



December 2025

Hard to believe 2025 is already coming to a close...

by Steve Smith, Executive Director

It's hard to believe that 2025 is already coming to a close. It has been a whirlwind of a year. With new administrations in all of our communities, US, AU & NZ, there have been many changes impacting the educational ecosystems across our membership with rippling impacts to be felt in years to come. As a Community driven by our members to address their most pressing needs, A4L has remained agile and responsive to these challenges. I continue to be inspired daily by the commitment and dedication of our members and leadership to address the challenges being faced by the PK20W+ ecosystem across the globe.

In the US for example, our peers have rallied behind Data Standards United (DSU) and the newly formed Education Data Unlimited (EDU) nonprofit to collaborate on the "Digital Freeway" project. This project is focused on aligning stakeholders and technical governance to unify the fragmented landscape of education and workforce data. At the same time, this project is focused on AI ensuring that education and workforce data is structured to ensure that when AI is leveraged and applied against education and workforce data we can expect the best outcomes.

At the same time we need to recognize, and where appropriate, celebrate accomplishments within our Community. As you have all seen by now, SDPC has recently celebrated its 10th birthday. It is truly amazing what

this community has built over the past 10 years. It is through the dedication and perseverance of all our Community members that the SDPC has had such a large impact on the EdTech marketplace and the protection of so many students' data. You should all feel very proud of what we have built together!

There are many other areas of work to be recognized over the past year. The ongoing work to advance SIF Unity, both the US data model and global infrastructure, is an ongoing effort that never stops. The Unity certification efforts specifically have advanced greatly over the past year. Of course the building and launching of the Registry 2.0 continues to be front and center. In addition the tedious ongoing work to improve the NDPA clause by clause must be highlighted and recognized as a huge lift for those directly involved in the drafting of the edits.

All of this work has not stopped our Community from growing. Membership is up along with participation from members as well as our overall productivity. 2026 is shaping up to be a very exciting year for A4L as we embark on new partnerships, launch the Registry 2.0 and lean into AI and its impact on the PK20W+ ecosystem.

I hope you all have a wonderful and relaxing Holiday Season and return energized for an exciting year ahead of us!

IN THIS ISSUE

Global Community News

Welcome new Members!; Come Join Us at the 2026 SDPC & Unity Convening; Sponsorship Opportunities; A4L Community Survey winners announced!; Changes to the A4L Community Membership Agreement; Update from the Association Board of Directors; Scheduled Maintenance; The Community Needs You: Volunteer Opportunities (global); and Community Project Team Updates.

Page 2

AU Community News

SIF Data Model Specification (Australia) 3.6.4 coming soon...!

Page 8

NA Community News

The Community Needs You: Volunteer Opportunities (North America); A4L at the PESC November 2025 Data Summit; and What to expect from CEDS Conceptual Model in the coming year.

Page 9

Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) News

Celebrating 10 years of the SDPC!; NDPA v2.2 now available; Recent Enhancements to Registry 1.0; SDPC Resource Registry 2.0: Winter Update; Future Changes to the NDPA—We want your input; and Self-directed online privacy training.

Page 14

Welcome new members!



Book Systems, Inc.



Human Restoration Project



Iredell-Statesville Schools, NC



JMC Inc.



Jones County School System, GA



Learning Charms, Inc.



Public Interest Privacy Center (PIPC)



SameGoal Inc.



West Ada Jt School District No. 2, ID



WestEd

Wishing you Happy Holidays!

As we approach the end of another busy year, A4L Staff want to take a moment to extend our warmest wishes to each and every member of our Community. The holiday season is a time to pause, reflect, and celebrate the connections that bring us together.

We hope you find the opportunity to step away from the day-to-day, spend meaningful time with your families and loved ones, and enjoy a well-deserved break. Whether you're traveling, gathering at home, or simply taking time to recharge, may this season bring you peace, joy, and renewal.

Thank you for being part of our Community. We look forward to continuing our work together in the new year, with fresh energy and shared purpose.

Happy holidays, and here's to a bright and inspiring year ahead!



PLEASE NOTE: There will be reduced A4L Staff availability between December 22, 2025—January 2, 2026 (inclusive). If you have any issues, please submit a [Support Ticket](#), so that we may try to resolve it as soon as possible.

ALL Community meeting between December 22, 2025—January 2, 2026 have been postponed. We will resume our meetings/calls on January 5, 2026.

Global Community News

Come Join Us at the 2026 Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) & Unity Convening!

Charting The Future: Privacy, People & the Power of Unity

DATES: **March 16-19, 2026**

VENUE: **RMS Queen Mary,
Long Beach, California**

Set sail aboard The Queen Mary in Long Beach, CA for the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) & Unity Convening—an immersive experience where vision meets action in the evolving education data ecosystem.

This transformative gathering brings together educators, administrators, technologists, and policymakers committed to stewarding trust, inspiring leadership, and building a united education community. Through dedicated tracks on privacy, interoperability, policy, and collaboration, attendees will explore future-focused solutions that empower meaningful change and uphold shared values.

Whether you're anchoring data stewardship or navigating innovation, this convening offers a compass for progress and a collaborative platform to chart new pathways for transparency, unity, and impact.

What to expect?

