



Press Release

New Education Portal System Helps State Education Agencies Easily Access, Manage, and Share Critical Information

Collaboration among five leading software companies results in revolutionary multi-system interoperability for data driven decision making system

ATLANTA, GEORGIA – (March 14, 2007) – Educators can now obtain information they need through a single system. The D3M Alliance, a group of five leading education technology companies, today announced the launch of a new portal-based system designed to help local and state education agencies reduce the number of steps it takes to access, manage, and share critical information for data driven decision making.

The system, called the D3M Education Connection™, implements software applications by Choice Solutions, Edustructures, ESP Solutions Group, and TetraData and is built on Microsoft's Sharepoint portal technology—allowing educators to access information by signing on to a single integrated system and simplifying the electronic sharing of data across any application.

Integrating all five companies' software applications in a single sign-on environment was the goal of the D3M Alliance when it formed 18 months ago. "The D3M Education Connection represents our collective vision for local and state education agencies," said Rich Seidner, Microsoft's executive director of education. "Our alliance is committed to further enhancing the capabilities of the D3M solution and to finding more ways to help educators manage their resources and accomplish their education mission through improved interoperability, adherence to open standards, enhanced security, and shared development tools."

Solving all the technical issues to get five companies' software to work seamlessly together in real-time required the successful integration of several national, open standards. National standards such as the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF), and numerous technical standards allow the D3M solution to be replicable across all 50 state environments.

"The integration accomplished by the Alliance would have saved us a tremendous amount of effort," said Howard Woodard, former CIO of the Georgia Department of Education who attended a demonstration of the new system. "I wish this solution was available four years ago."

Currently, education agencies have to manage large volumes of data that are distributed across various software applications and technology platforms to meet rigorous federal and state reporting mandates. They also need to rely on the quality of data in order to make important decisions that affect students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The D3M Education Connection makes it possible to integrate these applications and share data across agency departments instantaneously through a single access point. Further, the solution uses technology that ensures security and privacy, giving users immediate, authorized access to disparate information that is directly applicable to their role (e.g., student, teacher, administrator).

The key feature of the D3M Education Connection—the single sign-on environment—simplifies access for all users and addresses multiple facets of the education process, from tracking student performance data, to building personalized curriculum for the individual student, to creating a connected learning community where educators can share lesson plans and other teaching tools.

About the D3M Alliance: The D3M Education Connection solution represents the collaborative efforts of the D3M Alliance members—Choice Solutions, Edustructures, ESP Solutions Group, Microsoft, and TetraData. The primary vision of the Alliance has been to provide PK-12 education agencies with a comprehensive solution that addresses enterprise identity management, disparate systems interoperability, vertical reporting, and longitudinal data management.

Choice Solutions is an end-to-end global Enterprise IT Services & Solutions organization. Their E²RP™ (Enterprise Education Resource Planning) platform represents the next generation of educational software, which provides a comprehensive, secure and seamless access to all stakeholders' data needs. The E²RP™ Portal, Enterprise Directory, and SRS (State Registration System) form the foundation for creating a truly effective “connected learning” environment.

Founded in 1991 Choice Solutions has grown from a vendor of software products to a full-service technology consultancy in the education community. For more information, visit www.e2rp.com

Edustructures is the recognized leader in SIF integration solutions for the PK-12 education market, making it possible for market-leading Student Information, Library, Transportation, Cafeteria, and Directory solutions to reliably and securely share data in real-time. Through its SIFWorks® integration platform, comprehensive professional services, and business relationships with technology providers and educators, Edustructures connects the systems that power education. For more information, visit www.edustructures.com.

ESP Solutions Group is a data consulting and technology firm specializing in PK-12 education data systems. ESP has advised all 52 education agencies as well as the U.S. Department of Education on the practice of data management. ESP is regarded as leading experts in understanding the data and technology implications of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN, ED*facts*), and the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF). ESP's State Report Manager™ (SRM), a fully automated reporting tool that coordinates state data submissions, allows data errors to be resolved *before* they are sent to the state. For more information, visit www.espsolutionsgroup.com.

Microsoft Corporation (NASDAQ: MSFT) is the worldwide leader in software, services, and solutions for businesses, government, and education. For more information, visit www.microsoft.com.

TetraData is the nation's leading provider of data warehousing, analysis, and reporting solutions for K-12 education agencies. TetraData's solutions help educators achieve and sustain high performance by facilitating data driven decision making. TetraData solutions capture, integrate, and store data from administrative and educational systems and deliver comprehensive and customized data analysis and reporting. With TetraData solutions, educators can easily and accurately assess the factors that drive performance at the state, district, building, and individual student levels. TetraData located in Greenville, South Carolina, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Follett Software Company. For more information, visit www.tetradata.com.

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