

Current State Assessment and Requirements Definition

Education agencies are looking for better ways to integrate applications and data, and have learned that point-to-point synchronization between data systems is not sustainable. Furthermore, first generation data warehouses and dashboards aren't providing an adequate enterprise foundation to serve a growing need for accessibility to high-quality data.

Certica Solutions works with education agencies to evolve to a next generation data architecture that supports data integration and application interoperability in a manner that is efficient, cost-effective, reliable, and sustainable. Certica helps education agencies realize the benefits of next generation data architecture by providing consulting services in the areas of requirements definition, readiness assessment, architecture design and implementation planning services, tailored to meet organizational goals and objectives.

The primary goal of the Current State Assessment and Requirements Definition Service is to identify current organizational pain points and business requirements that will shape the agency's approach to implementing next generation data architecture. Utilizing an expert third party to discover and document the current state and opportunities for future requirements provides the agency with significant benefits in stakeholder engagement, buy-in, and foundational assets for building or improving strategic plans.

Documenting the Current State: Discovering, understanding and documenting the current state of the education agency's data system and the surrounding ecosystem, including:

- What applications and tools are currently being used?
- How are these applications currently connected?
- What infrastructure is currently in place (e.g. data warehouse, etc.)?
- How is the agency and staff organized?
- What is the agency's culture around data management and usage?
- What are the agency's strategic direction, goals and priorities?

Requirements Definition: Defining the high-level requirements for the education agency's future-state data system. We pose the question: "Where does the agency want to go?" Specifically, we want to identify the organizational problems to be solved and the goals that the agency wants to achieve strategically. Stakeholders in all departments, at all levels of the organization, will address this question.



How Does Certica Engage?

Documenting the Current State: Certica will review and evaluate baseline information provided by the agency, which may include an inventory of current technology, documentation, strategic plan(s), technology plan(s), budget and organizational chart. This information, coupled with input gathered during stakeholder engagements, is analyzed and consolidated.

Requirements Definition: Certica will immerse itself into the education agency to develop a complete understanding of the agency's requirements and help document the agency's vision in a clear, succinct way. We commit to speaking with a wide range of stakeholders to understand their pain points, the gaps in their current state system and process, and the opportunities that exist for improving the future state. Our goal is to engage with every major department (finance, operations, transportation, academic, research and reporting, etc.) and schools (principals, administrators, teachers, etc.) during this process. Certica's expertise and deep understanding of K-12 data management is key to facilitating constructive conversations to uncover issues and challenges during the requirements gathering and definition phase.

The Certica Approach for Stakeholder Engagement

- Utilize a documented stakeholder engagement method.
- Engage with individuals who create, manage, analyze and/or use data on a regular basis.
 - Administrators and staff: individual interviews conducted either face-to-face, web session, or by phone.
 - Teachers and school administrators: group setting to accommodate schedules. Certica will meet at established work group meetings, etc. to facilitate the session.
 - Students and parents: whenever possible to schedule, Certica strongly recommends including student and parent stakeholders for a full 360 view of the current state.

At the conclusion of an engagement, an education agency is providing with a Current State Assessment Report, which includes:

- A technical audit and summary of the current state
- Visual representations of current state including diagrams and maps that depict the agency's current core data systems as well as the current integration of applications and databases
- An application inventory
- Documentation of manual effort or unknown data use cases throughout the agency

The Requirements Definition Report includes:

- A synthesized set of high-level requirements
- Documented risks associated with each high-level requirement, including technical and administrative
- High-impact, agency-specific use case examples
- Recommendations for next steps