDPC) focuses on collaborative activities and does not attempt to replace products or services available in the marketplace allowing for ingenuity and opportunities for vendors to be a part of this trusted Community.

Recently, there have been multiple requests from local and state agencies for additional legal, implementation, professional learning, etc. support. These additional "services" requested may or may not be in the core activities of, but are impacted by, the Consortium tools, effective practices, etc. The SDPC leadership do not wish to enter into competition with community members but also want to play a leadership role in supporting the numerous requests from members to make the Project a success. In an attempt to balance these factors, the **SDPC Preferred Provider Program (P³)** has been developed.

The Preferred Provider Program Consists of:
- A set of SDPC Services are established and approved by SDPC leadership
- A call sent to marketplace providers to become a cadre of entities that can provide such goods and/or services to interested customers and enter into a contractual agreement to become a *"SDPC Preferred Provider"* (P³)

- Consortia sponsored products/tools services
- Consortia membership, ideals, mission
- Tangential initiatives and groups, including privacy initiatives, funders, etc
- Core stakeholder/consumer/client
- Stakeholder relationship driving core directives through pain points

containing a set of established rules and benefits
- P³ members will be promoted in all communications including the Vendor Marketplace
- These providers will be reviewed by customer surveys after each engagement

Possible Service/Product Support Area(S): Direct SDPC Alliance Support; Privacy Training; Cyber Security & Audits; Privacy Services & Audits; Cyber Security & Privacy Services; Application Monitoring & Support; Legal Privacy & Cyber Security Services; And Data Integration & Protection

Preferred Provider Requirements
To become an *"SDPC Preferred Provider"* the following criteria must be met:
- Be a member in good standing of the SDPC

- Accurately promote their products/services in the A4L/SDPC Marketplace
- Provide two verifiable recommendations from clients on products/services
- Enter into an agreement with the SDPC to accurately reimburse 15% of gross income from engagements to the SDPC for reimbursable overhead and product/service promotion
- Provide customers with a *"SDPC Preferred Provider Survey"* after engagement

If you, or your organization, is interested in being a SDPC Preferred Provider you can find more information in the Preferred Provider Guide or please contact us. **Be the first to get in front of the thousands of SDPC districts looking for privacy services support – and do it today!**

In The News

AU Community announces 2019 Leadership – click here

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) releases Public Service Announcement (PSA) recommending engagement with consortiums – click here

A4L Community joins Project Unicorn Steering Committee – click here

A4L Community Site: Changes to virtual meeting process – click here

A4L Community Functional Group Meeting Schedule

Day	Frequency	Group	Staff Liaison
INTERNATIONAL			*meetings are shown/based on US Eastern time zone*
Monday	1st Mon, monthly	**Open Source Developers Network**	John Lovell
Monday	3rd Mon, monthly	**Association Board of Directors**	Larry Fruth
Tuesday	2nd Tues, monthly	**Data Privacy**	Penny Murray
Tuesday	Every 4 weeks	**D3M**	John Lovell
Wednesday	Bi-weekly	**Infrastructure**	John Lovell
Tuesday	1st Tues, monthly	**Policy & Procedures**	John Lovell
Thursday	Every 4 weeks	**International Technical Board**	John Lovell
Ad-hoc	(currently meeting bi-weekly)	**Marketing**	Penny Murray
NORTH AMERICA			*meetings are shown/based on US Eastern time zone*
Monday	3rd Mon, monthly	**NA Management Board**	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	Bi-weekly	**NA Technical Board**	John Lovell
UNITED KINGDOM			*meetings are shown/based on UK GMT*
Tuesday	2nd Tues, monthly	**UK Management Board**	Larry Fruth / Penny Murray
Thursday	2nd Thurs, monthly	**UK Technical Board**	Penny Murray

A4L Community Members can find further information on each group on the collaboration area / A4L Community Site here.
(member log in required)

Facebook   **LinkedIn**   **Google+**   **YouTube**   **Twitter (NA)**   **Twitter (UK)**   **Twitter (AU)**

About the Access 4 Learning Community

There is no other global community made up of educational policymakers, marketplace product and service providers and the customers they serve, collaborating daily to address real word learning information and resource issues.

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, previously the SIF Association, is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of schools, districts, local authorities, states, US and International Ministries of Education, software vendors and consultants who collectively address all aspects of learning information management and access to support learning. The A4L Community is "Powered by SIF" Specifications as its major technical tool to allow for this management and access simply, securely and in a scalable, standard way regardless of the platform hosting those applications. The Access 4 Learning Community 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 https://www.A4L.org

Contact Us

Larry Fruth II, PhD
Executive Director/CEO

Provides direction and leadership toward the achievement of the organization´s philosophy, mission, strategy, and its annual goals and objectives. Support includes; Board Administration and Support, Program and Service Delivery, Financial and Human Resource Management, Community Relations and Fundraising.

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John Lovell
Technology Director

Responsible for the support and the extension of functionality for the SIF Test Harness. He is the lead software developer for the Association and supports the on-going use of the Test Harness by developers of agents, adapters, ZISes and middleware.

jlovell@A4L.org

Penny Murray
Community Director

Provides membership services, develops communications, supports member working activities including particular SIF implementations, organizational meetings and strategic partnerships to ensure initiative success.

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NEWSLETTER
Issue 41

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