



Access 4 Learning Community

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CONNECTING & SECURING EFFECTIVE LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS™

NEWSLETTER

March 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

How should we be 'measured'?

by Larry Fruth II, PhD—Exec Director/ CEO, A4L Community & SDPC

"The ultimate measure of a [person] is not where [he/she] stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where [he/she] stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Martin Luther King Jr.

That quote should make us think: It is now officially a year into this crisis and how would/could we be 'measured'? As we come out of our holes in the ground (like the American furry rodent we tell the coming of spring by), we begin to think what have we learned during this pandemic and what can we do differently for learners and practitioners NEXT year?

I, for one, am passionate about delivering REAL examples of sustainable personalized, individualized, differentiated learning – define those how you want! I think the explosion of virtual learning and maturation of new tools could make those often used, but not truly implemented, concepts a reality. But that is discussion for another LONGER day....

The A4L-SDPC Community continues to plug away at the regular deliverables

that never go away from our technical development around interoperability to addressing the needs around student data privacy stewardship. But to not 'waste' this crisis, which has really changed our collective view on what is needed for all schools, so much more is occurring.

First is our new mantra...

"Connecting and Securing Effective Learning Ecosystems™"

No interoperability. No Privacy. Those terms have become overused and tough to define today. Then there is the global work of the Community, the work around the next North American Unity Specification supporting CCSSO's COVID Task Force elements, the continued growth of the SDPC and effective use of the National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) with all this virtual learning occurring, and the multitude of webinars held during our year in exile that you can access on ANY topic!

So how can you and your organization be 'measured' during this pandemic? More exercise? Learn a language? Enjoy family time? Strategize on how to become a virtual organization? No matter what – we still seemed to keep busy!

Now read on...

Global Community News

OpenAPI: Unifying Developers; Quality Assurance: A vision is forming...; Welcome new Members!; Personal Privacy Obligations Document (P-POD) Under Consideration

Page 2

AU Community News

SIF Data Model Specification (Australia) 3.4.8 in review

Page 4

NZ Community News

SIF Data Model Specification (New Zealand) 3.2 in Community Review

Page 5

NA Community News

North American 2021 Elections: nominations now open!; A4L Community (NA) Town Hall Meeting announced; Bolstering Online Learning with Unity; Unity Specification: Community Review coming soon!; Connecting & Securing Effective Learning Ecosystem Webinars (Feb 2021)

Page 6

Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) News

SDPC Vendor Showcase Webinar: LearnPlatform (Mar 18); National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) Development & Usage Guide published; New Project Teams; Privacy By The Numbers

Page 8

Global Community News



OpenAPI: Unifying Developers

Thanks to the global Community's hard work adjusting our tooling, generation of a SIF Specification now produces OpenAPI YAML and JSON files. These can be used with UI tools to generate API style documentation. Furthermore, OpenAPI files can be used to automatically generate various libraries, frameworks, and even mock servers. Because of these capabilities we are making these files available to the Community to reduce implementation time for many product developers. Additionally, these bundles of files come with

JSON Schemas, the first time we are publish such artifacts!

As a result of this work, API style documentation will be appearing with our upcoming releases. For anyone that doesn't know, this is where each individual service is fully documented as discreet, yet comprehensive, chunks. This greatly aids programmers in properly putting together a set of API calls to have the desired effect.

While this is a major step forward the Community is still working on the fol-

lowing improvements.

- Faster Navigation & Loading Speeds
- Complete & Proper Labels
- Included Alternatives & Options
- Completely Expandable Payloads
- Hidden yet Discoverable Headers

Members should expect to encounter these files and this style of documentation as they review their next Specification release.

Quality Assurance: A vision is forming...



Quality Assurance represents a change in mindset for the A4L Community. No longer can we think of Certification as a one-and-done assessment, with minimal long-term involvement.

Instead, it needs to be seen by the marketplace as long-term commitment to excellence. It needs to be provided to the Community as a dependable and valuable service. It needs an ongoing

ing revenue stream to help deliver and support these needed services. The A4L Community intends to update our tooling and reform the Certification Program to rise to this challenge.

