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For Immediate Release

Global Education Security Standard (GESS) Version 2 and Self-Assessment Released

Washington, DC, 27 August 2024---The A4L Community, through its Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) has released a FREE self-assessment for marketplace providers as well as Version 2 of GESS. This tool will allow EdTech vendors to begin aligning to the Global Education Security Standard (GESS).

The SDPC has come together over the past two years to synthesize security, privacy and child safety requirements from across the USA, Europe, New Zealand and Australia to develop a set of relevant controls, which draw on existing international standards, to produce a set of controls which can be used by the education sector to drive adoption and compliance across the thousands of applications used across schools globally.

Anthony Yaremenko, Co-founder of Safer Technologies 4 Schools (ST4S), Australia states; “A unified standard, respected and supported by education authorities globally, will help shape the bi-partisan conversations between software vendors and education providers as we all work together to ensure the safety of students and school communities. Intended key benefits include a single repository of controls able to be contributed to and shared by education bodies across the globe; significantly reduced compliance overheads for software vendors who will be able to attest once to the GESS controls and have this result respected in participating education jurisdictions; and lastly, a message to the software industry that security and privacy of education data is of the utmost importance.”

Building upon the success of the Student Data Privacy Consortium’s work to normalize privacy obligations across jurisdictions, the GESS is expected to move the international EdTech community towards shared expectations and solutions to secure education data while ensuring privacy obligations are met.

Version 2 of GESS includes a restructuring of the GESS controls to align closer to NIST frameworks as well as the identification of CORE GESS controls.

As a way to lower the barriers to adoption the SDPC has developed, and made freely available to any vendor, a GESS self-assessment tool. The tool will assist vendors in aligning their practices to the GESS controls and help identify any areas they need to focus on.

“The GESS framework allows us, as a global EdTech vendor providing software and services to schools, colleges, local government and the wider public sector, to map our existing approaches to security and data protection against the wide range of standards and frameworks, covering approaches based on local legislation as well as international codes, and allow educational institutes to openly review and assess what we do” states Tony Sheppard, Information Governance Lead, NetSupport. “As well as enabling the mapping to take place, it can also highlight our gaps and in which regions it may affect our compliance. I can’t think of a more comprehensive tool for EdTech vendors to use as part of a continuous cycle of security improvements and providing demonstrable information on good practices.”

To learn more about the work of, or join the A4L Community, please visit <https://privacy.A4L.org/>

To find out more about GESS, please go to: <https://privacy.A4L.org/gess/>

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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>.