NEWSLETTER

June 2019

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

A deep breath…?

by Larry Fruth II, PhD – Executive Director / CEO

Can you recall a time in your professional or personal life when you were pressed both in time and the amount of work ahead of you on a critical task, event, etc.?

Can you recall how you felt after you successfully delivered on it?

A deep breath? …Hardly!

That is how a LOT of us feel with the successful release of the Unity Specification in North America and the next version of our international SIF Infrastructure Specification 3.3.

It is the culmination of 20 years of work bringing together the best of the best from all previous technical blueprint work that has enable more K12 software application interoperability than all other technical standards – combined! The Team and the Boards want to say a HUGE thank you for all that supported its

development over the past 2 years and its release (see article) to the marketplace. ***It impacts interoperability <u>AND</u> privacy – and no other technical specification can say that!***

But as we take that collective breath, the work is not done. Stay tuned as the Community embarks on a comprehensive adoption plan which will focus on creating marketplace demand for Unity's use from end users and easy adoption for current market offerings from providers – the ultimate "chicken or the egg" conversation when it comes to technical standards adoption!

The word is out, the breath has been taken… now it is time to get back to work and we could use all hands-on deck!

Global Community News

NOW AVAILABLE:
SIF Infrastructure Implementation Specification 3.3

PRESS RELEASE: The only educational interoperability data standard with privacy controls 'baked in'...

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community is proud to announce the release of the SIF Infrastructure Implementation Specification 3.3, supporting greater privacy and security controls including the work of the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) and designed to support API development and standardization.

Schools, administration officials, classroom teachers and education authorities are faced with an overwhelming array of applications to assist in a student's learning, school administrative functions and community communication tools. Data may travel from inhouse on premises, highly trusted sources to external applications which may not be as trusted. A paper or digital contract is the only primitive protection for this data exchange. The SIF Infrastructure Implementation Specification 3.3 sees the introduction of the Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS) to assist in this key area. GEPS, is a PK-20 global set of data privacy obligations that can be aligned to contractual clauses as well as technical control benchmarks. GEPS includes open XML code (Privacy Obligation Documents or PODs) to transfer privacy obligations between controllers and processors to bridge the gap in understand of education data protection expectations. GEPS allows for organizations to choose the SDPC standard suggestions or use other existing standards, (i.e. IEEE, NIST, ISO, etc.) to set their own expectations between vendors and customers on managing student data.

"Through the great collaborative work of the A4L Community in Australia, North America and New Zealand, this SIF Infrastructure Implementation Specification 3.3 release includes support for implementing Privacy Obligation Documents (PODs) via the Data Protection Enforcer Service. It provides a powerful way forward for organizations exchanging data to help ensure only the right data moves to the right place" says Anthony Yaremenko, Projects Lead, National Schools Interoperability Program (NSIP) and Co-Lead, A4L Data Privacy Task Force. "Privacy conscious organizations can leverage this new functionality to turn paper contracts into digital PODs and the A4L Data Privacy Task Force is excited to work with early adopters and ensure the PODs and Enforcement service are fit-for-purpose in the wild. The Task Force are now setting their sights on Personal Privacy Obligations Documents (PPODs)."

"I am proud of the work the Community has undertaken to bring this new release to the marketplace" states Larry Fruth II, PhD, CEO/Exec Director, A4L Community. "With increased performance 'on the wire' at all scales, this release enables ease of usage and a wider availability of tools to enable interoperability, making it a significant release for the educational marketplace. The Community is also developing 'use case' blueprints with other technical standards so vendors can expect that the data exchange standard they build today will be used tomorrow, alongside easy maturation from existing Specifications to a more powerful infrastructure. It is a powerful, upgraded standard for data exchange, ensuring student data privacy, that we know will make a great difference to end users and vendors alike."

To find out more about the SIF Infrastructure Implementation Specification 3.3, please click here.

Project Unicorn release Standards Glossary

Project Unicorn has recently released an *A-Z Glossary of K-12 Interoperability Standards* for the education marketplace.

This resource has all the information you need, including descriptions, resource types, domains, and organizations to get you on the right track for standards implementation. The glossary is clickable, so if you want to learn more about a standard, just click the section header. To download the glossary, please click here.