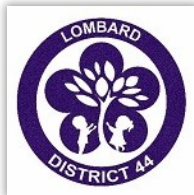
The A4L Policy & Procedures subcommittee is working to move us in this direction one step at a time. If you would like to help, please reach out to [Penny Murray](#), Community Director.

Welcome new members!

A4L-SDPC Community Members



Class Composer



Lombard School District 44, IL



Northeast Metro Intermediate District 916, MN

SDPC Community Members



Nardin Academy, NY



North Boone Schools, IL



Otus

Personal Privacy Obligations Document (P-POD) Under Consideration

The A4L Data Privacy Project Team is currently considering supporting objects to help map out the rich education digital technology ecosystem.

In support of the Privacy Obligation Document (POD) and Personal Privacy Obligation Document (P-POD), the A4L Data Privacy Project Team have commenced discussions regarding the creation of new objects to support the transfer of data regarding vendors, their products/services, assessments, and results of assessments. These assessment types could be security, privacy or interoperability related and the approach will help provide an on the wire capability to support emerging vendor catalogues, assessments of products and vendor onboarding processes.

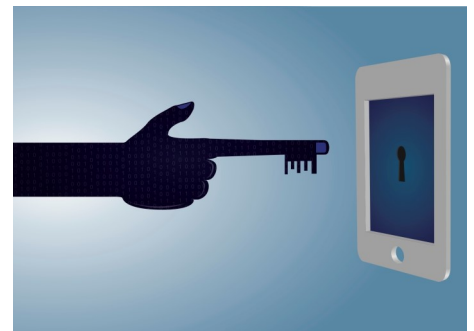
The Personal Privacy Obligations Document (P-POD) seeks to create a place to communicate personal requirements around an individual learner. Since we are starting by helping the people involved understand the decisions made for a particular student, we found that we could employ rather generic labels with international appeal.

Here are the high-level groupings:

- Consent to Share
- Permission to Participate
- Applicable Laws

The P-POD is both being discussed internationally and is included in the latest North American Specification draft.

If you would like to get involved in these discussions within the A4L Data Privacy Project Team, please contact [Penny Murray](#), Community Director.



News from the Australian Community



SIF Data Model Specification (Australia) 3.4.8 in review

The SIF Data Model Specification (Australia) 3.4.8 is to be released to the AU Management Board (SIFAAMB) for review and approval in the coming weeks.

At the recent AU Technical Board (Australian Data Standards Working Group) meeting, members moved to progress the 3.4.8 data model to the AU Management Board for ratification.

The SIF Data Model Specification (Australia) 3.4.8 includes:

- Australian Government - DESE Department of Education, Skills and Employment updates to support the collection of data from the Non-Government school sector
- Support for student travel and demographic updates (deceased flag)
- StudentSchoolEnrolment updates to reflect ongoing vs year by year enrolments (enrolments now supported to span many years)
- Additional gender codes



For more information, please contact the National Schools Interoperability Program (NSIP) by [email](#).



News from the New Zealand Community



SIF Data Model Specification (New Zealand) 3.2 now in Community Review

The SIF Data Model Specification (New Zealand) 3.2, release candidate 3 is expected to be the final release candidate in the 3.2 series; and we hope it will be released in the coming weeks, after review by our vendor community.

Updates in this release reflect lessons learned in implementing master data management processes at The Ministry, and in collecting attendance data from schools.

Changes to the model include:

- Provider data object, that defines Schools, ECEs and Tertiary Education Organisations, is dropped with the pre-existing Organisation data object taking on the role of defining education providers as well as communities of providers (such as Learning Support Clusters, Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako, etc.)
- Organisation, StudentPersonal,

StaffPersonal, and StudentContactPersonal data objects have changed how they store addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers to be Maps rather than Arrays. e.g. The new structure for a person with two Addresses is shown in *Picture 1*.

