

**Senators Rest and Kelley introduced--****S.F. No. 1311: Referred to the Committee on Education.**

1 A bill for an act

2 relating to education; restoring funding for area  
3 learning center pupils; increasing the age of eligible  
4 pupils; amending Minnesota Statutes 2004, sections  
5 123A.06, subdivision 2; 126C.05, subdivisions 8, 15;  
6 126C.10, subdivision 2a.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 123A.06,  
9 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

10 Subd. 2. [PEOPLE TO BE SERVED.] A center shall provide  
11 programs for secondary pupils and adults. A center may also  
12 provide programs and services for elementary and secondary  
13 pupils who are not attending the center to assist them in being  
14 successful in school. A center shall use research-based best  
15 practices for serving limited English proficient students and  
16 their parents. An individual education plan team may identify a  
17 center as an appropriate placement to the extent a center can  
18 provide the student with the appropriate special education  
19 services described in the student's plan. Pupils eligible to be  
20 served are those age five to adults 22 23 and older who  
21 otherwise qualify under the graduation incentives program in  
22 section 124D.68, subdivision 2, or those pupils who are eligible  
23 to receive special education services under sections 125A.03 to  
24 125A.24, and 125A.65.

25 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective July 1, 2005.

26 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 126C.05,

1 subdivision 8, is amended to read:

2 Subd. 8. [AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP.] (a) Membership for  
3 pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 and for prekindergarten  
4 pupils with disabilities shall mean the number of pupils on the  
5 current roll of the school, counted from the date of entry until  
6 withdrawal. The date of withdrawal shall mean the day the pupil  
7 permanently leaves the school or the date it is officially known  
8 that the pupil has left or has been legally excused. However, a  
9 pupil, regardless of age, who has been absent from school for 15  
10 consecutive school days during the regular school year or for  
11 five consecutive school days during summer school or  
12 intersession classes of flexible school year programs without  
13 receiving instruction in the home or hospital shall be dropped  
14 from the roll and classified as withdrawn. Nothing in this  
15 section shall be construed as waiving the compulsory attendance  
16 provisions cited in section 120A.22. Average daily membership  
17 equals the sum for all pupils of the number of days of the  
18 school year each pupil is enrolled in the district's schools  
19 divided by the number of days the schools are in session. Days  
20 of summer school or intersession classes of flexible school year  
21 programs are only included in the computation of membership for  
22 pupils with a disability not appropriately served primarily in  
23 the regular classroom. A student must not be counted as more  
24 than ~~1+2~~ 2.0 pupils in average daily membership under this  
25 section. When the initial total average daily membership  
26 exceeds ~~1+2~~ 2.0 for a pupil enrolled in more than one school  
27 district during the fiscal year, each district's average daily  
28 membership must be reduced proportionately.

29 (b) A student must not be counted as more than one pupil in  
30 average daily membership except for purposes of section 126C.10,  
31 subdivision 2a.

32 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective July 1, 2005.

33 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 126C.05,  
34 subdivision 15, is amended to read:

35 Subd. 15. [LEARNING YEAR PUPIL UNITS.] (a) When a pupil is  
36 enrolled in a learning year program under section 124D.128, an

1 area learning center under sections 123A.05 and 123A.06, an  
2 alternative program approved by the commissioner, or a contract  
3 alternative program under section 124D.68, subdivision 3,  
4 paragraph (d), or subdivision 3a, for more than 1,020 hours in a  
5 school year for a secondary student, more than 935 hours in a  
6 school year for an elementary student, or more than 425 hours in  
7 a school year for a kindergarten student without a disability,  
8 that pupil may be counted as more than one pupil in average  
9 daily membership for purposes of section 126C.10, subdivision  
10 2a. The amount in excess of one pupil must be determined by the  
11 ratio of the number of hours of instruction provided to that  
12 pupil in excess of: (i) the greater of 1,020 hours or the  
13 number of hours required for a full-time secondary pupil in the  
14 district to 1,020 for a secondary pupil; (ii) the greater of 935  
15 hours or the number of hours required for a full-time elementary  
16 pupil in the district to 935 for an elementary pupil in grades 1  
17 through 6; and (iii) the greater of 425 hours or the number of  
18 hours required for a full-time kindergarten student without a  
19 disability in the district to 425 for a kindergarten student  
20 without a disability. Hours that occur after the close of the  
21 instructional year in June shall be attributable to the  
22 following fiscal year. A kindergarten student must not be  
23 counted as more than ~~1.2~~ 2.0 pupils in average daily membership  
24 under this subdivision. A student in grades 1 through 12 must  
25 not be counted as more than ~~1.2~~ 2.0 pupils in average daily  
26 membership under this subdivision.

27 (b)(i) To receive general education revenue for a pupil in  
28 an alternative program that has an independent study component,  
29 a district must meet the requirements in this paragraph. The  
30 district must develop, for the pupil, a continual learning plan  
31 consistent with section 124D.128, subdivision 3. Each school  
32 district that has a state-approved public alternative program  
33 must reserve revenue in an amount equal to at least 90 percent  
34 of the district average general education revenue per pupil unit  
35 less compensatory revenue per pupil unit times the number of  
36 pupil units generated by students attending a state-approved

1 public alternative program. The amount of reserved revenue  
2 available under this subdivision may only be spent for program  
3 costs associated with the state-approved public alternative  
4 program. Compensatory revenue must be allocated according to  
5 section 126C.15, subdivision 2.

6 (ii) General education revenue for a pupil in an approved  
7 alternative program without an independent study component must  
8 be prorated for a pupil participating for less than a full year,  
9 or its equivalent. The district must develop a continual  
10 learning plan for the pupil, consistent with section 124D.128,  
11 subdivision 3. Each school district that has a state-approved  
12 public alternative program must reserve revenue in an amount  
13 equal to at least 90 percent of the district average general  
14 education revenue per pupil unit less compensatory revenue per  
15 pupil unit times the number of pupil units generated by students  
16 attending a state-approved public alternative program. The  
17 amount of reserved revenue available under this subdivision may  
18 only be spent for program costs associated with the  
19 state-approved public alternative program. Compensatory revenue  
20 must be allocated according to section 126C.15, subdivision 2.

21 (iii) General education revenue for a pupil in an approved  
22 alternative program that has an independent study component must  
23 be paid for each hour of teacher contact time and each hour of  
24 independent study time completed toward a credit or graduation  
25 standards necessary for graduation. Average daily membership  
26 for a pupil shall equal the number of hours of teacher contact  
27 time and independent study time divided by 1,020.

28 (iv) For an alternative program having an independent study  
29 component, the commissioner shall require a description of the  
30 courses in the program, the kinds of independent study involved,  
31 the expected learning outcomes of the courses, and the means of  
32 measuring student performance against the expected outcomes.

33 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective July 1, 2005.

34 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 126C.10,  
35 subdivision 2a, is amended to read:

36 Subd. 2a. [EXTENDED TIME REVENUE.] (a) A school district's

1 extended time revenue is equal to the product of \$4,601 and the  
2 sum of the adjusted marginal cost pupil units of the district  
3 for each pupil in average daily membership in excess of 1.0 and  
4 less than ~~1-2~~ 2.0 according to section 126C.05, subdivision 8.

5 (b) A school district's extended time revenue may be used  
6 for extended day programs, extended week programs, summer  
7 school, and other programming authorized under the learning year  
8 program.

9 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective July 1, 2005.

- 1 Senator ..... moves to amend S.F. No. 1311 as follows:
- 2 Page 2, lines 24 and 26, delete "2.0" and insert "1.5"
- 3 Page 3, lines 23 and 25, delete "2.0" and insert "1.5"
- 4 Page 5, line 4, delete "2.0" and insert "1.5"

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# Senate

State of Minnesota

## **S.F. No. 1529 -Requiring Blocking Technology for School and Library Computers**

**Author:** Senator Betsy Wergin

**Prepared by:** Shelby Winiecki, Senate Research (651/296-5259)

**Date:** March 15, 2005



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**Section 1. [125B.15] [Internet Access for Students.]** states that an Internet-accessible computer at a school site must have blocking technology to restrict access to obscene or harmful material. If an adult requests, sites may be unblocked for research purposes.