The agenda is currently being drafted by the Planning Committee, but a summary of key focus areas are as follows:

- ◆ **Open Data Standards:** Explore the latest developments and advance-



ments in open data standards within the education domain. Understand how these standards can enhance interoperability, streamline data sharing, and contribute to a more connected and efficient education ecosystem.

- ◆ **Privacy in Education:** Delve into the critical aspect of privacy within the education landscape. Discuss best practices, regulatory compliance, and ethical considerations in handling sensitive educational data. Learn how to strike the right balance between data-driven insights and safeguarding individual privacy.
- ◆ **Lifelong Learning Initiatives:** Showcase initiatives, programs, and technologies that promote lifelong learning. Discuss strategies to support continuous education, skills development, and adaptability in an ever-changing world.
- ◆ **Collaboration and Networking:** Foster collaboration among attendees, including educators, technologists, policymakers, and indus-

try representatives. Provide opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange to create a community dedicated to driving positive change in education through open data standards and privacy.

Who Should Attend?

Education Technology Professionals; Data Scientists and Analysts; Academic Administrators; Privacy and Compliance Officers; Policy Makers in Education; Industry Stakeholders; Researchers and Scholars.

FIND OUT MORE >>

**RESERVE YOUR PLACE
TODAY!**

Registrations must be made online, in advance. On-site registrations are not permitted.

2026 Convening: Sponsorship Opportunities available!

2026 Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) & Unity Convening

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Is your organization ready to be "front and center" of the fastest growing global educational non-profit community?

The A4L Community and Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) will be hosting a four-day immersive experience where vision meets action in the evolving education data ecosystem. This transformative gathering will bring together educators, administrators, technologists, and policymakers committed to stewarding trust, inspiring leadership, and building a united education community. Through dedicated tracks on privacy, interoperability, policy, and collaboration, attendees will explore future-focused solutions that empower meaningful change and uphold shared values.

Audience: We are planning for 125 delegates in attendance. Based on previous years, we expect 75%+ of attendees to be EdSistas (Alliance, LEA, school district and State reps).

Why Secure a Vendor Table? Visibility, Values, & Engagement.

Position your organization at the heart of the conversation by reserving a vendor table. Strategically placed around the perimeter of the main conference room, these tables offer high visibility and direct access to engaged attendees—making them the perfect space to showcase your commitment to student data privacy, interoperability, & community collaboration.

Each reservation includes a 6ft clothed table and two chairs, providing a dedicated area to display materials, offer demos, and feature a pop-up stand. It's a streamlined setup designed for impact—not a booth, but a statement of presence and purpose. Let your organization be seen as a leader in shaping the future of education data.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Level	Price	Includes
LOGO	\$1,000	Organization logo on event web page Organization logo promoted on slide deck during the event
Bronze	\$6,000	All the benefits of Logo PLUS Acknowledgment at Opening Session 6ft Vendor table in the main conference room
Silver	\$15,000	All the benefits of Bronze PLUS Named as Sponsor (with logo) in A4L comms before the event Brief introductory remarks at Opening Session One complimentary registration
GOLD	\$30,000	All the benefits of Silver PLUS 5-minute Opening session welcome remarks Evening "networking event" named sponsor recognition

Find Out More

Is your organization ready to be "front and center" of the fastest growing global educational non-profit community?

We have several sponsorship opportunities available, from 'LOGO' which provides your organization's name & logo on the event page, all the way through to 'GOLD' which includes a Vendor Table, complimentary registration for 1 attendee, 5-minute opening remarks, and being a named sponsor at our evening social networking event.

Why secure a Vendor Table? Visibility, Values & Engagement.

Position your organization at the heart of the conversation by reserving a vendor table. Strategically placed around the perimeter of the main conference room, these tables offer high visibility and direct access to engaged attendees—making them the perfect space to showcase your commitment to student data privacy, interoperability, & community collaboration. Each reservation includes a 6ft clothed table and two chairs, providing a dedicated area to display materials, offer demos, and feature a pop-up stand. It's a streamlined setup designed for impact—not a booth, but a statement of presence and purpose. Let your organization be seen as a leader in shaping the future of education data.

Spaces are limited—lock in your place today >>

THANK YOU to our GOLD Sponsors!



PUBLIC[®]
CONSULTING GROUP

A4L Community Survey winners!

As previously announced, the Marketing, Communications & Membership Committee published a series of Community Surveys earlier this year. These surveys were designed to help shape the future of our Community, and we would like to thank everyone who submitted their responses.

As a thank you for completing the surveys, we entered all submitters details into a prize draw, and we are thrilled to announce the following winners...

Survey Draw (for any Community Member who completed an individual survey) - **\$25 Amazon Gift Card** awarded to:

- Brittany Rizzo
- Vance Allen
- Alex Jackl
- George Gatsis

Grand Prize Draw (for any Community Member who completed all four surveys) - **'Full Suite Upgrade'** at

our **2026 SDPC & Unity Convening**—awarded to:

- Vance Allen

Thank you again to everyone who took the time to complete a survey. These responses, as well as the recommendations from Slalom's work, will feed into deliverables for the A4L Community in 2026 and beyond.

