

For Immediate Release

A4L Community Announces Major Milestones

Washington, DC, 9 May 2024--- Last week the Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community held its Annual Summit in Arlington VA, in collaboration with the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) and HR Open Standards Consortium. The joint Summit demonstrated the standards body's vision to collaborate and work together with other standards groups, towards the ultimate goal of improving interoperability, privacy and security for lifelong learning.

During the Summit, the A4L Community announced 4 major milestones:

1. SIF adoption by state educational agencies continues to grow with the announcement of two new statewide SIF Unity implementation projects. The state of Virginia is rolling out an implementation of the SIF 'Unity' Specification to facilitate statewide student ID assignment. Also, the state of Maine has announced plans to leverage the SIF Specification for their statewide student data gathering. The implementation of the SIF standard in Maine is expected to streamline and automate the Maine Department of Education's data reporting requirements from all Local Education Agencies (LEAs), saving countless staff hours, as well as ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the data reporting process.
2. The release of the National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA), version 2. This was the culmination of nearly two years of collaboration between local and state education agencies and marketplace providers. The result is a highly anticipated NDPA v2 that further streamlines the EdTech onboarding process across the marketplace. Building upon the NDPA v1, version 2 addresses common edits and pain points experienced in the 4 years that version 1 had been in use. Over the next several months the NDPA v2 will be adopted and put into practice by A4L Community members.
3. The kickoff of the Student Data Privacy Consortium's (SDPC) Resource Registry redevelopment. The 'Registry 2.0' project is expected to take approximately 18 months to build a new and improved SDPC Resource Registry for all A4L Community members. The 'Registry 2.0' is expected to provide a more user-friendly interface, streamlined workflows and enhanced

functionality to further facilitate the execution and management of data privacy agreements (DPAs). Today the SDPC Resource Registry contains over 130,000 DPAs representing over 12,000 local education agencies.

4. Lastly, the A4L Community announced the development of a FREE and confidential self-assessment for all EdTech providers in meeting the Global Education Security Standard (GESS) controls. The self-assessment will be made available to any marketplace provider that would like to begin aligning with the GESS controls, which are a crosswalk of existing controls in various cybersecurity frameworks. The intention is to provide a superset of controls that are applicable across and meet the minimum control sets in all jurisdictions. Much like how the SDPC brought the marketplace together on privacy legal obligations, GESS is expected to do the same for security controls.

The A4L Annual Summit was also captured by the [K12 Tech Talk Podcast](#), a unique perspective on the summit and its impact on K-12 ed tech. If you missed the summit or just want a recap, it can be accessed on most Podcast services.

Find out more:

- SIF 'Unity' Specification - <https://data.a4l.org/sif-specifications-north-america/>
- National Data Privacy Agreement (NDPA), version 2 - <https://privacy.a4l.org/national-dpa/>
- Global Education Security Standard (GESS) - <https://sdpc.a4l.org/gess/>
- A4L Community membership - <https://home.a4l.org/join-the-community/>
- K12 Tech Talk Podcast - <https://k12techtalkpodcast.com/e/episode-165-data-privacy-interoperability-at-the-pesc-a4l-summit/>

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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>.