- NationalStudentNumber is now a String, rather than Integer; because real NSNs are too big for int32 to hold
- We have restructured Schedule entities that record the structure of a School's timetable. We renamed BellSchedule to SchedulePeriodTime; ScheduleHoliday to ProviderCalendarEvent; and ScheduleEvent to ScheduleException.
- StudentAttendanceTimeList, which collected student attendance on a student-by-student basis, has been dropped in favour of TeachingGroupMeetingAttendance; which allows for collecting attendance on a TeachingGroup meeting (or Timetable cell) basis as shown in *Picture 2*.

During 2021 we will continue to work with our community of software vendors who will be implementing SIF API calls to exchange data with The Ministry's Te Rito data hub "powered by SIF"; and expect to make another release of the SIF NZ Data Model in mid-2021.

For more information, or to provide feedback during this Community Review period, please contact [Stuart McGrigor](#), NZ Ministry of Education.

```
{
  "StudentPersonal": {
    "StudentPersonalLocalId": "ST1000001",
    "NationalStudentNumber": "9001000001",
    "PersonInfo": {
      "Name": {
        "FamilyName": "Saunders",
        "GivenName": "Thomas"
      },
      "Address": {
        "Physical": {
          "Type": "TH",
          "Line1": "27 Arataua Street",
          "Suburb": "Rotorua",
          "City": "Rotorua",
          "Country": "New Zealand",
          "PostalCode": "3010"
        },
        "Postal": {
          "Type": "DE",
          "Line1": "P O Box 81",
          "City": "Rotorua",
          "Country": "New Zealand",
          "PostalCode": "3010"
        }
      }
    }
  }
}
```

Picture 1



Picture 2

```
{
  "TeachingGroupMeetingAttendance": {
    "TeachingGroupMeetingAttendanceRefId":
      "7f11e3ed-3ac5-4673-9fdc-bcd934554",
    "Organisation": {
      "RefId": "762"
    },
    "TeachingGroup": {
      "RefId": "7f11e3ed-3ac5-4673-9fdc-
bcd934554"
    },
    "MeetingDate": "2020-04-03",
    "Scheduled": {
      "SchedulePeriod": {
        "LocalId": "2020a-A"
      },
      "StartTime": "09:30:00",
      "EndTime": "10:30:00"
    },
    "StudentAttendanceList": {
      "StudentAttendance": [
        {
          "Student": {
            "RefId": "7f11e3ed-3ac5-4673-9fdc-
bcd934554"
          },
          "Code": "P",
          "CodeGroup": "P",
          "Note": "Student was present."
        },
        {
          "Student": {
            "RefId": "7f11e3ed-3ac5-4673-9fdc-
bcd934554"
          },
          "Code": "L",
          "CodeGroup": "U",
          "Note": "Late to class; Unjustified",
          "StartTime": "09:45:00",
          "EndTime": "10:30:00"
        }
      ]
    }
  }
}
```

News from the North American Community



NA 2021 Elections: Nominations open!

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community has continued to have phenomenal leadership over the past year. The leadership, guidance and overall dedication to the Community prove critical to our collective successes. With the upcoming Town Hall Meeting, it is hard to believe that it is time for elections again! **Nominations are now OPEN!** (Available from March 15 -April 5, 2021 inclusive).

The Management Board is elected for two-year terms. This year there will be seven (7) seats open for the Management Board. To be eligible to run for the Management Board, the individuals shall be at least eighteen (18) years old and be A4L Community Voting Participants or employed by or representing an A4L Community Voting Participant

and duly authorized to represent that A4L Community Voting Participant, but need not be residents of the District of Columbia. An A4L Community Voting Participant Member institution (including associated subsidiaries of an A4L Community Voting Participant) may have at most one representative on the Management Board at one time.

The At-Large Technical Board is elected for a one-year term. There are four (4) seats open for the At-Large Technical Board members. At-Large Technical Board members must be A4L Community Voting Participants or employed by or represent an A4L Community Voting Participant and duly authorized to represent that A4L Community Voting Participant. You can download the policies and procedures for the Annual Elec-

tions as outlined by the Elections Committee on the A4L Community Site [here](#).