This section does not leave any school site exempt from purchasing such technology; current law states that the school site is not required to make the purchases if the cost is more than an incidental expense. State funds for school library, school computer lab, and school media center will be withheld from the site until all Internet-accessible computers have this technology. A district must notify the Department of Education that a school site has equipped their computers with this technology in order to receive these state funds. Districts must also adopt an Internet safety policy.

**Section 2. [134.50] [Internet Access; Libraries.]** states that an Internet-accessible computer at a public library, if used by children under the age of 18 (currently 17) must have blocking technology in addition to existing filtering technology to restrict access to obscene or harmful material. If an adult requests unblocking for lawful purposes of the Internet, the library must unblock without delay and without requiring explanation.

This section does not leave any library exempt from purchasing such technology; current law states that a public library is not required to make the purchases if the cost is more than an incidental expense. State funds available to a public library will be withheld until all Internet-accessible computers have this technology. A public library system must notify the Department of Education that libraries within their system have equipped their computers with this technology in order to receive state funds. A public library must also adopt an Internet safety policy.

SW:vs

Senators Wergin, Gaither and Hann introduced--

S.F. No. 1529: Referred to the Committee on Education.

1 A bill for an act

2 relating to education; requiring school and library  
3 computers with Internet access available for student  
4 use to be equipped with software filtering or blocking  
5 technology; imposing a financial penalty; amending  
6 Minnesota Statutes 2004, sections 125B.15; 134.50.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 125B.15, is  
9 amended to read:

10 125B.15 [INTERNET ACCESS FOR STUDENTS.]

11 (a) Recognizing the difference between school libraries,  
12 school computer labs, and school media centers, which serve  
13 unique educational purposes, and public libraries, which are  
14 designed for public inquiry, all computers at a school site with  
15 access to the Internet available for student use must be  
16 equipped to-restrict~~7--including-by-use-of-available~~ with  
17 software filtering or blocking technology ~~or-other-effective~~  
18 ~~methods7--all~~ designed to restrict student access to material  
19 that is reasonably believed to be obscene or child pornography  
20 or material harmful to minors under federal or state law.

21 ~~(b) A-school-site-is-not-required-to-purchase-filtering~~  
22 ~~technology-if-the-school-site-would-incur-more-than-incidental~~  
23 ~~expense-in-making-the-purchase.~~

24 (c) A school district receiving technology revenue under  
25 section 125B.25 must prohibit, including through use of  
26 available software filtering or blocking technology ~~or-other~~



1 ~~effective-methods~~, adult access to material that under federal  
2 or state law is reasonably believed to be obscene or child  
3 pornography. At the request of an adult, the district may  
4 unblock filtered sites for bona fide research or other lawful  
5 purpose.

6 ~~(d)~~ (c) A school district, its agents or employees, are  
7 immune from liability for failure to comply with this section if  
8 they have made a good faith effort to comply with the  
9 requirements of this section.

10 ~~(e)~~ (d) "School site" means an education site as defined in  
11 section 123B.04, subdivision 1, or charter school under section  
12 124D.10.

13 (e) All state funds available to a school site for its  
14 school library, school computer lab, and school media center  
15 shall be withheld from the school site until all computers with  
16 Internet access available for student use at the school site are  
17 equipped with software filtering or blocking technology designed  
18 to restrict students' access to material that is reasonably  
19 believed to be obscene, child pornography, or material harmful  
20 to minors under state or federal law. A school district must  
21 formally adopt an Internet safety policy consistent with this  
22 section and other applicable law.

23 (f) To ensure that state funds are not withheld under  
24 paragraph (e), a school district must send an electronic notice  
25 to the department indicating those school sites within the  
26 district that have equipped their computers with software  
27 filtering or blocking technology, consistent with this section.  
28 A district must immediately transmit to the department any  
29 additional information related to school sites' compliance with  
30 this section.

31 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective January 1, 2006.  
32 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 134.50, is  
33 amended to read:

34 134.50 [INTERNET ACCESS; LIBRARIES.]

35 (a) Recognizing the difference between public libraries,  
36 which are designed for public inquiry, and school libraries,

1 school computer labs, and school media centers, which serve  
2 unique educational purposes, all public library computers with  
3 access to the Internet available for use by children under the  
4 age of ~~17~~ 18 must be equipped ~~to restrict, including by use of~~  
5 ~~available~~ with software filtering or blocking technology or  
6 ~~other effective methods, all~~ designed to restrict access by  
7 children to material that is reasonably believed to be obscene  
8 or child pornography or material harmful to minors under federal  
9 or state law.

10 ~~(b) A public library is not required to purchase filtering~~  
11 ~~technology if the public library would incur more than~~  
12 ~~incidental expense in making the purchase.~~

13 ~~(c)~~ A public library that receives state money must  
14 prohibit, including through the use of ~~available~~ software  
15 filtering or blocking technology ~~or other effective methods,~~  
16 adult access to material that under federal or state law is  
17 reasonably believed to be obscene or child pornography. At the  
18 request of an adult conducting bona fide research or pursuing  
19 another lawful purpose, a public library must unblock filtered  
20 sites without significant delay and without requiring the adult  
21 to explain the request. A public library may remove a person  
22 from the library if the person gains access or attempts to gain  
23 access to materials prohibited under this section by  
24 ~~intentionally bypassing the filtering technology or other method~~  
25 ~~used by the library.~~

26 ~~(d)~~ (c) A public library, its agents or employees, are  
27 immune from liability for failure to comply with this section if  
28 they have made a good faith effort to comply with the  
29 requirements of this section.

30 ~~(e)~~ (d) This section does not apply to the libraries of  
31 postsecondary institutions.

32 (e) All state funds available to a public library shall be  
33 withheld from the public library until all computers with  
34 Internet access available for use by children under age 18 are  
35 equipped with software filtering or blocking technology designed  
36 to restrict children's access to material that is reasonably

1 believed to be obscene, child pornography, or material harmful  
2 to minors under federal or state law. A public library must  
3 formally adopt an Internet safety policy consistent with this  
4 section and other applicable law.

5 (f) To ensure that state funds are not withheld under  
6 paragraph (e), a public library system must send an electronic  
7 notice to the education department indicating that the public  
8 libraries within the system have equipped their computers with  
9 software filtering or blocking technology, consistent with this  
10 section. A public library system must immediately transmit to  
11 the department any additional information related to public  
12 libraries' compliance with this section.

13 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective January 1, 2006.

Senators Gaither, Kelley and Wergin introduced--  
 S.F. No. 731: Referred to the Committee on Education.

1                                   A bill for an act

2           relating to education; providing for a unified,  
 3           Internet-based, student information and reporting  
 4           system; directing the commissioner of education to  
 5           contract with a single contractor; appropriating money.

6   BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

7           Section 1. [STATEWIDE STUDENT INFORMATION AND REPORTING  
 8   SYSTEM.]

9           (a) The commissioner of education shall improve and  
 10   decrease the cost of school district management of student  
 11   information by contracting with a single contractor to:

12           (1) efficiently and accurately serve all Minnesota school  
 13   districts without any local cost;

14           (2) meet all of the data collection and reporting  
 15   requirements of the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student  
 16   System; and

17           (3) provide a unified, secure, user-friendly, and  
 18   Internet-based system capable of converting data from a variety  
 19   of sources.

20           (b) In developing a request for proposal, the commissioner  
 21   shall seek input from school districts to establish criteria for  
 22   technical standards, state and local data standards, and local  
 23   system functionality.

24           [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective July 1, 2005.

25   School districts must receive contractor services by July 1, ~~2005~~

1 2006.

2 Sec. 2. [APPROPRIATION.]

3 Subdivision 1. [DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.] The sum  
4 indicated in this section is appropriated from the general fund  
5 to the Department of Education for the fiscal year designated.

