

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RECOMMENDS  
INTEGRATED DATA SYSTEMS VIA SCHOOLS INTEROPERABILITY  
FRAMEWORK CERTIFICATION**

*SIF Certification recommended in released U.S. National Education Technology Plan*

**Washington D.C. - January 11, 2005** - The Schools Interoperability Framework Association, (SIF), is proud to announce that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) recommends that schools, districts and states consider SIF Certification in the recently released National Educational Technology Plan - *Toward A New Golden Age In American Education*. The National Technology Plan provides a technology utilization framework developed from input received from educators and technology experts across the country.

The report outlines Secretary of Education Rod Paige's vision and recommendations for a national strategy for educational technology. The strategy includes examples of use and seven major action steps with recommendations for all schools and states to use to help utilize technology to its fullest extent. A vital component in this utilization is the development of systems that allow teachers, principals and administrators to track student achievement and adjust instruction more effectively to individual needs.

The Plan's Action Step 7 is Integrated Data Systems. According to the plan, "Integrated, interoperable data systems are the key to better allocation of resources, greater management efficiency, and online and technology-based assessments of student performance that empower educators to transform teaching and personalize instruction". A recommendation under this Action Step is, "Ensure interoperability. For example consider Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) Compliance Certification as a requirement in all RFPs and purchasing decisions".

The SIF Association is a unique non-profit collaborative of over 250 schools, districts, states, the USED, vendors and consultants collectively defining the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. The SIF Certification program is a voluntary, formal process that vendors undertake to ensure their products meet all the applicable conformance requirements for interoperability. To date, 41 products have been certified ranging from student information and data warehouse systems to transportation, library and foodservice applications. The SIF Certification program is administered on behalf of SIF by its designated Certification Authority, The Open Group.

"On behalf of the Association I want to commend Secretary Paige, his staff, and the thousands of Americans who have provided input into the National Technology Plan for recognizing the vital role that interoperable data systems play in making our educational institutions more efficient and more effective," says Larry Fruth II, Executive Director of SIF. "By including SIF Certification in their data system RFP's schools, districts and states can feel confident that the purchases they make adhere to the

most rigorous interoperability standards available. SIF is pleased that its efforts have been recognized in the report and is committed to serving the educational community as a forum where developers and end-users can collaborate to develop the next generation of pK12 data standards in an open and vendor neutral manner."

SIF sample RFP language, certified products, interoperability readiness surveys, implementation tools, end-user discussion forums and membership information can all be found on the SIF web site at [www.sifinfo.org](http://www.sifinfo.org).

**About The Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF)**

*The Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization driven by pK-12 education technology stakeholders to revolutionize the management and accessibility of data within schools and school districts and states. SIF enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably and securely regardless of the platform hosting the applications. SIF has united over 250 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 <http://www.sifinfo.org>.*