[Submit your NA MANAGEMENT BOARD nomination >>](#)

[Submit your NA TECHNICAL BOARD nomination >>](#)



A4L Community (NA) Town Hall Meeting



We are delighted to announce that we will be holding an A4L Community (North America) Town Hall Meeting on **Tuesday, May 4, 2021**.

This 2-hour webinar will include updates from the NA Management Board & NA Technical Board; an overview of Community activities over the past year plus a focus on priorities for 12-18 months ahead; Staff priorities and upcoming Community changes; as well as an opportunity for Community members to ask questions and feedback into upcoming priorities.

This is a 'free' closed event for A4L Community members only. *Login is required to view details and to register for this event.*

FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER TODAY!

Bolstering Online Learning with Unity

As the North American Technical Board (NATB) considered its next set of deliverables for Unity last fall, one thing bubbled all the way to the top: reporting of Online Learning. Yet as we looked amongst ourselves no expert could be found to lead us. So, we did what any strong group does: took it on ourselves, took more time, did research, and did it right. The results culminated in three distinct areas.

- Online Learning Profile
- Instructional Delivery Mode
- Positive Attendance & Expectations Met

CCSSO did a fantastic job of bringing the broader community together to create a Home Digital Access Data Collection. We have taken those fields

and added context to create the option of moving multiple Online Learning Profiles with any student's records. Deciding what to do with important fields that come from a questionnaire wasn't easy, so we hope you like the results.

Home Digital Access Data Collection: Blueprint for State Education Leaders (published by CCSSO)

Fundamental to Online Learning is when it is offered, who is enrolled to receive it, and how did they actually attend. So, we added Instructional Delivery Mode to several objects in the Unity Specification to cover all of these areas. Furthermore, we drew our final name and initial mapping to an existing CEDS element that we hope that will meet your needs.

CEDS: *Instructional Delivery Mode element*

Another area of Online Learning is positive attendance. Happily, Unity already has solid support for reporting who attended a class (not just who did not), even in its summary objects. In fact, we went back and forth on whether or not to make any changes to this area at all. In the end, we determined that some want to capture two things: did the student show and did they meet the expectations set by the organization. So, we added Expectations Met throughout our attendance related objects.

Members can take part in the Community Review of the next release of Unity. Find out how in the article that follows!

Unity Specification: Community Review coming soon!

The upcoming release of the Unity Specification impacts many areas. Some changes to the Data Model itself, other enhancements support the people working to adopt it.

Unity areas impacted:

- Online Learning Profile
- Instructional Delivery Mode
- Positive Attendance & Expectations Met
- Personal Privacy Obligations Document (P-POD)
- xPress Roster Corrections
- OpenAPI, JSON Schema, and API Documentation
- JSON Examples & Conversion Tools
- Spreadsheet Completeness

For a more detailed dive into the first three, checkout the Bolstering Online Learning with Unity article of this newsletter. There you will find a summary of our efforts and outcomes in meeting the needs of the unprecedented wave of online learners.

Objectively, the biggest change coming to Unity is the Personal Privacy Obligations Document (P-POD). So, don't be surprised if you hear this release referred to as the personal privacy release. To find out more about the P-POD check out the global area of this newsletter.

Release timeline (draft):

March 11-25:

NA Technical Board final review

March 25:

NA Technical Board make recommendation to NA Management Board to publish Unity Specification for Community Review

March 29:

NA Management Board approval

March 30-April 13:

COMMUNITY REVIEW

April 15-22:

NA Technical Board review feedback and make edits to Specification

April 22:

NA Technical Board recommendation to NA Management Board to publish Unity Specification for public release

April 26-28:

NA Management Board review of feedback & NATB recommendation, approve for public release

May 4:

Unity Specification (Personal Privacy Release) published

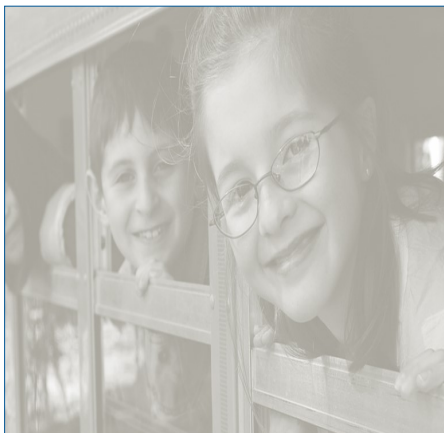
Members can see the full details, provide feedback, and vote on this release of Unity by participating in Community Review. Details will be sent to all NA Community Members in due course.