6 Subd. 2. [STATEWIDE INFORMATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM.] For  
7 the statewide information and reporting system under section 1:

8 \$7,000,000 ..... 2006

9 Of this amount, up to \$5,000,000 is for contracting with a  
10 single contractor and up to \$2,000,000 is for system conversion  
11 and training costs. This appropriation does not cancel but is  
12 available until June 30, 2007.

13 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective July 1, 2005.

14 School districts must receive contractor services by July 1,  
15 2006.

1 Senator ..... moves to amend S.F. No. 731 as follows:

2 Page 1, after line 23, insert:

3 "(c) Any private student information handled by the  
4 statewide student information and reporting system is governed  
5 under the appropriate sections of Minnesota Statutes, chapter  
6 13, and related federal law."

Senators Kelley, Gaither, Foley and Rest introduced--  
S.F. No. 1180: Referred to the Committee on Education.

1                                   A bill for an act

2           relating to education; requiring school districts to

3           comply with the schools interoperability framework

4           specifications; establishing a working group.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

6           Section 1. [SCHOOLS INTEROPERABILITY FRAMEWORK.]

7           By July 1, 2007, schools, school districts, and the

8           Department of Education must comply with the schools

9           interoperability framework specifications to provide for

10           efficient student data sharing.

11           Sec. 2. [SCHOOL DATA SHARING WORKING GROUP.]

12           Subdivision 1. [MEMBERSHIP.] The commissioner of

13           administration shall convene a working group consisting of

14           representatives of the following:

15           (1) several school districts that are diverse in size and

16           location;

17           (2) charter schools;

18           (3) alternative learning centers;

19           (4) the Department of Education; and

20           (5) up to three citizens with expertise in information

21           technology.

22           The working group must develop a uniform data model that is

23           usable for schools, school districts, and the Department of

24           Education and enables effective data sharing between schools,

25           school districts, and the Department of Education.

1        Subd. 2. [REPORT TO LEGISLATURE.] The working group must  
2 report to the legislature by January 15, -2006. The report must  
3 include a recommendation of any legislative changes needed to  
4 streamline reports for schools and school districts. In  
5 addition, the report must include a recommendation on the  
6 feasibility of expanding the purchasing of data processing  
7 products and services by the state on behalf of school districts.



### MN Senate Education Committee: SIF State Solutions Overview



Patrick Plant  
Director of Technology & Information Services  
Anoka-Hennepin School District 11

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### SIF: A Quick Definition

- ✓ Non-profit membership organization comprised of:
  - pK-12 Educational Technology Companies
  - Regional Service Agencies
  - Schools & Districts
  - U.S. and State Departments of Education
  - Other educational organizations
- ✓ Jointly building the XML Specifications to enable K-12 software applications to share data quickly, dynamically and securely
- ✓ The SIF Implementation Specification is publicly available on the SIF website
- ✓ "Platform Independent / Vendor Neutral"

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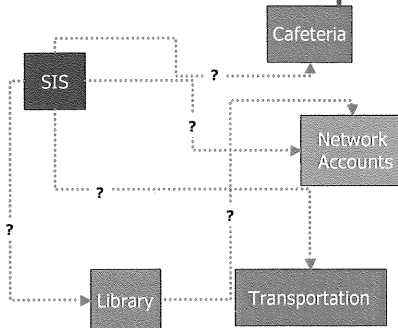
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### School Traditional Setup

• The situation in many schools and school systems is that there are a series of software applications which all may require the same data, but which have no way to talk to each other.

• It may be possible for one or two applications to share data through proprietary methods, but open, dynamic and synchronized data sharing does not occur.



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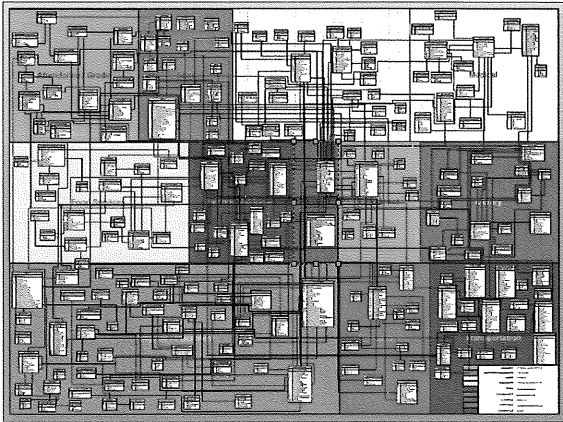
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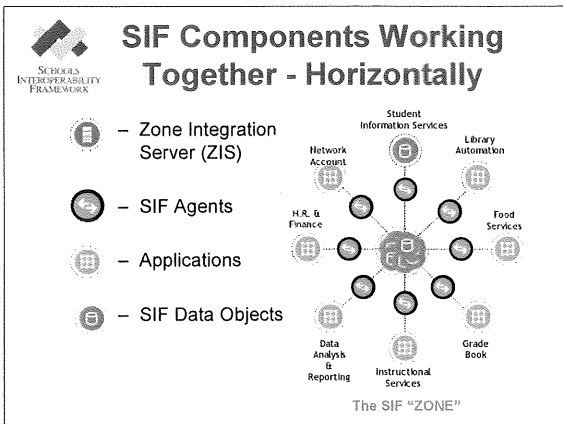
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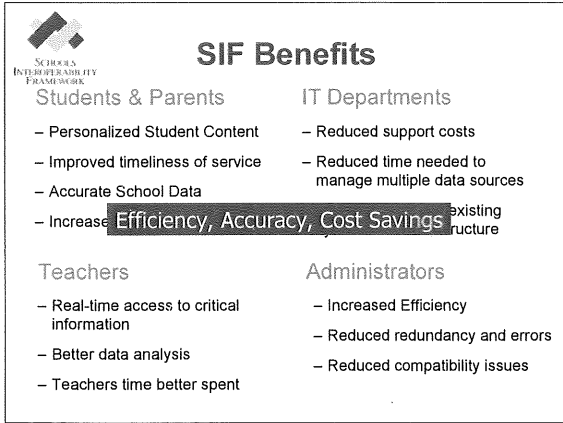
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### Local Return on Investment

#### New Student Registering for Enrollment into:

- \*Student Information System          \*Directory Service Application
- \*ID Card System                         \*Library Automation System
- \*Cafeteria Management System

**Typical School**

- 49 minute task
- 10 times data entered

**SIF School**

- 4 minute task
- 1 time data entry

**45 minutes/student X 18,000 students=  
6 FTE's!**

**1/10<sup>th</sup> the Time – 1/10<sup>th</sup> the Risk**

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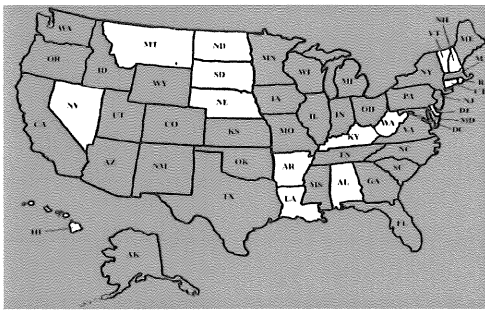
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### Current Deployment of SIF

**35 States - 250 Districts - 2.5 Million Students**



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### National Validation

USED National Educational Technology Plan - *Toward A New Golden Age In American Education*

Action Step 7 Integrated Data Systems: Integrated, interoperable data systems are the key to better allocation of resources, greater management efficiency, and online and technology-based assessments of student performance that empower educators to transform teaching and personalize instruction

Recommendation: "Ensure interoperability. For example consider Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) Compliance Certification as a requirement in all RFPs and purchasing decisions".

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SCHOOLS  
INTEROPERABILITY  
FRAMEWORK

# The Schools Interoperability Framework

*A blueprint for education software interoperability and data access*

## Horizontal Interoperability Case

The Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) is a non-profit membership organization comprised of over 250 software vendors, school districts, state departments of education and other organizations active in PK-12, who have come together to create a set of rules and definitions to enable software programs from different companies to share information. This set of platform independent, vendor neutral rules and definitions is called the "SIF Implementation Specification."

