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## **WYOMING BUYS SIFA MEMBERSHIPS FOR ITS DISTRICTS**

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The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) is taking a giant step toward improving communication among school districts' computers. It has purchased memberships in the Schools Interoperability Framework Association (SIFA)® for all Wyoming school districts.

“While States and Districts are becoming members of SIFA individually, many leading State Education Agencies (SEA’s) find that they want to show leadership to their districts by providing those entities with access to SIFA’s resources and membership benefits. The Wyoming Department of Education supports the efforts and views of SIFA and wants the districts of Wyoming to be able to utilize these resources,” says Teri Wigert, the State’s Unit Director for Technology, Careers & Data.

With this membership, SIFA will provide each district with access to the SIFA community and will schedule state membership kick-off activities with the department and the districts. “Working with the department to tailor and address the needs of the districts is an essential part of the membership benefits we provide,” said Laurie Collins, Project Strategist of SIFA. “This work includes scheduled visits with districts for one-on-one planning sessions, district awareness building activities, strategizing on implementation planning, district-specific webinars and presentations, and professional development activities.”

Wyoming considers state-wide SIFA memberships to be a key to their data management success. “The only way to make this a streamlined and successful endeavor is to insure all districts and the state have the opportunity to grow into this together,” Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jim McBride said. “I am glad we have the resources to make this possible for all Wyoming districts and I look forward to the positive results I believe this venture will provide.”

By bringing together more than 350 leading software developers, interested school districts, regional education service centers, state departments of education and other concerned organizations, SIFA has developed a set of common definitions for data interoperability and a set of rules for how this data can be shared. This combination of common definitions and messaging rules make it possible for software applications from different vendors to share data and help eliminate redundant data entry and data inconsistency.

“These state bulk buys are invaluable resources for schools attempting to meet state and federal requirements for educational data reporting,” said Dr. Larry Fruth, Executive Director of SIFA. "These memberships will allow schools from across the state to improve their daily data-driven decision-making and ideally reduce costly data quality errors and duplication of data entry efforts."

Wyoming is the third state to purchase memberships for all of its districts or regional service providers. Virginia and Pennsylvania did so in 2005.

#### **About the Schools Interoperability Framework Association**

SIFA is a unique non-profit collaboration of over 375 schools, districts, states, the U.S. Department of Education, international government entities, software vendors and consultants collectively defining the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. SIFA enables diverse applications to interact and share data efficiently, reliably and securely regardless of the platform hosting the applications. It 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 <http://www.sifinfo.org>.

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