Connecting & Securing Effective Learning Ecosystems webinars (February 2021)

Thank you to our Presenters, Sponsors and everyone who attended our Connecting & Securing Effective Learning Ecosystems™ webinar series during February 2021—we hope you found the conversations useful and informative.

If you missed any of the sessions, here are the links to the webinar recordings and presentation slides:



FEBRUARY 3, 2021

Connecting and Securing: Setting the Stage

Data Access is Easier Than Ever with More Data Each Day – Is That A Good Thing?
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)

School and State Leadership On Local Control Issues
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)

FEBRUARY 10, 2021

Foundations of “Connecting” Ecosystems in the Real World

Setting the Course for Standardizing – Stopping the “Wheel Re-invention”
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)
‡ [CHAT](#)

Starting with the Data Dictionary and Maturing to Usage Tools All Under Local Control.
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Foundations of “Securing” Ecosystems Student Privacy

Data Stewardship 101 – Setting Common Expectations Between Vendors and Customers
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)

The Securing Continuum: From Legislation to Ecosystem Implementation and All Steps In-Between.
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Connecting and Securing in the Real World

The MA Data Hub Solution
[WEBINAR RECORDING](#) ‡ [SLIDES](#)

These and all our other presentations are available from the A4L website in the [Presentation Archive](#).

News from the Student Data Privacy Consortium

SDPC Vendor Showcase: LearnPlatform



We are delighted to confirm that our SDPC Vendor Showcase webinars are back for 2021!

Our first 2021 webinar is being co-hosted by LearnPlatform.

Building an Effective District EdTech Ecosystem

March 18, 2021 at 2pm ET

In this webinar, LearnPlatform will discuss what the 6 essential elements of an effective edtech ecosystem are and how LearnPlatform empowers districts to ensure the safety, equity and effectiveness of their education technology resources.

If you are a Vendor member of the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) and are interested in co-hosting a webinar during 2021, please contact [Penny Murray](#), Community Director for more information.

The National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) Development and Usage Document

As you probably know by now, the *National Data Privacy Agreement* (NDPA) was developed with extensive review and comments from districts, state organizations, marketplace providers and their legal representatives. The NDPA is designed to address common student data privacy concerns to streamline the educational application contracting processes for schools/districts who do not have the legal or fiscal resources and vendors who previously had to sign "one off" contracts with each of the over 13,000 US school districts.

While the NDPA allows for any state specific legislative requirements, the majority of the privacy expectations are standardized and may be used in addition to a Service Agreement (e.g. vendor Terms of Service (TOS) Agreements).

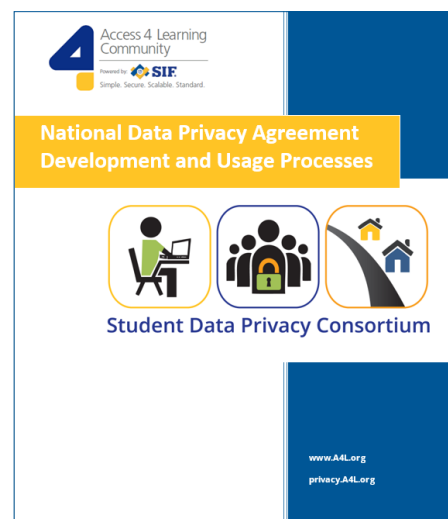
The SDPC Management Board formed a new group, the *Policy, Procedures and Usage (PPU) Project Team* with the charge to:

- Continue to develop continuity in the NDPA usage across Alliances/Country,
- Establish clear, transparent and open change management processes to the NDPA,
- Identify streamlining opportunities for usage of the NDPA.