### WHY IS SIF NEEDED?

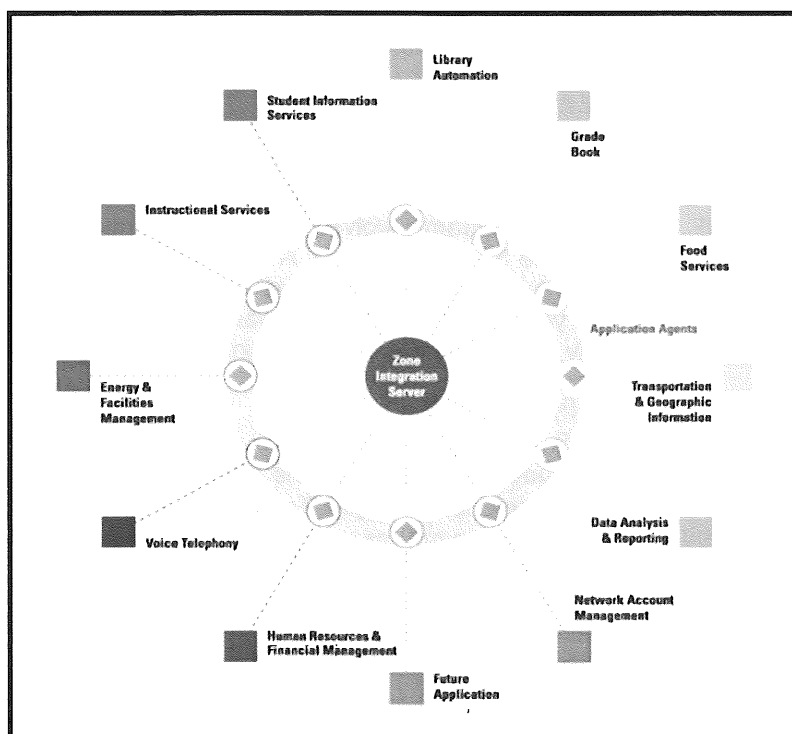
Education is facing a critical challenge in deploying technology due to the pressing problem of interoperability. Today, applications available for PK-12 schools and their districts are either closed systems or systems that allow customer access only through proprietary interfaces and data formats. To a user, that lack of interoperability means:

- Applications and their data are isolated from one another
- Redundant data entry is common
- Disconnected applications increase support costs
- Data reporting is costly and inefficient
- Data is inaccessible to decision makers

### HOW IS SIF DIFFERENT?

Rather than have each application vendor try to create a separate connection to every other application, SIF has defined the set of rules and definitions to share data within a *SIF Zone* (below). A SIF Zone is a logical grouping of applications, in which software application agents communicate with each other through a central communication point – the *Zone Integration Server* (ZIS). Data is shared between applications through a series of standardized messages, queries and events written in XML and sent using Internet protocols. These events are defined by the SIF Specification.

SIF Agents are extensions of each application that serve as the intermediary between the software application and the SIF Zone. The ZIS keeps track of the Agents registered in the Zone and manages transactions between Agents, enabling them to provide data and respond to requests. The ZIS is responsible for all access control and routing and security within the system. Because the behavior of the Agents and ZIS are standard functionality can be added to a Zone over time by simply adding SIF-enabled applications.



### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS TODAY?**

- Streamlined data entry
- Increased data accuracy
- Refocus staff resources to service delivery rather than data input
- Increase instructional opportunities by reducing resource 'down time' such as library closing
- Improved timeliness of service to students, families and staff
- Immediate flow of information to other agents
- Leverages existing Internet and LAN/WAN infrastructure and connectivity
- Allows choice of authentication methods and encryption strengths
- Leverages existing applications and enables "Best of Breed" approach to software acquisition
- Reduced maintenance
  - Standard interfaces are easier to support
  - Less redundant data and data entry

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS TOMORROW?**

SIF is working with representatives from states and the federal government to define the ways in which SIF can be expanded to support:

- Seamless reporting – ability to move data from school to district to state to federal levels
- Enable statewide electronic exchange systems of student records between districts
- Data driven decision making
  - Collecting & analyzing information as it is developed
  - Ability to populate data warehouses and utilize data mining
  - Use business tools to analyze administrative functions
  - Respond to changes as they occur rather than reacting to on an annual basis

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COSTS TO SCHOOLS**

Costs to schools will vary depending upon the existing infrastructure and personnel available as well as the scope of the SIF installation proposed. Possible costs include:

- Potential infrastructure upgrades
- Possible purchase of applications or upgrade currently owned ones
- Staff time to develop data / information management system and procedures
- Staff to implement and support the implementation or contract for services to do so
- Purchase of Zone Integration Server(s) software and hardware
- Possible contract for integration or implementation services

### **WHAT IS SIF CERTIFICATION?**

The SIF Certification Program is a formal program undertaken by SIF to confirm that software programs adhere to the rules and definitions of the SIF Implementation Specification. SIF has contracted with the Open Group, a well respected international certification organization, to serve as the SIF Certification Authority. The SIF Certification Program involves a series of formal tests which validate that software applications properly implement the SIF specification. A software program which successfully completes the program will be able to display the 'SIF Certification' logo on its package, website and in promotional literature. The 'SIF Compliant' logo is your indication that this particular version of the software program has been tested and certified to properly communicate and share information with other "SIF Certified" software programs.

### **HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?**

- Encourage SIF products to be considered in your RFPs and buying process
  - RFP language is available on the SIF website
- Apply to be a SIF Reference or Object Testing Site – Details at <http://www.sifinfo.org/compliance.html>
- Join SIF and sit on working groups, influence and vote on specifications

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information, contact Larry Fruth II, Ph.D., +1.202.789.4460, [lfruth@sifinfo.org](mailto:lfruth@sifinfo.org) or visit the SIF web site at <http://www.sifinfo.org> for information on current activities.



# The Schools Interoperability Framework

*A blueprint for education software interoperability and data access*

## Vertical Interoperability Case

The Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) is a non-profit membership organization comprised of over 250 software vendors, school districts, state departments of education and other organizations active in PK-12, who have come together to create a set of rules and definitions to enable software programs from different companies to share information. This set of platform independent, vendor neutral rules and definitions is called the "SIF Implementation Specification."

### WHY IS SIF NEEDED?

Education is facing a critical challenge in deploying technology due to the pressing problem of interoperability. Today, applications available for PK-12 schools and their districts are either closed systems or systems that allow customer access only through proprietary interfaces and data formats. To a user, that lack of interoperability means:

- Applications and their data are isolated from one another
- Redundant data entry is common
- Disconnected applications increase support costs
- Data reporting is costly and inefficient
- Data is inaccessible to decision makers

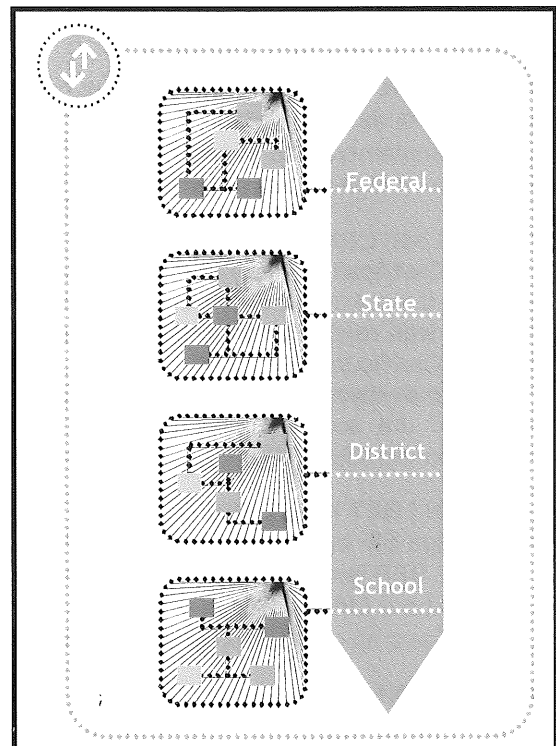
There is currently much discussion of using SIF as a medium and standard for reporting among different levels of education organizations. Initially, a SIF zone was conceived and implemented as existing within a school where different software packages within the school cooperate in sharing common information. Now as the concept of a SIF Zone is being expanded there is concern that the Zone be scalable to accommodate this new kind of communication – **Vertical Interoperability**.