Update to the A4L Community Membership Agreement

The recent update to the A4L Community Membership Agreement introduces clearer expectations for member participation, reinforces commitments to data privacy and interoperability, and formalizes intellectual property and marketing guidelines. Members are now more directly involved in shaping A4L's direction and are required to adhere to updated standards for privacy, branding, and community engagement.

The revised Membership Agreement introduces the following clauses to the Member Commitment Guidelines:

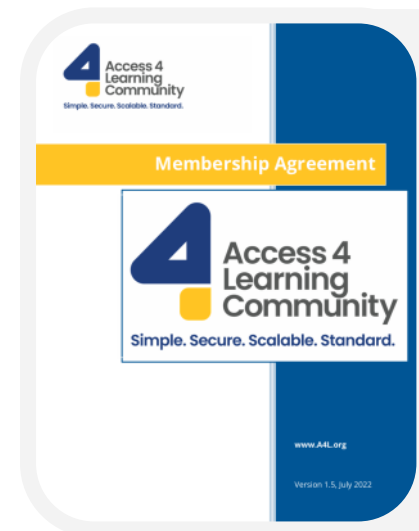
- 1e. *demonstrate a commitment to interoperability by implementing data standards within your organization where possible.*
- 1f. *demonstrate a commitment to data*

privacy by adhering to privacy best practices supported and promoted by the A4L Community.

- 4b. *influence the creation of and future versions of the SDPC Resource Registry, National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA), Global Education Security Standard (GESS) and other privacy related resources,*
- 4c. *serve on one or more Project Team or Committee. Current lists of project teams may be found here; SIF Project Teams, Privacy Project Teams, Overall Organizational Structure including project teams and committees,*

In addition, upon completing a new membership application, or by renewing their existing membership, Members will automatically be agreeing to the Membership Agreement.

To view the full A4L Community Membership Agreement, please click [here](#).



UPDATE: Association Board of Directors

As reported in the last newsletter the Association Board had engaged Slalom Consulting to perform a marketing & messaging analysis and provide recommendations. Slalom has completed this engagement and presented their findings and recommendations to the Association Board at the December meeting. As a result, A4L will be making some adjustments to our market-

ing and branding strategy that we expect will improve our outward identity. You can expect to begin to see these changes over the next few months.

In addition, since the last newsletter we have had one change in Board membership. Jeff Simons stepped down from the Association Board of

Directors, and the North American Interoperability Leadership Group appointed Jim McGlynn to replace Jeff. Jim has also stepped in the Board Co-Chair role alongside Ramah Hawley.

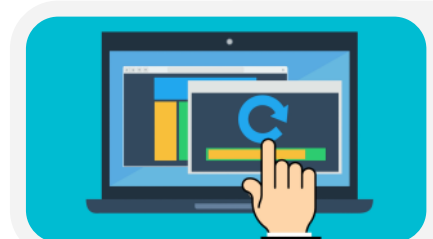
We are excited to have Jim's leadership on the Board once again.

Scheduled Maintenance

Our regular maintenance schedule is timetabled for the last Friday of each month from 8pm ET until COB on Sunday. **However, due to the holidays this is being moved forward one week to December 19-21, 2025.**

Scheduled maintenance will be taking place on the **SDPC Resource Registry, SIF Test Harness and operational databases** during this time.

We are sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause and advise you to plan your work accordingly.



The Community Needs You:

Global Volunteer Opportunities for A4L Members

The A4L Community is sustained by volunteers who turn good ideas into real, working solutions for schools, states, vendors, and partners around the world. As we expand our work in artificial intelligence, infrastructure, reporting, and adoption of SIF Unity, we are seeking new contributors from **A4L Community member organizations** to join several key Project Teams.

If you (or colleagues on your team) are ready to contribute time, expertise, and perspective, please consider stepping into one or more of the roles as follows:

Artificial Intelligence Project Team

Purpose: The AI Project Team is focused on using artificial intelligence to practically advance the work of the A4L Community. Current priorities include:

- Synthetic data generation to support testing, pilots, and vendor development
- Automated mappings between data models and standards
- Exploring AI capabilities through concrete examples, demonstrations, and stories
- Building institutional knowledge so that AI becomes a sustainable, shared competency across the Community

Who we're looking for: True AI enthusiasts from A4L member organizations who are ready both to share what they know and to learn from others. This group is ideal for technical leaders, data scientists, and product teams experimenting with or deploying AI in real-world education settings.

Infrastructure Project Team

Purpose: This group stewards the global SIF Infrastructure and is now launching a new effort to create supporting documentation to sit alongside the normative specification. The goal is to make the infrastructure more understandable, implementable, and scalable for the next generation of adopters.

Who we're looking for:

- People invested in REST APIs, containerized deployments, and modern integration patterns
- Contributors interested in taking scalability, reliability, and privacy to the next level
- Technical writers and editors who can help transform expert knowledge into clear, usable guidance

If you care about making SIF Infrastructure easier to adopt and operate, this group needs you.

How to Get Involved

Volunteer participation in these groups is open to individuals from A4L member organizations.

If you or a colleague are interested in joining any of the Project Teams—or in discussing where your skills might be the best fit—please contact [John Lovell](#), Technology Director, and indicate:

- Your name and organization
- Which group(s) you're interested in
- A short note on your role and experience

Together, we can ensure that the A4L Community continues to deliver practical, future-ready interoperability solutions for education and workforce data worldwide.