And one of the first charges to the group was to put in place some usage expectations and change processes for the NDPA – or we could very easily have 50 "different" national models! So, with that the ***National Data Privacy Agreement Development and Usage Document*** was created. This document has been developed to pro-

tect the integrity of the NDPA, as well as the usage, change and approve Community expectations adopted by the members of the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC).

[View NDPA Usage Guidelines >>](#)



New SDPC Project Teams

Research Data Privacy Agreement (RDPA) Project Team

The Research Data Privacy Agreement (RDPA) Project Team is charged with the task of standardizing a data sharing agreement between end users and researchers. This will be accomplished by reviewing examples of currently used Research Data Sharing Agreements and some "must haves" in a potential candidate draft. The Project Team will successfully leverage the processes and format of the National Data Privacy Agreement SDPC work to generate and support the usage of a common agreement addressing the needs of both end users and researchers.

This group is open to any member of the Student Data Privacy Consortium.

Call Schedule: Every month, third Tuesday at 2pm US ET

Resource Registry Roadmap (R3) Project Team

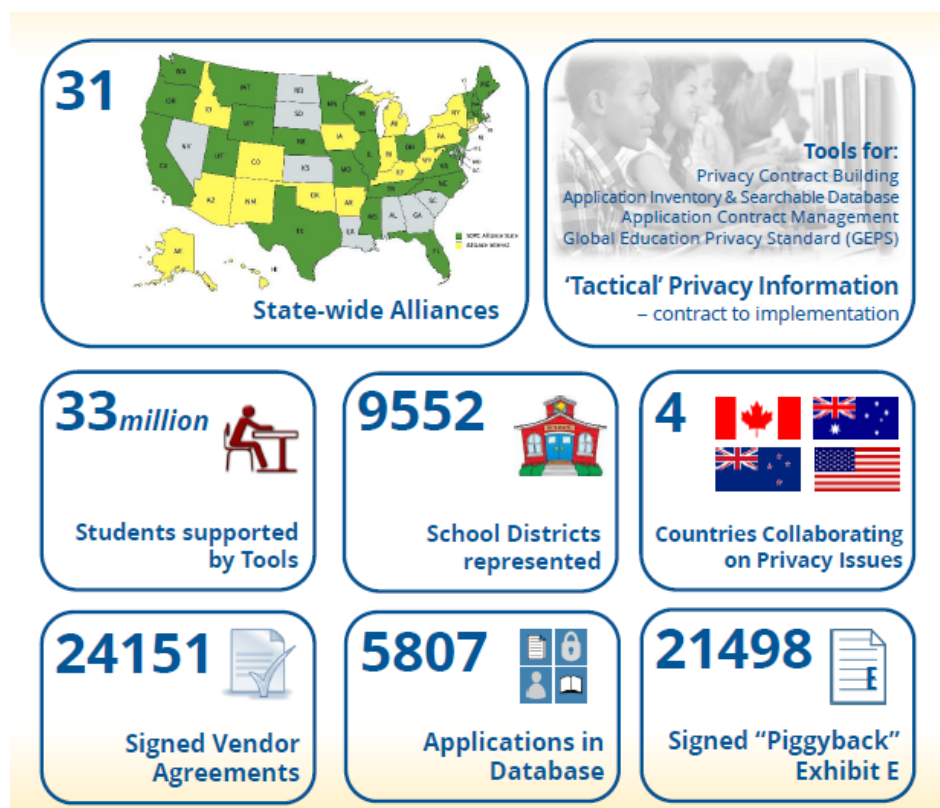
The Resource Registry Roadmap (R3) Project Team is charged with establishing a long-term vision for the SDPC Resource Registry including features, functionalities, operations, funding and priorities for change requests. This information is then passed along to SDPC Management Board for discussion and approval.

This group is open to any member of the Student Data Privacy Consortium, but each call will be targeted at specific membership groups, and information will be provided on the SDPC Monday mailer (Subject: SDPC Call Schedule: Don't miss these upcoming calls...).