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

UPDATE: Vendor Marketplace

It is a time of transition. As people start the work to adopt the Unity Specification, they will be turning to our integrator members for everything from advice to working solutions. Because of this, staff will be taking steps to help people connect with these members. At a high level we are making integrators easier to find in the Vendor Marketplace along with their current certifications.

To review this Integrator list, please click here.

If your organization helps end-users deploy software that follows and adopts SIF Standards, please check the Marketplace to ensure your organization is listed in the 'Integration Services' filter. If not, please ask your organization's 'Primary Business Contact' to update their A4L Community profile (in the Additional Information section). Information is synched daily so check back in 24 hours to ensure the profile has been updated.

Any queries, please contact Penny Murray.

Welcome new members!

A4L Community member:

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

Baltimore County Public Schools

Gresham-Barlow School District

Gonzales Unified School District

Oakland School District

Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) members:

Bainbridge Island School District

Clever

codeSpark, Inc.

Hanford Joint Unified School District

LearnPlatform

North Allegheny School District

News from the Australian Community

EduTECH 2019

Earlier this month NSIP were exhibitors at the EduTECH conference held in Sydney.

This year's topic for the NSIP Interoperability Challenge was Trust. The objective was for system solution providers to identify ways in which trust, privacy and security are implemented in their solutions to provide the digital ecosystem with confidence in their product / service. Applications were open to all EduTECH exhibitors. To enter the challenge, the following questions needed to be answered:

- Is trust a key focus for your organisation? If so, why?

- What questions are potential purchasers asking regarding your product's privacy and security features?

- What do you see as the challenges of building trust in education technology solutions, and how do you deal with them? in your own product and when you interact with other products and services

- How does your solution address the various privacy and security concerns? What is on your future roadmap?

- What national initiatives or support would help you in meeting the challenges of privacy and security into the future?

The seven successful applications chosen were from SchoolBox, ecoSIStem, Civica, CyberHound (SuperLoop), Wonde, Instructure and Microsoft. The presentations can be found here

NSIP also held their annual vendors forum breakfast where the agenda topics covered were:

- The Learning Services Architecture Roadmap: Jurisdictional Implementation Update. The current roadmap can be viewed here

- Privacy and Trust

- Update on the SIF Data Model Implementation Specification

- Vendors Update

News from the North American Community

NOW AVAILABLE: Unity Specification

PRESS RELEASE: Introducing Unity... the best of the best from 20yrs marketplace interoperability

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, previously the SIF Association, is proud to create a new "buzz" – the best of the best from 20 years of the most widely used interoperability specifications to address school needs and builds towards allowing states and vendors to implement the US Department of Education's Common Education Data Standards (CEDS).

The new Specification – code named "Unity" – was built by our volunteer members developed using open, non-proprietary and transparent processes linked to a quality control Certification Program. It contains the most comprehensive K12 data model and modern, internationally used transport technologies to securely move the data to provide it to the right person at the right time in the right way under local data privacy control.

A highlight of the new global infrastructure is the ability to carry the most recent work of the Student Data Privacy Consortium's (SDPC) and their 'Global Education Privacy Standard' or GEPS. GEPS allows for the communication of privacy requirements including contract clauses, privacy obligations and security benchmarks over the wire in a format easily ingested by marketplace providers allowing products to get in the hands of users in a rapid, safe, and secure manner. The new 'Unity' infrastructure has increased performance and security on the wire, ease of usage, and scales for the widest educational focused interoperability by any technical standard - with or without the need for middleware!

"What Unity gives me as a school student data steward is what it can do compared to other educational specification; the ability to link interoperability with privacy controls for greater data control" affirms Steve Smith, CIO, Cambridge Public Schools.

"Many marketplace providers and other standards groups have attempted to underplay usage of the SIF Specifications in the educational space. A recent survey of just 7 K12 software integrators proves they are far and away the most used set of blueprints – in all 50 states and multiple countries! Unity is the next step supporting greater privacy and security controls including the work of the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) and is designed to support API standardization" states Larry Fruth II, PhD, CEO/Exec Director, A4L Community. "The Community is also developing 'use case' blueprints based on 'solutions development' that will include other technical standards so vendors can expect that the data exchange standard they build today will be used tomorrow."