More volunteer opportunities available in A4L Community (North America) - see page 9!

Community Project Team Updates

ASSOCIATION

Association Board of Directors: See [page 5](#) for more information.

Policy & Procedures: This group are continuing to focus on updating policies for the Community.

Marketing, Communications & Membership: The group discussed the next steps following Slalom's recommendations, as well as outreach to the education marketplace.

INTERNATIONAL

International Technical & Privacy Leadership Group (ITP-LG): This group has concluded the Data Privacy Project Team's work for now and will reconvene it once Registry 2.0 supports digital agreements and can generate PODs from them.

Global Education Security Standards (GESS) Project Team: The group has been reviewing RFPs for a third-party certification and plans to award one by the end of the year/early next year. Anyone interested in being more involved with the GESS Project Team can sign up to participate in our regular monthly meetings or reach out to [David Sallay](#) for more information.

Infrastructure: This team is focused on applying AI to new and existing community resources to rapidly generate draft whitepapers that members can refine, accelerating the creation of guidance and tools that support common SIF Infrastructure related tasks.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Project Team: We are actively assessing how Anthropic's Claude Opus 4.5 can enhance our CEDS mapping workflows and improve coordination between multiple AI agents.

Vendor: The recent meeting focused on discussions around the upcoming

NDPA review and vendor engagement.

AUSTRALIA

AU Leadership Group (AU-LG): The AU Management Board continue discussions on AU activities.

AU Technical Project Team: The group met on the 2 December to discuss changes to the SIF Data Model Specification (AU) 3.6.4.

NORTH AMERICA

North American Privacy Leadership Group (NA-P-LG): Since September, the leadership group has taken over the direction of the privacy training initiatives and approved the creation of a project team that will focus on AI and privacy policy issues, which will be open to all A4L Community members and start up in the new year.

North American Interoperability Leadership Group (NA-I-LG): This group is providing direction on Unity 4.4 (mandatory elements, migration from StudentPersonal to StudentParticipation, and CEDS/EDFacts changes), advising the 2026 Convening interoperability program and webinar series, and working with staff to surface strategic resources and IEP/Unity guidance in a more usable, discoverable form.

Discipline: This group finalized guidance on modeling discipline incidents as separate offenses, clarified when to use RelatedToList for incidents, offenders, and victims, and addressed overlapping structures such as WeaponTypeList and Action/IncidentAction lists, including CRDC-related extensions.

SEDM: This group is collaborating with CEDS OSC to mature the CEDS Conceptual Model into a clearer founda-

tion for interoperability, aligning it with the Ontological Model and tightening definitions for governance, Time/Events, Assets, and Claims—so that practical use cases are properly supported in CEDS v14.

State Requests: This group is channeling state implementation needs into Unity planning, including refinements to the StudentAttendanceSummary pattern, sharing SIF-to-Unity migration lessons from multiple states, and forwarding CEDS OSC items and CRDC-related concerns to the North American Interoperability Leadership Group and Unity Adoption Team.

Unity Adoption: This group is developing practical guidance for migrating from program elements in StudentPersonal to StudentParticipation, while also advising on Unity baseline profiles, specification placement, and other “market-meaningful” priorities such as assessment result exchanges and address code set alignment.

NDPA: The team approved the NDPA v2.2, which consists only of nonsubstantive changes (e.g., fixing citations, consistent use of the Oxford comma, etc) – see [page 15](#). They are looking to wrap up proposed edits for the community to review and provide input on early next year.

SDPC Alliance Leadership: The group has been brainstorming ideas for the 2026 Convening, discussed transitioning to Registry 2.0, and collaborated on challenges they've had negotiating the NDPA with vendors. If you haven't been for awhile, we meet bi-weekly, and will be covering issues and questions that you can either learn from or help with.

SDPC Resource Registry Roadmap (R3): This group recently approved two enhancements for Registry 1.0—see [page 15](#).

News from the Australian Community

UPDATE: SF Data Model Specification (AU) 3.6.4

The SIF Data Model Specification (Australia) 3.6.4 has been approved by the AU Technical Group (also known as the Data Standards Working Group (DSWG)), and has been sent for ratification to the A4L Association Board of Directors.

This update:

- adds new 8-digit codes for languages, in line with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' update to the Standard Australian Classification of Languages. The 4-digit codes

have been retained in the specification as legacy equivalents, as school authorities are not planning to adopt the updated standard yet.

- adds fields to SchoolInfo, to address the requirements of Early Childhood provision when a SchoolInfo object is used to represent an Early Childhood care provider, at the request of the National Education Digital Advisory Group.

Once it has been approved for publication by the Association Board of Directors, it will be available on the website [here](#).



News from the North American Community

The Community Needs You: Volunteer Opportunities for A4L Members (North America)

The A4L Community is sustained by volunteers who turn good ideas into real, working solutions for schools, states, vendors, and partners around the world. As we expand our work in artificial intelligence, infrastructure, reporting, and adoption of SIF Unity, we are seeking new contributors from **A4L Community member organizations** to join several key Project Teams.

If you (or colleagues on your team) are ready to contribute time, expertise, and perspective, please consider stepping into one or more of the roles below.