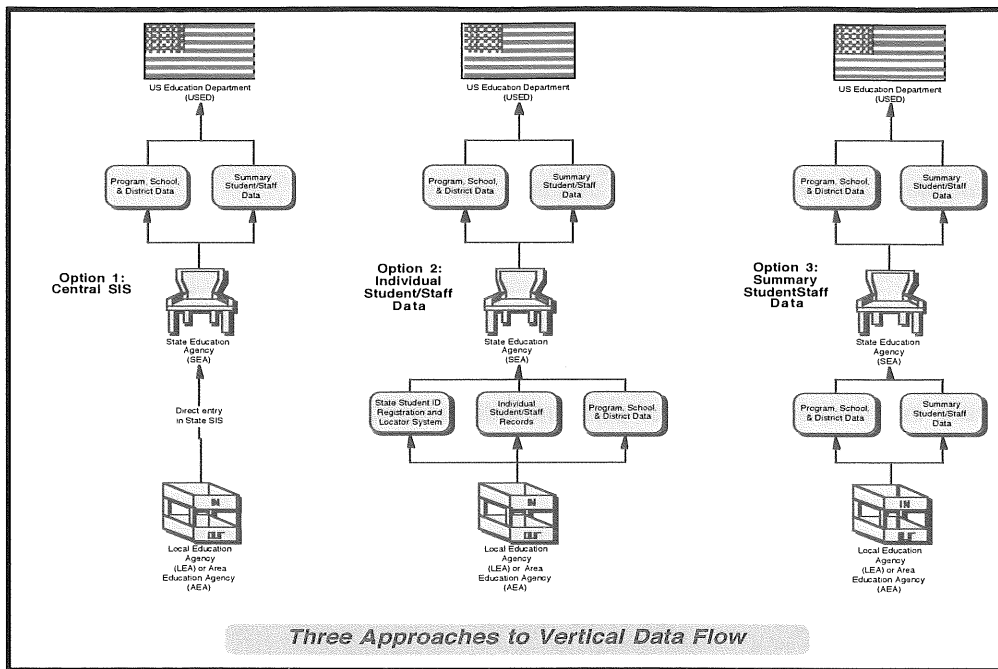
### WHAT IS VERTICAL INTEROPERABILITY?

Vertical interoperability is a situation in which SIF agents at different levels of an organization communicate using a SIF Zone. Vertical interoperability involves data collection from multiple agents (upward) or publishing of information to multiple agents (downward). For example, a state department data warehouse may listen for changes in district level data warehouses and update its database on a regular basis. Or, a state department may wish to publish teacher certification data to districts.

### WHAT IS VERTICAL REPORTING?

Vertical reporting using SIF is a special case of vertical interoperability. It is distinguished by the movement of pre-specified (and possibly large) packages of data at designated or predictable intervals. The SIF objects that are contained in the report may be any SIF data objects, representing either aggregate information or granular information. The set of data objects help define the report. Other things that define the report are the date the report is to be submitted, the time period the report applies to, and the mandate that the report fulfills.





*Three Approaches to Vertical Data Flow*

### WHAT ARE BENEFITS TO STATES?

- Increased data accuracy
- Allows choice of authentication methods and encryption strengths
- Reduced maintenance
- Seamless reporting – ability to move data from school to district to state to federal levels
- Enable statewide electronic exchange systems of student records between districts
- Data driven decision making

### WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COSTS TO STATES?

Costs to states will vary depending upon the existing infrastructure and personnel available as well as the scope of the SIF installation proposed. Possible costs include:

- Potential infrastructure upgrades
- Possible purchase of applications or upgrade currently owned ones
- Staff time to develop data / information management system and procedures
- Staff to implement and support the implementation or contract for services
- Purchase of Zone Integration Server(s) software and hardware

### WHAT IS SIF CERTIFICATION?

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### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, contact Larry Fruth II, Ph.D., +1.202.789.4460, [lfruth@sifinfo.org](mailto:lfruth@sifinfo.org) or visit the SIF web site at <http://www.sifinfo.org> for information on current activities

**Senators Kelley, Kierlin and Saxhaug introduced--**  
**S.F. No. 919: Referred to the Committee on Education.**

1                                   A bill for an act

2           relating to education; funding on-line learning at  
3           same rate for certain students; amending Minnesota  
4           Statutes 2004, section 124D.095, subdivision 8;  
5           repealing Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 124D.095,  
6           subdivision 9.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

8           Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 124D.095,  
9           subdivision 8, is amended to read:

10           Subd. 8. [FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.] (a) For a student  
11           enrolled in an on-line learning course, the department must  
12           calculate average daily membership and make payments according  
13           to this subdivision.

14           (b) The initial on-line learning average daily membership  
15           equals 1/12 for each semester course or a proportionate amount  
16           for courses of different lengths. The adjusted on-line learning  
17           average daily membership equals the initial on-line learning  
18           average daily membership times .88.

19           (c) No on-line learning average daily membership shall be  
20           generated if: (1) the student does not complete the on-line  
21           learning course, or (2) the student is enrolled in on-line  
22           learning provided by the enrolling district ~~and the student was~~  
23           ~~enrolled in a Minnesota public school for the school year before~~  
24           ~~the school year in which the student first enrolled in on-line~~  
25           learning.

26           (d) On-line learning average daily membership under this



1 subdivision for a student currently enrolled in a Minnesota  
 2 public school and-who-was-enrolled-in-a-Minnesota-public-school  
 3 for-the-school-year-before-the-school-year-in-which-the-student  
 4 first-enrolled-in-on-line-learning shall be used only for  
 5 computing average daily membership according to section 126C.05,  
 6 subdivision 19, paragraph (a), clause (ii), and for computing  
 7 on-line learning aid according to section ~~126C.24~~ 124D.096.

8 ~~(e)-On-line-learning-average-daily-membership-under-this~~  
 9 ~~subdivision-for-students-not-included-in-paragraph-(c)-or-(d)~~  
 10 ~~shall-be-used-only-for-computing-average-daily-membership~~  
 11 ~~according-to-section-126C.05, subdivision-19, paragraph-(a),~~  
 12 ~~clause-(ii), and-for-computing-payments-under-paragraphs-(f)-and~~  
 13 ~~(g).~~

14 ~~(f)-Subject-to-the-limitations-in-this-subdivision, the~~  
 15 ~~department-must-pay-an-on-line-learning-provider-an-amount-equal~~  
 16 ~~to-the-product-of-the-adjusted-on-line-learning-average-daily~~  
 17 ~~membership-for-students-under-paragraph-(e)-times-the-student~~  
 18 ~~grade-level-weighting-under-section-126C.05, subdivision-1,~~  
 19 ~~times-the-formula-allowance.~~

20 ~~(g)-The-department-must-pay-each-on-line-learning-provider~~  
 21 ~~100-percent-of-the-amount-in-paragraph-(f)-within-45-days-of~~  
 22 ~~receiving-final-enrollment-and-course-completion-information~~  
 23 ~~each-quarter-or-semester.~~

24 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective for revenue for  
 25 fiscal year 2006.

26 Sec. 2. [REPEALER.]  
 27 Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 124D.095, subdivision 9,  
 28 is repealed.

29 [EFFECTIVE DATE.] This section is effective for revenue for  
 30 fiscal year 2006.

