



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Carolina to Implement First SIF-Based Statewide Student Identifier System

Bellwether Contract Awarded to ESP Solutions Group, eScholar, and Edustructures

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA (February 23, 2005) – ESP Solutions Group, the leader in K-12 education data systems, today announced the awarding of a contract from the South Carolina Department of Education to build the country's first statewide student identifier and locator system based on technologies compliant with Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) specifications. Unique student identifier and locator systems are considered to be critical components of a state's efforts to meet their accountability and data reporting requirements and those of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). SIF based data management solutions help school districts save time, reduce redundant data entry, save money, and improve data quality.

To implement this breakthrough system, ESP is partnering with Edustructures, the leader in SIF software products and services, and eScholar, the leader in unique student identification and data warehousing in K-12 education. This contract solidifies the ESP-eScholar-Edustructures team as the premier identifier and locator solution for state education agencies.

Student identifier systems are used by state education agencies to identify each student within the state and maintain a contiguous record of those students as they move. This capability allows a state to implement data warehouses that track enrollment, test scores, and other factors as the students matriculate. The identifiers also help track student mobility, facilitating easier transfer of records as students migrate from school to school within a district or across the state.

"South Carolina is well known as being a national leader in education technology," said Glynn Ligon, president_of ESP Solutions Group. "They solidified that reputation today with the procurement of the first statewide SIF-based student identifier system." This system will be deployed during 2005 in all of the state's 88 school districts and will serve over 670,000 students.

"Setting up a student identifier and locator system will further South Carolina's efforts to provide teachers, administrators, and policy-makers with the information needed to support high student achievement," said Shawn Bay, CEO of eScholar. "Establishing a student ID and locator system is an essential building block for using data to help children get a better education. Implementing this system will reduce the reporting burden, make reporting more valid, and enable South Carolina to follow cohorts of students."

"This is another example of the powerful potential of SIF," added Steve Curtis, chief operating officer of Edustructures. "South Carolina is showing the country that states can implement innovative data management solutions based on the Schools Interoperability Framework that reduce the data reporting burden on districts and save the state money."

-MORE-

About ESP Solutions Group

ESP Solutions Group provides its education agency clients with extraordinary insight into K-12 data systems and psychometrics. Its team is comprised of industry experts who pioneered the concept of “data-driven decision-making” in the 1970’s and now help optimize the management of data by state and local education agencies. ESP personnel have advised all 52 state education agencies as well as the U.S. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on the practice of K-12 school data management. The firm’s management team is regarded as leading experts in understanding the data and technology implications of NCLB (the No Child Left Behind Act), PBDMI (Performance Based Data Management Initiative), EDEN (Education Data Exchange Network), and SIF (the Schools Interoperability Framework).

About eScholar

Based in White Plains, New York, eScholar is the leading provider of data warehouse and student identifier systems. The company’s products are licensed by seven state education agencies and approximately 2000 school districts.

eScholar has partnerships with leading product and service vendors, consulting firms and educational organizations. eScholar chairs the Data Warehousing Working Group for the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) is a founding Board Member and has assisted in setting the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) standards for school data identification.

About Edustructures

Edustructures is the first company completely dedicated to delivering an independent integration solution built on the SIF standard. As a result, it has quickly become the recognized leader in SIF integration solutions, making it possible for disparate applications to reliably and securely exchange data with one another.

Founded in 2002 and headquartered in the shadow of the Wasatch mountains just south of Salt Lake City, Edustructures is a privately held company distributing SIF-based software solutions. Through its SIFWorks® technology platform, comprehensive professional services, and business relationships with technology providers and educators, Edustructures connects the systems that power education.

Contact:

ESP Solutions Group
Mark D. Johnson
(512) 458-8364, ext. 107
mjohnson@espsolutionsgroup.com

Edustructures LLC
Steve Curtis
1.877.790.1261, ext. 913
news@edustrucures.com

eScholar LLC
Shawn Bay
(914) 989-2909
sbay@escholar.com

SIF and Schools Interoperability Framework are trademarks of the Schools Interoperability Framework Association. SIFWorks is a registered trademark of Edustructures, LLC.