Discipline Project Team

Purpose: The Discipline Incident object has served the Community well for many years, but it is now being reworked to better support current state adopters and evolving federal reporting requirements. This is a critical opportunity to ensure that discipline data is accurate, consistent, and aligned with real-world needs.

Who we're looking for:

- State reporting staff—especially those responsible for discipline/behavior reporting
- Vendors and solution providers who design and implement discipline/behavior modules
- Stakeholders interested in making

it easier to support positive student behavior through better data.

SEDM (Special Education Data Model) Project Team

Purpose: The SEDM group is focused on what is required for reporting of Special Education, starting with the “golden” elements that states and agencies must have. A key emphasis is modeling the time dimension—eligibility, services, and placements over time—in ways that many existing systems do not naturally support.

Who we're looking for:

- Special Education experts, particularly those engaged in state or federal reporting
- Data modelers and system architects who regularly wrestle with time-based data and effective-date logic
- Vendors and practitioners who want to ensure Special Education data is both accurate and actionable.

State Requests Project Team

Purpose: This group exists first and foremost to address the needs of individual states. It also plays a key role in aligning A4L work with CEDS so that state reporting requirements are met in a consistent, standards-based way.

Who we're looking for:

- State reporting leads and state CIOs from A4L member organizations
- State staff who need a safe, peers-first environment to discuss requirements, challenges, and priorities

While not formally restricted, this group operates as a safe space for states. Vendors generally participate only by invitation or when there is a specific concern or topic that requires their input.

States Helping States Project Team

Purpose: Originally designed to extend beyond A4L membership, this group provides a venue for states to share how they are using technology more broadly—not just within the boundaries of a single standard or project.

Leadership opportunity: This group is currently ***without a lead*** and is actively seeking a dynamic, well-respected state CIO to take the helm. This is a high-impact leadership opportunity for someone who wants to foster collaboration and peer learning across states.

(Continued on page 10)

The Community Needs You...

(Continued from page 9)

Unity Adoption Project Team

Purpose: The Unity Adoption group focuses on the technical and market guidance needed to grow adoption of SIF Unity. The group addresses implementation patterns, migration strategies, messaging, and resources that help integrators and agencies succeed with Unity-based solutions.

Who we're looking for:

- Integrators and implementers of all kinds are strongly encouraged to participate
- Anyone passionate about winning over minds through excellent, standards-based technical solutions
- Product managers, solution architects, and technical leaders working with or planning for SIF Unity

How to Get Involved

Volunteer participation in these groups is open to individuals from A4L member organizations. If you or a colleague are interested in joining any of the Project Teams above—or in discussing where your skills might be the best fit—please contact [John Lovell](#), Technology Director and indicate:

- Your name and organization,
- Which group(s) you're interested in,
- A short note on your role and experience.

Together, we can ensure that the A4L Community continues to deliver practical, future-ready interoperability solutions for education and workforce data worldwide.



A4L at the PESC November 2025 Data Summit

The November 2025 Data Summit in Nashville, Tennessee (November 20–21) brought together leaders from

across the education data ecosystem to tackle some of the most pressing questions in interoperability, privacy, and governance. The quality of the discussions was outstanding, and PESC has already received strong feedback about the engaging sessions and welcoming atmosphere. It is clear that our community is driving forward crucial work, and we appreciate all of you who are part of that momentum.

The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community was well represented throughout the Summit. A4L Executive Director Steve Smith shared timely insights on privacy and the growing opportunity to

develop a **model privacy agreement for higher education**. Building on the K–12 experience with student data privacy and standardized agreements, Steve highlighted how a common, trusted framework could reduce confusion for institutions and vendors alike, streamline procurement, and improve protections for learners as they move across systems and sectors.

A4L Technology Director John W. Lovell provided an update on **JSON-LD Transcript work based on the CEDS Ontology**. His session walked participants through the progress toward a mod-

(Continued on page 11)



Connecting and securing effective learning ecosystems.

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A4L at the PESC November 2025 Data Summit

(Continued from page 10)

ern, machine-readable transcript format that can align with existing standards while supporting richer, more portable learner records. By grounding the JSON-LD Transcript in the CEDS Ontology, this effort aims to improve semantic consistency, support auto-



mation, and create a pathway for interoperability across PK–12, postsecondary, and workforce systems.

Participants consistently praised how well the program “built on itself” across the two days. Sessions moved in a deliberate arc—covering **how to fund it, how to build it, how to standardize it, and how to manage it**. That structure helped connect strategy, implementation, and long-term sustainability, and attendees repeatedly emphasized how much they appreciated the depth of work already completed and the transparency around what comes next.

Summit Resources

For those who could not attend—or who want to revisit specific topics—the following resources are available:

- [Presentation slide decks](#)
- [Photo highlights](#) from the event are available, capturing the energy, collaboration, and community that defined the Summit.

We encourage A4L members to explore these materials, share them with colleagues, and continue the conversations started in Nashville. Thank you again to everyone who joined us, presented, and contributed to the dialogue. We look forward to building on this work together in the year ahead.