APPENDIX  
Repealed Minnesota Statutes for 05-2107

**124D.095 ON-LINE LEARNING OPTION.**

Subd. 9. Payment priority. (a) To the extent funds are available, the commissioner must pay an on-line learning provider according to subdivision 8, in the order in which an on-line learning provider notifies the commissioner under subdivision 3, paragraph (b), that it is delivering on-line learning. The on-line learning provider must submit to the commissioner any student information necessary to process payments under this section.

(b) Before paying other on-line learning providers under paragraph (a), the commissioner must pay providers that delivered on-line learning in fiscal year 2003. (1) First, the commissioner must pay for students who were enrolled in a Minnesota on-line learning program during fiscal year 2003 and continue to be enrolled in that on-line learning program during the current fiscal year. (2) Second, the commissioner must pay for other students enrolled in that on-line learning program during the current fiscal year. A provider's qualifying number of pupils under clauses (1) and (2) shall not exceed 100 percent of the fiscal year 2003 pupils. An on-line learning provider that qualifies under this paragraph may also submit an application for funding for additional pupils under paragraph (a).

(c) Notwithstanding paragraph (a), the commissioner may establish criteria to limit the increase in the number of qualifying pupils for an on-line learning provider to enable start-up or growth of other providers.

1 Senator ..... moves to amend S.F. No. 919 as follows:

2 Page 1, after line 7, insert:

3 "Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 124D.095,  
4 subdivision 2, is amended to read:

5 Subd. 2. [DEFINITIONS.] For purposes of this section, the  
6 following terms have the meanings given them.

7 (a) "Online learning" is an interactive course or program  
8 that delivers instruction to a student by computer; is combined  
9 with other traditional delivery methods that include frequent  
10 student assessment and may include actual teacher contact time;  
11 and meets or exceeds state academic standards.

12 (b) "Online learning provider" is a school district, an  
13 intermediate school district, an organization of two or more  
14 school districts operating under a joint powers agreement, or a  
15 charter school located in Minnesota that provides online  
16 learning to students.

17 (c) "Student" is a Minnesota resident enrolled in a school  
18 under section 120A.22, subdivision 4, in kindergarten through  
19 grade 12.

20 (d) "Online learning student" is a student enrolled in an  
21 online learning course or program delivered by an online  
22 provider under paragraph (b).

23 (e) "Enrolling district" means the school district or  
24 charter school in which a student is enrolled under section  
25 120A.22, subdivision 4, for purposes of compulsory attendance."

26 Renumber the sections in sequence and correct the internal  
27 references

28 Amend the title accordingly

Senators Kelley, Skoe, Stumpf and Gaither introduced--  
S.F. No. 1793: Referred to the Committee on Education.

1 A bill for an act

2 relating to education finance; amending the online  
3 learning program funding formula; establishing an  
4 online learning advisory council; amending Minnesota  
5 Statutes 2004, section 124D.095, subdivision 8, by  
6 adding a subdivision.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 124D.095,  
9 subdivision 8, is amended to read:

10 Subd. 8. [FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.] (a) For a student  
11 enrolled in an on-line learning course, the department must  
12 calculate average daily membership and make payments according  
13 to this subdivision.

14 (b) The initial on-line learning average daily membership  
15 equals 1/12 for each semester course or a proportionate amount  
16 for courses of different lengths. The adjusted on-line learning  
17 average daily membership equals the initial on-line learning  
18 average daily membership times .88.

19 (c) No on-line learning average daily membership shall be  
20 generated if: (1) the student does not complete the on-line  
21 learning course, or (2) the student is enrolled in on-line  
22 learning provided by the enrolling district and the student was  
23 enrolled in a Minnesota public school for the school year before  
24 the school year in which the student first enrolled in on-line  
25 learning, or (3) the student is enrolled in online learning and  
26 the student was enrolled in and received funding for online

1 learning for the school year before the school year in which the  
2 student is currently enrolled.

3 (d) On-line learning average daily membership under this  
4 subdivision for a student currently enrolled in a Minnesota  
5 public school and who was enrolled in a Minnesota public school  
6 for the school year before the school year in which the student  
7 first enrolled in on-line learning shall be used only for  
8 computing average daily membership according to section 126C.05,  
9 subdivision 19, paragraph (a), clause (ii), and for computing  
10 on-line learning aid according to section ~~126E.24~~ 124D.096.

11 (e) On-line learning average daily membership under this  
12 subdivision for students not included in paragraph (c) or (d)  
13 shall be used only for computing average daily membership  
14 according to section 126C.05, subdivision 19, paragraph (a),  
15 clause (ii), and for computing payments under paragraphs (f) and  
16 (g).

17 (f) Subject to the limitations in this subdivision, the  
18 department must pay an on-line learning provider an amount equal  
19 to the product of the adjusted on-line learning average daily  
20 membership for students under paragraph (e) times the student  
21 grade level weighting under section 126C.05, subdivision 1,  
22 times the formula allowance.

23 (g) The department must pay each on-line learning provider  
24 100 percent of the amount in paragraph (f) within 45 days of  
25 receiving final enrollment and course completion information  
26 each quarter or semester.

27 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 124D.095, is  
28 amended by adding a subdivision to read:

29 Subd. 10. [ONLINE LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL.] (a) An  
30 online learning advisory council is established under section  
31 15.059, except that the term for each council member shall be  
32 three years. The advisory council is composed of 12 members  
33 from throughout the state who have demonstrated experience with  
34 or interest in online learning. The members of the council  
35 shall be appointed by the commissioner. The advisory council  
36 shall bring to the attention of the commissioner any matters

- 1 related to online learning and provide input to the department  
2 in matters related, but not restricted, to:
- 3 (1) quality assurance;
  - 4 (2) teacher qualifications;
  - 5 (3) program approval;
  - 6 (4) special education;
  - 7 (5) attendance;
  - 8 (6) program design and requirements; and
  - 9 (7) fair and equal access to programs.
- 10 (b) The online learning advisory council under this  
11 subdivision expires June 30, 2008.

**In support of Senate File 1793**

Dear Education Committee:

We need a moment of your time to introduce MNOLA; the Minnesota K-12 On-Line Learning Alliance. The alliance was formed over a year ago to promote on-line learning options for all students in the State of Minnesota. The alliance is composed of the following school districts and charter schools:

Spring Lake Park Schools  
North Branch Schools  
TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School  
Blue Sky Charter School  
Cyber Village Academy Charter School  
Northern Star Schools Collaboration (Osseo-Hopkins-Edina-Eden  
Prairie-Bloomington-Richfield-Wayzata-TIES-Intermediate District 287)

Our legislative goals for this session include the following items:

1. Supporting a change to the current OLL Funding formula that would remove students from OLL funding after 1 year in an approved OLL program or school. Currently, students that are funded through the OLL Funding formula (ref. Legislative line item from 2003 K-12 Omnibus ACT) remain in that funding program throughout the duration of their OLL learning experience.

2. Establishing a 12-member on-line learning advisory council to bring to the Commissioner's attention matters related to on-line education and to provide input to the MDE in matters related, but not restricted, to:

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) Quality Assurance      | (e) Attendance                      |
| (b) Teacher qualifications | (f) Program Design and Requirements |
| (c) Program approval       | (g) Fair and equal access           |
| (d) Special education      |                                     |

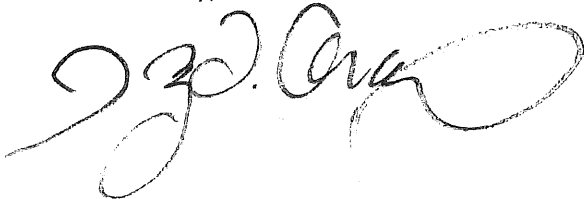
We feel that this is a pivotal year for on-line learning in the State of Minnesota. Members of the alliance are available to speak to you in greater detail about specific issues or concerns about on-line delivery of education.

Please feel free to contact Tracy Quarnstrom, chair of the legislative committee for the alliance, at any time.