Call Schedule: Every month, fourth Tuesday at 12noon US ET



Privacy By The Numbers



We thought we should share with you the exponential growth of the Consortium and the SDPC Resource Registry... it is amazing!

Six years ago, it was hard to believe we would be in this position and have this many States involved, with over 24,000+ signed Agreements in place... and it is all down to the hard work of each and every Member of the Student Data Privacy Consortium...

...so, THANK YOU!

If you are not already part of the Consortium, why not get involved?

Join today!!

Community Meetings Schedule

<u>Day</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Staff Liaison</u>
INTERNATIONAL			
			<i>meetings are based on US Eastern time zone</i>
Tuesday	TBD	Association Board of Directors	Larry Fruth
Tuesday	2 nd Tues, monthly	Data Privacy	Penny Murray
Tuesday	4 th Tues, monthly	D3M	John Lovell
Tuesday	4 th Tues, monthly	Policy & Procedures	John Lovell
Wednesday	Bi-weekly	Infrastructure	John Lovell
Thursday	Bi-weekly	Open Source Developers Network	John Lovell
Thursday	Every 4 weeks	International Technical Board	John Lovell
NORTH AMERICA			
			<i>meetings are based on US Eastern time zone</i>
Monday	Bi-weekly	State Requests	John Lovell
Tuesday	1 st & 3 rd Tues, monthly	Unity Adoption	John Lovell
Wednesday	4 th Weds, monthly	NA Management Board	Larry Fruth
Thursday	2 nd & 4 th Thurs, monthly	NA Technical Board	John Lovell
STUDENT DATA PRIVACY CONSORTIUM			
			<i>meetings are based on US Eastern time zone</i>
Tuesday	3 rd Tues, monthly	Research Data Sharing Agreement	Larry Fruth
Tuesday	4 th Tues, monthly	SDPC Resource Registry Roadmap (R3) Project Team	Larry Fruth
Tuesday	4 th Tues, monthly	SDPC Management Board	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	1 st Weds, Qtrly (2 nd month)	Consortium Updates	Larry Fruth
Wednesday	2 nd Weds, Qtrly (2 nd month)	Alliance Leadership	Larry Fruth
Thursday	Bi-weekly	NDPA Policy, Procedures & Usage	Larry Fruth
Thursday	1 st Thurs, Qtrly (1 st month)	Vendor Project Team	Larry Fruth
Thursday	1 st Thurs, Qtrly (2 nd month)	Legislative Activity Project Team	Larry Fruth

Connect with us!

Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community



Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC)



About the Access 4 Learning Community

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, and its special interest group the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC), is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of schools, districts, local authorities, states, US and International Ministries of Education, software vendors and consultants. The Community is "Powered by SIF" as its major technical tool to help manage learning data simply, securely and in a scalable, standard way regardless of platform. The SDPC is designed to address the day-to-day, real-world multi-faceted issues faced when protecting learner information by setting common expectations between market providers and end users. The A4L Community has united these education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort **"connect and secure effective learning ecosystems"** to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach. For further information, visit <https://www.A4L.org> and <https://privacy.A4L.org>

Contact Us

Larry Fruth II, PhD Executive Director/CEO

Provides direction and leadership toward the achievement of the organization's philosophy, mission, strategy, and its annual goals and objectives. Support includes Board Administration and Support, Program and Service Delivery, Financial and Human Resource Management, Community Relations and Fundraising.

lfruth@A4L.org

John Lovell Technology Director

Technical liaison and resource for all things A4L, the Technology Director encompasses areas from IT to ensuring collaboration on local and international efforts. Lead software developer for the Community, supporting the ongoing use of the Test Harness by developers to assure quality.

jlovell@A4L.org

Penny Murray Community Director

Provides membership services, develops communications, supports member working activities including particular SIF implementations, organizational meetings and strategic partnerships to ensure initiative success.

pmurray@A4L.org

NEWSLETTER

Issue 50

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