For information about PESC, please visit: <https://pesc.org/>

What to Expect from the CEDS Conceptual Model in the coming year

by Greg Nadeau, Public Consulting Group

Early next year, the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) community will see the Conceptual Model mature into a clearer, more powerful foundation for interoperability work across initiatives such as A4L, SDPC, Unity, Ed-Fi, JEDx, and beyond. This article provides a preview of what is coming and how it will support the work of A4L members.

One CEDS, Many Artifacts – All Under Open Governance

At its core, CEDS is a set of shared artifacts we use to describe education data in a consistent way. Canonical version control for these artifacts is managed by the CEDS Open Source Community (OSC) using GitHub.

A key change going forward is that the CEDS Conceptual Model (CCM) and the CEDS Ontological Model (COM) will be maintained in lockstep. Any change to one must be reflected in the other, under the same open governance and versioning. This keeps the human-readable documentation and the machine-readable ontology aligned and trustworthy.

CEDS remains a public, no-cost resource intended to be used, mapped to, and extended. The formal ownership and stewardship details are being clarified, but the intent is unchanged: CEDS is held in trust for the education community.

Two Core Components

What has been the CEDS Data Dictionary and Domain Entity Schema will be organized explicitly around two primary artifacts:

CEDS Conceptual Model (CCM)

The CCM is “by humans, for humans.” It is the narrative, diagrammatic, and example-driven description of the CEDS world: the core concepts, definitions, and relationships that subject-matter experts, governance groups, and implementers can read, discuss, and test. The CCM is where governance decisions are made and documented.

(Continued on page 12)

What to Expect from the CEDS Conceptual Model in the coming year

(Continued from page 11)

CEDS Ontological Model (COM)

The COM is the canonical JSON/RDF schema that implements those concepts in a form that both humans and machines can use. Think of it as a “periodic table” of education data elements. Other standards and reference architectures (e.g., SIF, Ed-Fi, Unity, JEDx) can map to this table for cross-walks, validations, and transformations.

Because the ontology is not easy for most people to edit directly, its evolution will be strictly driven by the CCM. Once aligned, the COM can:

- Automate validation and transformation between different data sources and targets.
- Provide a common “interlingua” for interoperability across standards.
- Serve as part of structured prompts for AI systems to normalize and interpret unstructured or semi-structured education data.

Solidifying the Core Concepts

Upcoming CCM work focuses on making a small set of core ideas explicit and easy to understand:

- **Person** – A human being, living or deceased, as defined by applicable law in a given jurisdiction.
- **Organization** – An organized group of one or more people with a particular purpose (e.g., local edu-

cation agency, school, vendor, state agency).

- **Resource** – Any non-person, non-organization entity that supports or defines learning: content, tools, programs, physical spaces, reference definitions, and more.
- **Membership** – The relationship between a Person and an Organization, expressed as a **role held over a defined period of time**.

For many A4L members, this is familiar terrain. The relationship “Person with Role in an Organization during a Time Period” is what has powered PK20W+ state longitudinal data systems and routine reporting for years (think: “K–12 student enrolled in this LEA for this school year”). The revised CCM will make this lineage clearer and more reusable.

Introducing Time and Events

CEDS v14 will bring **Time and Events** to the center of the model.

An Event is defined as: ‘A time-bound occurrence in which people interact with resources within the context of an organization, resulting in a change of state, relationship, or outcome’.

This event lens allows us to tell richer stories than enrollment alone can capture. For example:

- A child’s morning session in child care and afternoon participation in Head Start become distinct events associated with the same person, organization(s), and resources.
- A professional development workshop for educators is an event connecting multiple people, an organizing institution, and the learning resources used.
- An assessment sitting, a graduation ceremony, or a change in program eligibility can each be modeled as events that change someone’s sta-

tus or relationships over time.

This move toward events is what enables better “timeline” views of a learner, staff member, or program.



Clarifying Assets and Ownership

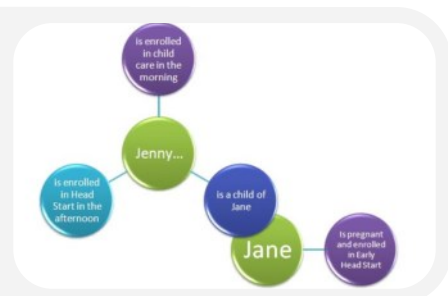
Within the broader category of Resources, CEDS will highlight Assets—resources where ownership or rights matter.

An **Asset** captures the relationship that exists when a person or organization has **ownership, authorship, stewardship, access, or other rights** to a resource. Examples include:

- A transcript or micro-credential issued to a learner.
- A lesson plan authored by a teacher.
- A dataset maintained by a state agency.
- A license to use a particular digital learning resource.

By distinguishing assets explicitly, the COM can better support conversations about data governance, rights, and portability—topics that are increasingly important for both privacy and credentialing.

(Continued on page 13)



News from the Student Data Privacy Consortium

Celebrating 10 years of the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC)!

On December 9, 2025, we were thrilled to announce a major milestone - the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC), a special interest group of the Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, celebrated 10 years!

We invite you to join the celebration and help us spread the word! Please share our anniversary posts on your social media channels and encourage your networks to learn more about SDPC's mission and achievements (<https://privacy.A4L.org>). Please use the hashtags #SDPC10 and #DataPrivacy to amplify our message.

Why Celebrate?