Phone (651) 213-2017 Work - Phone (651) 462-0260 Home  
[Tquarnstrom@chisagolakes.k12.mn.us](mailto:Tquarnstrom@chisagolakes.k12.mn.us)

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,





15 January, 2005

Dear Ms. Quarnstrom,

I wanted to take a moment to write and tell you what a benefit Trio Wolf Creek has been for my son, Sean.

We have had a very difficult time finding the proper educational fit for him. He has been in a variety of different academic settings over the past few years in our search for one that would allow him to use his intellectual gifts. Unable to find either public or private education that was suited to his needs we decided to homeschool him. In homeschool he was able to use the distance learning program offered by Stanford University but even with financial aid we couldn't afford more than one course at time.

All that changed when we found out about Trio Wolf Creek. It was the first time we had encountered a school that actually encouraged Sean to proceed at his own pace. That attitude combined with the fact that it was a public school and within reasonable commuting distance made it a very easy decision to enroll our son with you.

In the time Sean has been going to Wolf Creek he has made excellent academic progress and, contrary to our past experience, is happy to go into school. We could not be more pleased with how this has worked out for him as we were convinced we would have a great deal of trouble finding an appropriate high school.

I was somewhat dismayed recently to discover that, because Sean was homeschooled, you are not receiving any educational funds for him. That bothers me as I have been paying my taxes all the years that he has been homeschooled. The reason he was homeschooled in first place was due to the total lack of adequate funding for gifted education in Minnesota. Finally we find a public school that has structured their curriculum so that it meets the abilities of the student and they can't get funding for some students just because they were homeschooled. Someone in the state educational system needs to address this issue which is fundamentally unjust.

In closing I would like to say thank you. Your educational vision has opened up an avenue for my son and others like him to utilize their abilities to the utmost. I hope in the future you will be able to secure the funding necessary to continue this very beneficial program. If there is anything I can do help please let me know. Thanks again

Sincerely yours,

John Donovan

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a current student of TRIO Wolf Creek HS and have been attending for almost a year. During this time I have experienced first-hand the benefits of this program. When I first enrolled in the program I was recovering from an acute case of mononucleosis. This was not the only time in my high school years that I had struggled with this illness. But at that point, the middle of my junior year, I was so far behind in my credits that it wouldn't be possible to graduate with my class. Not only that, but I was having a hard time imagining myself able to return to a normal class schedule.

My aunt knew a student attending TRIO Wolf Creek, and she suggested that I enroll. Right away the teachers worked with my transcript and helped me develop a plan for graduating. As of right now I will have no problem graduating on time, with my class of 2005! I have been able to do most of my schoolwork from home, which is the best solution for me. My weak immune system and stamina are not hindrances with a flexible program such as this one. TRIO Wolf Creek supported me and gave me the second chance I needed to graduate from high school.

Why then should this program be preserved and protected? --For me, and for the many teenagers who call TRIO Wolf Creek their school. For so many, this is their only opportunity for a high school diploma and a good education. Circumstances arose in their lives that made attending a normal public high school impossible. Circumstances like illness, pregnancy, the need to work to support a family, and learning challenges are just a few. If left with no alternative, many of these students would permanently drop out of high school or go through high school with out being challenged or successful. Everyone here has a story of why normal public high school didn't work for them. And their stories of failure can be changed here at TRIO Wolf Creek—into stories of accomplishment and success.

Sincerely,



Rachelle Schaible

*Jamie & Kimmy Owens*

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January 14, 2005

I am writing this letter to support the On Line Learning Program. I believe that in today's society our children need better options than what have been available in the past. On Line Learning has proven that it can provide these options.

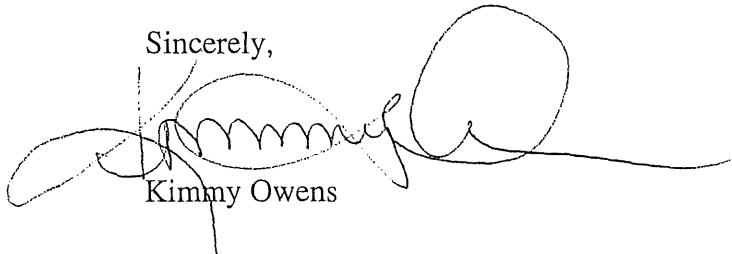
I am asking for increased funding to support On Line Learning, to better our society and to give our children better options in which to learn. Education is the cornerstone on which America is founded, we owe it to ourselves, to our children and to the future to fully fund this program.

You simply need to look at the facts regarding today's public school system to see that it is lacking. The graduation rate has decreased, students are achieving lower test scores, and there is the issue of bullying and threats. On Line Learning is a great alternative and for many students the only alternative. This program deserves to be fully funded as our students deserve to have every opportunity for their future.

My son is currently attending TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School. This has opened many doors for him and helped him to take ownership of his education. Increasing the funding for On Line Learning programs will directly benefit my son and many others.

Thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kimmy Owens

January 17, 2005

To whom it may concern:

I am a parent of a student that had a very difficult time during High School. If we did not come upon the Distance Learning Program through the North Branch School district I don't know what we would have done.

I would like to give you a little background on my son's situation. My son had a bright future and was exceptional in the fact that he went from fifth grade and tested into the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. A very motivated and involved student he struggled with Migraine Headaches all through his life. He always managed to excel at his school work. He had a freak accident in our home and ended up with a concussion and things spiraled out of control after that. Missing a lot of time at school we looked had the Stillwater Area School district set up a homebound plan at the advice of his doctors. Well, this was a true disaster, as no one teacher would help and not one of the people involved would ever take responsibility to get to my son in a timely manner and they always managed to misplace his work or new assignments. I could have done a better job myself. As things got worse medically and his vision was affected, we had to seek many medical opinions that dragged out over a year's time. After several hospitalizations for pain management and a botched sinus surgery, we went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. He had an abscess behind his eye going through the bone in his sinus cavity towards his brain. He needed specialized emergency surgery. As he recovered the Stillwater School tried to pull things together but had no teacher that could teach him the AP math class that he needed and finally a teacher told us there were alternatives and sent me the information on North Branch.

I contacted North Branch and sent them all of the paperwork and doctors information and they were here at our home setting up our computer and getting things set for my son to continue with his high school education. There was a lot of work and a lot on help from the Teacher at North Branch and technical support. They were wonderful and supportive and understood how important it was and how difficult it was for my son to attend school in a traditional way and that it was not impossible for him to succeed and graduate from high school. The Distance Learning program was the only thing that kept my son going. As he was recovering he had set backs and illnesses and a lot of trips to Mayo. The Distance Learning program was flexible to allow him to do his class work and his online work when he was physically able to work. There were times that he did his best class work at 2:00 in the morning, because that was the time he felt well enough to work on it. There are no traditional schools that would have encouraged him the way that the distance learning program did.

I could go on about the fantastic job that the teachers and administrators of this program did. I am also a believer in the program. It works, and the schools and state need to see that they would benefit by encouraging growth in these programs. They need your support and your understanding. The distance learning program allows students to succeed that have been told by traditional schools that there is nothing they can do but be in that school building and be in class or fail.

My son is in his freshman year in college at UW-Stout this year. He would not be there today had it not been for the North Branch School District Distance Learning Program.

Please support the program!