To find out more about the 'Unity' Specification, please go to: https://www.A4L.org/page/Unity

SIF Usage Survey information >>

SIF being used in ALL 50 States!

Some in the educational marketplace attempt to dismiss SIF utilization in the attempts to promote their own work but the fact is: **since 1997, the SIF Specification is the #1 used technical blueprint for interoperability – and still is BY FAR!**

In 2016, and again in 2019, the Community developed a brief usage survey which was sent to marketplace software integrators who must support all technical standards when serving their LEA/SEA customers. Even with a short timeframe (2 weeks) and low response rate (7 survey responses) the impact numbers depict the continued usage and growth of SIF usage. Care was taken to not "double count" applications in use in districts. This means that confirmed numbers are substantiated and expected to be well under actual values.

SIF Usage Survey information >>
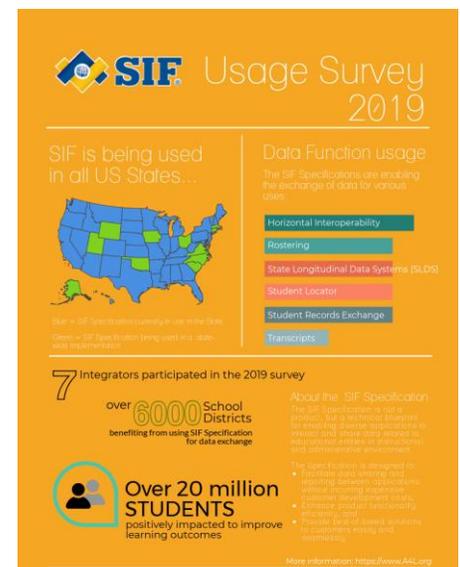
News from the Student Data Privacy Consortium

SDPC Resource Registry API released to further the awareness of student data privacy

PRESS RELEASE: SDPC Resource Registry API released to further the awareness of student data privacy

The Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC), a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, is proud to announce the release of its API to enable the use of the public information available from the SDPC Resource Registry to further student data privacy awareness in the educational marketplace.

While meant to be a tool for individual schools and Alliances to use for their internal application management, the strength of the Resource Registry is in the numbers! Data from thousands of schools, about contract information across hundreds of vendors, is the leveraging that is moving the needle in the educational technology marketplace. Some of the inputted information is available publicly on the site (no log in required) while much more is only accessible with membership and account log in.

By popular request, the SDPC Governance Group has been asked by numerous parties (schools, states, researchers, vendors policy makers, etc.) to make the public information available in the SDPC Resource Registry in a more efficient manner. The **SDPC Resource Registry API** is that mechanism. The API is only available to SDPC members and users must adhere to the **API Registry Usage Policy**.

"As the SDPC community continues to grow exponentially members are seeing opportunities to leverage the public data in a manor to serve the needs of both districts and vendors better" states Steve Smith, CIO, Cambridge Public Schools. "SDPC's willingness to share this information in an efficient manor with partners providing services to SDPC members demonstrates the power of the community as a whole."

The SDPC Governance Group have also published their Privacy Policy, including API Usage Policy documentation, outlining the terms of use for members to access and use the API. It also clearly identifies which data objects are shared via the API and which are not.

To find out more about the SDPC Resource Registry API, please go to: https://privacy.A4L.org/privacy-policy/

Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS)

Stay tuned to this space! As we mentioned, the Unity release addresses both interoperability and privacy...

Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS). v3

The privacy component it enables is the new international infrastructure, which now supports the usage of the Global Education Privacy Standard (GEPS), which in turn is getting its finishing touches within the SDPC Community.
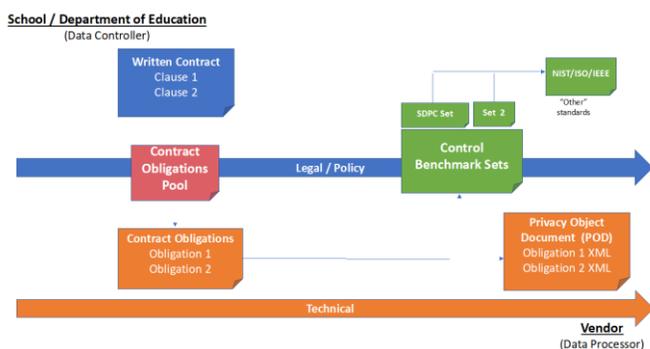
GEPS is privacy contract meta-data to more clearly articulate between vendors and end users, the specific ways that the data is handled by aligning the privacy legal clauses to technical obligations and then standard benchmarks to generate a machine-readable XML-based Privacy Object Document.

Imagine an end user and vendor process where a signed contract immediately can kick off a data exchange because all the privacy expectations around who, what, where and how about student data is clearly articulated...It is a reality now with GEPS.

To find out more about GEPS, please go to: https://privacy.a4l.org/geps/

Student Privacy Boot Camp @ ISTE

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.

REGISTER TODAY!
June 24, 2019
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Philadelphia, PA
Register Here

UPDATE: Use of 'National Clause Set' increasing…

The beginnings of the Student Data Privacy Consortium's (SDPC) Common Contract Framework had visions of grandeur of all 50 states adhering to a similar set of contract clauses focused student data privacy.

As you know getting 50 entities to agree was a fool's goal. The Alliances were formed to allow each state to develop their own and now with 25 Alliances the ball is rolling fast! Well the pendulum swings back and we now have 11 state

Alliances using the SAME set of contract clauses with slight modifications.

Expected soon from the SDPC Legal Sub-Committee is a crosswalk of those 11 and other state specific ones creating a National Data Privacy Agreement (DPA) for use by other Alliances. Imagine the win-win for schools and vendors adhering to one set of privacy contract clauses across numerous states. A huge savings of time and money and most importantly – student privacy!

Eleven States now utilizing 'National Privacy Clause Set' from the SDPC
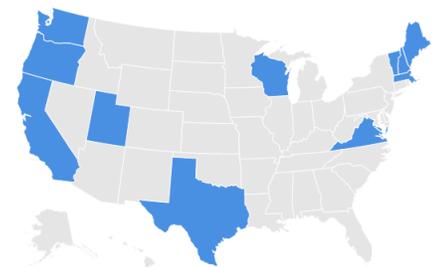
Chromebook App Hub enables transparency for developers

Following our March 5, 2019 press release, the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC), a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, is proud to be part of the Chromebook App Hub as it is a great place to be transparent about data privacy policies.

The App Hub is an online resource to help educators, administrators and developers work together to learn about

Chromebook apps and activity ideas for schools. Visitors to the site will now be able to see which vendors are members

and/or have signed SDPC Agreements on the SDPC Resource Registry, providing additional transparency for the education marketplace.

With twenty-five State Alliances serving over 32 million students supporting privacy controls across almost 2,000 applications - the SDPC is THE Community to be a part of to share successes and challenges!

In the News

SDPC Resource Registry API released to further awareness of student data privacy – click here

The only educational interoperability data standard with privacy controls 'baked in'… – click here

Introducing Unity… the best of the best from 20 years marketplace interoperability – click here

Nine States Now Utilizing 'National Privacy Clause Set' from the Student Data Privacy Consortium – 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
Tuesday	4th Tues, quarterly	**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
Thursday	(currently meeting bi-weekly)	**Marketing**	Penny Murray
NORTH AMERICA			*meetings are shown/based on US Eastern time zone*
Wednesday	2nd Weds, quarterly	**NA Management Board**	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	Bi-weekly	**NA Technical Board**	John Lovell
STUDENT DATA PRIVACY CONSORTIUM			*meetings are shown/based on US Eastern time zone*
Wednesday	3rd Weds, monthly	**Project Updates**	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	2nd Weds, Qtrly (2nd month)	**Alliance Leadership**	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	4th Weds, Qtrly (3rd month)	**Governance**	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	1st Weds, Qtrly (1st month)	**Legal Task Force**	Larry Fruth

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

Facebook   **LinkedIn**   **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.

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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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