A Decade of Impact: SDPC, a special interest group of the Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, has spent 10 years building a collaborative network of schools, districts, state agencies, policy makers, and vendors to address real-world student data privacy challenges. Today, SDPC supports over 34 million students, with 34 state-wide alliances represented.

Driving Privacy Innovation: SDPC is known for developing the National

Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) and the National Research Data Privacy Agreement (NRDPA), which streamline application contracting and set common expectations for data privacy across the U.S. These agreements have saved schools and vendors countless hours and resources, allowing more focus on learning.

SDPC Resource Registry: The SDPC Resource Registry is a cornerstone, providing a framework for identifying and sharing solutions that have real-world impact on student data privacy. It helps schools, districts, and vendors find and adapt resources to their unique needs.

Community-Driven Success: SDPC's strength lies in its inclusive community, which brings together end-users and marketplace providers to address day-to-day privacy issues, share effective practices, and leverage partnerships for greater impact.

Saving Districts & Vendors over \$65 million: The SDPC model Data Privacy Agreements (DPAs) have had a huge impact on the K12 EdTech ecosystem by establishing common expectations



and streamlining the DPA execution process for both districts and providers. Since 2016, over 131,000 standard DPAs have been executed and subscribed to. By applying an average legal fee of \$250/hr and minimal negotiation time of 1hr per district/vendor/DPA, these standard DPAs have saved participating districts and vendors over \$65 million!

And finally...

We'd like to **thank YOU**—our amazing Community members—for being an essential part of our journey and the Community - here's to the next 10 years!

Come Join Us!

2026 Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) & Unity Convening

March 16-19, 2026 | Long Beach, CA



Sponsorship Opportunities available!

Connecting and securing effective learning ecosystems.

A4L.org | data.A4L.org | privacy.A4L.org

National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) v2.2 now available

This fall, the NDPA Project Team approved the National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) v2.2.

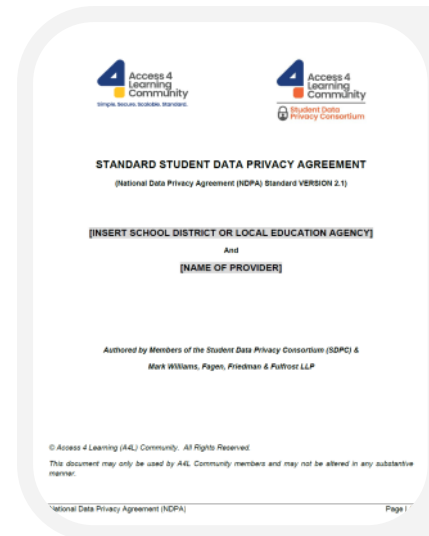
Earlier in the year, we were talking about a v2.2 that would include minor, but substantive changes. In late summer, however, we had a few members point out some incorrect citations to FERPA, which needed to be fixed. We also took the opportunity to address a few other non-substantive issues (e.g., spacing, consistent use of defined terms, capitalization, use of the Oxford comma).

Since all of the edits did not materially change the content of the NDPA, it

was approved and released without Community Review. A4L Community Members can find the Delta Document, listing a full account of all changes made since the last release, on the A4L Community Site [here](#).

States that wish to move to v2.2 should reach out to [Penny Murray](#), Community Director, to start the process.

The National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA) v2.2 is available from the SDPC website [here](#).



Recent Enhancements to Registry 1.0

In November 2025, the SDPC Resource, Registry Roadmap (R3) Project Team approved a couple of enhancements to the SDPC Resource Registry 1.0.

Resource Listing

Applies to: ALL USERS

The inclusion of a logo (if available) and the website URL have been added to the page of all resources listed on the Registry. This enhancement was approved to assist users in checking whether the resource they wish to use

is already listed on the Registry before they submit a 'New Resource' form. It will also allow users to notify the SDPC Admin Team if there are any errors, and if a specific resource name needs to be updated/changed.

Existing Users List

Applies to: ALLIANCE LEADS

The current existing users page has been updated to enable Alliances get a headstart on the clean-up process in the current Registry, prior to migration to Registry 2.0.

Alliance Leads can now access a comprehensive list of all users within their Alliance, including (the highest ranked) permission level, and last login date (please note this has only been recorded since Feb 2025).

Alliance Leads: If you would like to keep up-to-date on discussions around Registry 2.0 migration, please join the SDPC Alliance Leadership calls (bi-weekly, Thursdays). Contact [David Sallay](#), Director of Data Privacy, for more information.

SDPC Resource Registry 2.0: Winter Update

by David Sallay, Director of Data Privacy

When I last updated everyone in September, we were in the middle of beta testing and onboarding Alabama to the new Registry. That process is now nearly complete with only the migration of Alabama's records remaining.

Learn21 and A4L Staff have been working through issues with the record migration process and once that is complete, we anticipate being able to move more states over.

Be on the lookout early next year about getting your state moved into the new system.

Future Changes to the National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA)—We Want Your Input!

by David Sallay, Director of Data Privacy

Early in 2026, the NDPA Project Team is planning to propose changes to the National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA). We will be looking for input from the entire A4L Community to make sure the NDPA is an instrument that addresses common student privacy concerns, streamlines the app vetting process, and reflects the reality on the ground for both schools and vendors.

