

Birmingham Local Authority Proof of Concept with SIF® and Edustructures®

Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Authority) is an agency of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCES, formerly DfES) tasked to procure and maximize the use of information technology for schools. Ultimately, Becta aims to help schools use technology to drive student achievement in accordance with the Every Child Matters Agenda.

Challenge

Under that charter, Becta began investigating standardized solutions for establishing true data interoperability that enables the collection and use of school and pupil data. The solution needed to enable secure, reliable, and platform-independent data sharing between diverse applications. Further, it needed to facilitate better management and accessibility of data within and between schools (horizontal reporting) as well as between schools and other interested parties such as local authorities and government agencies (vertical reporting).

Solution

After researching various standards and methodologies, and noting the momentum and successful adoption throughout the U.S. of the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF®) standard, Becta recommended the adoption of SIF as the UK's solution for data interoperability. At the time, however, the SIF specification was standardized on U.S. education objects and elements, thus Becta needed to adapt the existing standard to meet UK education data definitions. Becta turned to Edustructures®, the leading provider of SIF solutions and services, to assist in the gap analysis (determining what needed to be adapted), in architecting a UK SIF specification, and then proving the standard in a real-world implementation. Working in close cooperation with the concerned entities—including schools, vendors and educators—Edustructures delivered the SIF UK data model v1.0, customized to address the unique data management needs of the UK. Once the spec was architected, Edustructures implemented the first-ever SIF UK project, a proof-of-concept involving nine schools in the Birmingham Local Authority (LA) to test interoperability between the schools, the Local Authority and the national DCES.

Results

The proof-of-concept was a success, meeting project objectives for robust connectivity between the schools' MIS systems, learning platforms, and the LA's MIS system. With SIF, data movement is *much* faster—one day compared to existing data collection methods that require three-to-four months to complete for data transfer from the individual school to the national education authority. A full set of data can now be collected from a school in less than 10 minutes—real-time information automation that enlightens school practice and strengthens the ability of schools to personalize learning. As a result, students throughout the UK will enjoy an enhanced learning experience.



“One particular benefit of the vertical transfer of data was that data was received by the DCES the day it was collected at the school level. This is a significant and key improvement on the standard three-to-four month delay using existing data collection methods”

NICK BARRON,
senior architect, Data Services,
Becta

Assuring Your Success

Edustructures ensures your SIF implementation success story by offering a comprehensive program of training, technical support and consulting services.

Implementation

Our implementation engineers have successfully installed more state and district projects than any other SIF vendor, experience that results in a superior implementation. The implementation process involves analysis and planning, installing the server software, creating zones, defining the agents that will be registered in each zone, and configuring access control permissions.

Project Management

As the first company dedicated to delivering SIF-based solutions, Edustructures offers a knowledgeable staff to deliver extensive, real world, best-practice project management for your implementation.

Training/Professional Development

Edustructures offers a variety of training options tailored to each district or state need. Basic SIFWorks training includes installation, configuration, and continued maintenance of the SIF infrastructure.

Ongoing Support

Edustructures maintains an experienced team of support professionals focused on your success via toll-free phone and email. Additionally, our Customer Support Center portal offers downloads of the latest versions of our products, the ability to open or view support cases, browsing of technical support bulletins and product documentation, and access to our technical knowledge base.

Edustructures: SIF is all we do!

- **MORE state and district SIF implementations than any other SIF solution provider**
- **MORE available certified agents than any other SIF solution provider**
- **MORE SIF agents have been built using our technology than all other technology platforms combined**
- **FIRST to market with a commercial Zone Integration Server (ZIS)**
- **FIRST to implement district-wide SIF solutions**
- **FIRST to scale SIF to State-level implementations**
- **FIRST commercial SIF development toolkit**

ABOUT EDUSTRUCTURES

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, Directory solutions and more 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.

**To get your school, district or state connected, contact Edustructures:
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