Sincerely,

Helen C. Hamble  
1916 W. Pine Street  
Stillwater, MN 55082

# Letter to the Legislature

As a student at Wolf creek Internet school, I was shocked to hear that the state may be considering cutting funding for the school district. Charter schools like wolf creek are some of the only possible places for kids to learn that cannot do well in a high school setting. Students are offered a chance to excel in school by working on their own time and at their own pace. Teachers in high school classrooms can only teach their students at the pace of the average of the group. This means that students that can learn easily sit and waste time while students that have difficulty learning are sometimes left behind. At wolf creek students can work ahead on assignments that they understand, and students that have trouble with their work get individual attention almost immediately, in the classroom or at home by email. Wolf creek also relieves some of the stress of high school by offering a much more relaxed environment. Charter schools offer a much safer environment because the teacher to student ratio is so much smaller, and teachers are able to watch over their students and protect them from such things as peer pressure, violence, and drugs. High schools are places where drug use and crime is high. As a former student of Chisago lakes high school I can attest to the dangers of large groups of unmonitored teenagers that have been sitting in school for hours on end. Wolf creek has made a lot of positive things available in my life that I wouldn't have been able to obtain had I gone to a normal high school, such as a steady job and a running car. When I did attend Chisago lakes high school, I made a lot of negative friends, and I made a lot of negative choices, and some of these choices are still affecting me to this day. Without the option of Internet school, teenagers are left to fend for themselves, and some that may do poorly in high school, could have had a chance to excel in a completely different environment. Please consider my letter when this issue is brought up in the legislature, and please don't cut our funding.

David Webster

Dear Legislators,

It is my fourth year in the Distance Learning program. I joined the program at the beginning of my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year because of the challenges I faced in the public middle school. While I was in public school, I was unable to learn efficiently because I was not understanding the teacher's methods. When I asked questions, I would often frustrate my teachers to the point where they told me to stop asking questions. I did stop asking questions, as a result my grades began to slip. I was called stupid by my classmates, my teachers, and myself. I was constantly putting myself down. I was afraid I wasn't going to pass the Basic Standards Test because I was having so much trouble in school. The summer after my 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, my mom and I began looking for an alternative education. We looked into private schools, and moving out of the district. However, we could not afford the expensive private schools, and moving away from home was a last resort. That is when we found Distance Learning. It was free, and very convenient. Distance Learning is a wonderful program, which has helped me succeed in many aspects as a student. I no longer call myself stupid, and I passed the BST's with the help of the program and my tutor. I am earning A's in all of my classes, and I am confident in myself. I feel I am better prepared for college after being in the program, because of the study skills, and independence I have gained. I feel, that with the help of the program, I will be able to become the Architect I have always wanted to be. Before the program, I thought that goal was an unreachable one. This is just my story, but by keeping the option of having alternative learning programs, you are helping so many other people with their educational needs. Please remember the students' lives you can help by giving them the chance to make a difference in their own education through the opportunity to be in an On-Line Learning Program. Thank you for your time, and attention.

Sincerely,

Kelly Keene  
Spring Lake Park  
Distance Learning Academy

Dear Representatives,

This year I started on-line learning. My mom was actually the one who chose on-line learning for me, and at first I wasn't looking forward to it, but now I'm glad I tried it. It has benefited me in a number of ways. There are no distractions like there would be at public school, and I feel you get more attention and help than if you were in a class room with 30 other children. On-line learning is a great thing, and I hope it continues to be an option for every student in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Alexis Anderson  
Spring Lake Park  
Distance Learning Academy



January 18, 2005

Dear Representative:

Medical has been my biggest battle with everything since I first started school. Due to a genetic immune system disorder I get sick every time I am exposed to a new bacteria. Unfortunately since this has gone on for quite some time I have missed a great amount of public school and was falling behind. I was to the point where I was ready to throw in the towel because I felt like I couldn't keep up.

One day I got sick in school and my counselor suggested online learning. At first I wasn't to thrilled but I thought about it long time considering all the choices. The best way for me to graduate on time was online learning. I decided that it was worth trying.

After the first week I began to notice how compatible it was to my lifestyle and how much healthier I am getting. I am now one step closer to graduating with all my classmates. I know I will have this disorder for the rest of my life and I know there will be bridges to cross and mountains to climb. I don't think that going to school should have to jeopardize my health or other students and staff.

Sincerely,  
Erin Jagodzinski  
Spring Lake Park Schools  
Distance Learning Academy

January 18, 2005

Dear Representative,

My name is Whitney. I just started distance learning because I have chronic health issues. Regular school was not an option for me, but Distance Learning is. I am now able to do all of my schoolwork at my home and receive the education that I need. Without this program I would not be passing the 7th grade. I feel more confident and I know that even if I'm not feeling well I can still do my work at home and not get behind.

Sincerely,

Whitney Busby  
Spring Lake Park  
Distance Learning Academy

Dear Representative,

We are writing in support of the On-line Distance Learning program that the Spring Lake Park District has offered. We chose this program because it fit our kids needs. Both children were unhappy with the school atmosphere and disrespect that they were seeing on a daily basis. One of my children was also the object of bullying from other children. We were not wanting to use the homeschool option for our children because of the time and effort it would take on my part. We have gone through some difficult times in our family and were looking for an alternative. Distance Learning offered quality classes and a staff who would be willing to help the kids as needed. The program has been very flexible and very educational for my kids. Please keep this as an option for the State of Minnesota, many could benefit from this type of learning.

Thank you.

Laury Hall

12134 Radisson Rd.

Blaine, MN 55449

To Whom It May Concern,

We would like to voice our support for the continuance of the Distance Learning Program. Our son, Nathaniel Kruckeberg was a former student at North Branch Senior High School. While attending the high school, he was falling behind and failing many classes. It was happening at a rate that had become discouraging to him. As a discouraged student, Nathaniel searched for other options of education.

While acknowledging the very few options available, Distance Learning was one of the few. Through this program, Nathaniel's persistence and passion for school work had risen due to the fact he was given teachers who cared to see students achieve. The program offered Nathaniel not only an alternative to school work but also offered him a diploma which was unlikely with the public school system, i.e. North Branch Senior High.

Without the availability of the Distance Learning Program and the guidance from his teacher Sara Home, Nathaniel would not have earned his high school diploma. With Sara's help and the help from Distance Learning, Nathaniel is now utilizing the ability to advance by applying to colleges he sees fit. As a family, we support Distance Learning because it has shown us that there is an option out their for students who struggle with the public school system.

Sincerely,

Donald Kruckeberg & Family

My name is Janet Hesselgrave and I have two children in the North Branch's Distance Learning Program. This is our 2nd year with the program.

I originally moved the kids to Distance Learning because of our moral beliefs. (Homeschooling was not an option. My kids are too smart for me to teach.) I also like that my children were still part of the school system which gave us many options/opportunities: i.e. sports, school materials, access to teachers, etc.

Over the past year and a half I have learned a great deal about this program. This program enables individuals to challenge and push themselves.

My oldest is very goal oriented and enjoys working at her own pace -- which is faster than the classroom setting. At the rate she is going, she will be graduating two or three trimesters early.

My second child ran into a wall this year. She has depression and needed a little help. The gals who make-up the staff of the Distance Learning program did so much to help my daughter and I. Because of them and having the option of Distance Learning, my daughter can focus on her health and keep herself on track with her education.

I support the Distance Learning Program 110%. It is an option and that is what families, children need. Not all children learn in the same way. I believe that Distance Learning can address so many issues: from those like my oldest who need more of a challenge; giving parents another way to maintain a high level of education but not of the moral type; helping those who have a disability of sort like depression that requires a less stressful environment in which to learn.

Janet Hesselgrave  
Administrative Assistant  
FLACC  
651.464.3200

"To Serve Our Members & Advocate For Our Business Community"

1 Senator Kelley from the Committee on Education, to which  
was referred

3 S.F. No. 1311: A bill for an act relating to education;  
4 restoring funding for area learning center pupils; increasing  
5 the age of eligible pupils; amending Minnesota Statutes 2004,  
6 sections 123A.06, subdivision 2; 126C.05, subdivisions 8, 15;  
7 126C.10, subdivision 2a.

8 Reports the same back with the recommendation that the bill  
9 be amended as follows:

10 Page 2, lines 24 and 26, delete "2.0" and insert "1.5"

11 Page 3, lines 23 and 25, delete "2.0" and insert "1.5"

12 Page 5, line 4, delete "2.0" and insert "1.5"

13 And when so amended the bill do pass and be re-referred to  
14 the Committee on Finance. Amendments adopted. Report adopted.

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*Steve Kelley*  
.....  
(Committee Chair)

March 17, 2005.....  
(Date of Committee recommendation)