Thus far, the Project Team has met and considered changes, holding a Community Review at the end. In some cases, this has led to A4L Members feeling out of the loop until the very end. Because of this the Project Team wants to shift to getting more feedback from the Community up front, but we have the issue that we have spent most of the year working under the former model (draft edits first, get feedback second).

To switch models, we plan to announce a large feedback period at the start of 2026. To start, we plan to present the work that the Project Team

has developed so far this past year. In cases where both the vendor and alliance communities agree with the changes, we plan to release these into a new interim release. Conversely, on topics where there is not agreement from the broader community, they will not go into an interim release, and the Project Team will seek to gather more input on the topics.

There were some items the Project Team hoped to address this past year, but wasn't able to, particularly once we realized that we needed to get more Community input before deliberating. For these, we plan to put together a packet of directed questions to help gather input on these topics.

Lastly, we recognize that there are topics beyond those the Project Team received this past year that may need to be addressed. This may be because they only recently surfaced or because members of the Community weren't sure how to get their concerns on the Project Team agenda. Because of this, we want to gather feedback from the

broader Community about the entire document. We are currently formulating the plan for what this input period will look like, but know that we want opportunities for all the members of the Community to contribute both in breadth and depth. This will mean holding meetings that everyone in the Community will be able to attend that will look at the NDPA broadly and potentially also meetings that will dive deeply into specific topics (e.g., artificial intelligence, limitation of liability). We anticipate opportunities to provide feedback in writing as well and are also considering short surveys (<5 minutes) to give high-level feedback for those who don't have the time to participate in more in-depth ways.

Ultimately, we want there to be a way for every member to participate, feel heard, and see their contributions become part of the NDPA. If you have any questions or want to share ideas on how these review periods can be a greater success, please reach out to David Sallay, Director of Data Privacy, at dsallay@a4l.org to share.

Self-Directed Online Privacy Training: For Vendors and (Coming Soon!) for Districts

by David Sallay, Director of Data Privacy

This past summer, A4L launched its vendor privacy training course. The initial version of the course contains three modules: privacy fundamentals, the NDPA, and complying with New York law. This third one is especially important since New York's Ed Law 2-D requires vendor employees to take a privacy training, and the course was designed in collaboration with staff in

New York. For more information about the training and to sign up, please go [here](#).

We are also excited to announce that early next year, we will be launching another self-directed online training, this one directed specifically at school and district staff who are involved with edtech decision making and vetting.

This course will cover fundamentals of FERPA compliance specifically as relates to sharing data with edtech, but will also go over requirements like providing notice to parents and handling directory information.

Be on the lookout early next year for more information about this training!

Community Meetings Schedule

<u>Day</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Staff Liaison</u>
ASSOCIATION			<i>meetings are based on U.S. Eastern Time</i>
Wednesday	2 nd Weds, monthly	Association Board of Directors	Steve Smith
Tuesday	4 th Tues, monthly	Policy & Procedures	Penny Murray
INTERNATIONAL			<i>meetings are based on U.S. Eastern Time</i>
Wednesday	Every 2 weeks	Infrastructure	John Lovell
Wednesday	Every 2 weeks	Artificial Intelligence Project Team	John Lovell
Thursday	Every 4 weeks	International Technical & Privacy Leadership Group	John Lovell
Thursday	4 th Thurs, monthly	Global Education Security Standards (GESS)	David Sallay
Thursday	2 nd Thurs, quarterly	Vendor Project Team	Penny Murray
NORTH AMERICA			<i>meetings are based on U.S. Eastern Time</i>
Monday	Every 2 weeks	State Requests	John Lovell
Tuesday	1 st & 3 rd Tues, monthly	Unity Adoption	John Lovell
Tuesday	1 st Tues, monthly	SDPC Resource Registry Roadmap (R3) Project Team	Penny Murray
Wednesday	4 th Weds, monthly	NA Privacy Leadership Group	David Sallay
Wednesday	Every 2 weeks	SEDM Project Team	John Lovell
Thursday	Every 2 weeks	SDPC Alliance Leadership	David Sallay
Thursday	Every 2 weeks	Discipline	John Lovell
Thursday	Every 2 weeks	NA Interoperability Leadership Group (formerly NA-TAC)	John Lovell
Thursday	Every week	NDPA Project Team	David Sallay

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 to **“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>

Contact Us



Steve Smith
Executive Director

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. ✉ ssmith@A4L.org



John Lovell
Technology Director

Provides technical leadership and as the primary resource for all things technical – from internal IT support to driving the global community efforts state-wide, nationally and internationally focused on both technical specification development and privacy support. ✉ jlovell@A4L.org



Penny Murray
Community Director

Provides leadership and ownership over providing “value-add” for members and potential members of the Association. This position gauges all aspects of member services including communications, marketing, support member working activities, organizational meetings and strategic partnerships to ensure initiative success. ✉ pmurray@A4L.org



David Sallay
Director of Data Privacy

Provides advice on the implications of student privacy regulations to schools and vendors, identifying emerging trends, and managing and expanding the SDPC's data privacy agreements; contributes to the sustainability of the A4L community, building relationships with school districts, technology providers, and policymakers to strengthen and promote A4L and SDPC's privacy initiatives. ✉ dsallay@A4L.org



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