3 Key Benefits of Data Interoperability in K-12 Education

Is your district getting the full picture to make data-driven decisions?

The challenge for many districts today is that they may be gathering all of their data and storing it in one place, but in reality they can't easily integrate the various pieces from multiple data sources such as a student information system (SIS), assessment programs or learning applications. Many districts must endure time-consuming and manual processes to get the data in one place, and, even then, co-located data is not the same as fully integrated data. The lack of integration gives an incomplete picture of each student and district, limiting the potential for student progress. This is a problem that many districts struggle with and some are turning to data interoperability initiatives to address this.

Interoperability can be simply thought of as the ability of applications to connect and exchange data—even if these applications were developed by different vendors. Having a bi-directional exchange of data across multiple source systems is crucial for the modern school district that wants a holistic view of their students. Some districts are adopting open source Ed-Fi Technologies (with an operational data store (ODS) and API) to create a custom interoperability solution and others are seeking a managed and hosted solution like Data Connect—Certica's interoperability platform based on Ed-Fi. In either scenario, there are 3 key benefits for those school districts that are moving towards data interoperability:

Seamless and secure data exchange. All applications in the K-12 ecosystem need to speak a common language and exchange data in a clearly defined and predictable way. The Ed-Fi Education Data Standard can provide the common language and technologies (ODS and API) to provide predictable ways to transfer data. When using an interoperable solution and education data standard, school districts are no longer tied to a single vendor and can more easily swap out applications that may offer greater value.

Actionable insights. As the data scientist W. Edwards Deming so famously said, "Without data you're just another person with an opinion." This quote and concept rings true in K-12. Getting all of the K-12 source systems connected and sharing accurate data gives districts the insights to achieve their KPIs and learning objectives with the ability to make effective data-driven decisions.

IT efficiencies. With limited IT staff and dwindling budgets, most district IT departments need to work as productively as possible. An interoperable data solution gives district IT staff the option to eliminate many manual and repetitive tasks associated with the upkeep of point-to-point systems. The time saved can be spent on other high-value projects.

Delivering accurate, actionable and real-time information to teachers, administrators, parents and students can be the catalyst for measurable improvements in K-12 education. Wherever you may be on your path to data integration and application interoperability, some organizations that offer helpful resources include Certica Solutions, the Ed-Fi Alliance, and Project Unicorn.

To learn more about data interoperability or Data Connect, contact Sales@ CerticaSolutions.com, call 855.766.9916 Ext. 1, or visit CerticaSolutions.com.