For additional information,
Contact: Penny Murray
+1 202.621.0547
pmurray@A4L.org

For Immediate Release

'New' Unity Specification release supports implementation of Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) to enable State Reporting

Washington, DC, 27 August, 2020 ---The Access 4 Learning® (A4L) Community, previously the SIF® Association, is proud to announce the latest release of the 'new' Unity Specification which provides EDFacts and xPress Roster mappings to address school needs and build towards allowing states and vendors to implement the US Department of Education's Common Education Data Standards (CEDS).

The Community's new focus on "connecting and securing effective learning ecosystems" begins with this release and will continue as we ensure interoperability is aligned with privacy effective practices to best support end users and marketplace providers in their distinct data stewardship roles. The Unity Specification was built by our volunteer members developed using open, non-proprietary and transparent processes. It contains the most comprehensive K12 data model and modern, internationally used transport technologies to securely move the data to provide it to the right person at the right time in the right way under local data privacy control. The 'Unity' infrastructure has increased performance and security on the wire, ease of usage, and scales for the widest educational focused interoperability by any technical standard - with or without the need for middleware!

"The original goal of the Community was to support school/district level data management issues and then streamline the mandated reporting of that source data. While the SIF Specifications did serve as a major starting point for the CEDS initiative, this release streamlines the reporting end to end in North America. Data now can move from local entities to state agencies and then to federal departments", states Larry Fruth II, PhD, CEO/Exec Director, A4L Community. "While many providers and other standards initiatives underplay usage, the SIF Specifications are the most used K12 open standards in the marketplace, used in hundreds of school districts across all 50 states and in multiple countries! Unity is the next step in supporting greater privacy and security controls including the work of the Student Data Privacy Consortium® (SDPC) and is designed to support API standardization. The A4L Community is the only place where connecting and securing are done in the same place!"

To find out more about the 'Unity' Specification, please go to: https://www.A4L.org/page/Unity

###

About the Access 4 Learning Community

There is no other global community made up of educational marketplace product and service providers and the customers they serve, collaborating daily to address real word learning information and resource issues. The Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community, previously the SIF Association, is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of schools, districts, local authorities, states, US and International Ministries of Education, software vendors and consultants who collectively address all aspects of learning information management and access to support learning. The A4L Community is "Powered by SIF" Specifications as its major technical tool to allow for this management and access simply, securely and in a scalable, standard way regardless of the platform hosting those applications. The Access 4 Learning Community 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.A4L.org

About the Student Data Privacy Consortium

The Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) is designed to address the day-to-day, real-world multi-faceted issues that schools, states, territories and vendors face when protecting learner information. SDPC's vision is to develop common activities, artifacts, templates, tools and effective practices that can be leveraged through a unique collaborative of end users and marketplace providers working together. For further information, visit https://privacy.A4L.org