

Texas Student Data System (TSDS) Vendor Forum – Questions & Answers

Texas Education Agency
 William B. Travis Bldg, Room 1-111
 May 14, 2010
 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

| VENDOR QUESTION | TEA RESPONSE |
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| State-Sponsored Student Information System (SSIS) | |
| Will service centers that have software solutions of their own be used to support competitor products if the service centers are not selected as a SIS solution? | This is a possibility if it is in the best interest of the state. |
| Does TEA need a mechanism to solicit ideas from your users in a forum type fashion to align user need with SIS design? | TEA’s mechanisms to solicit ideas from users will be: 1) direct feedback from LEAs, 2) Feedback through the website, and 3) the RFI process. |
| TEA mentioned about the state sponsored SIS being under state control. Are there any specifics about the nature of that relationship, their control? | The specifics have not been developed, yet. But the vendor will have an agreement / license with the state. The state will act on behalf of the LEAs who opt-in. It is likely the system will rely on ESC regional support. |
| What is the cost funding formula for state SIS as it pertains to the district? | Today there is no published funding formula as it pertains to the LEAs. The financial model is being contemplated, but the key requirement is that it be financially sustainable long-term and less costly to the LEAs, TEA, and the state than it is today. |
| Is there any consideration for more than 1 state sponsored SIS? | We will consider a multi-vendor solution if it is in the best interest of the state. |
| Who would support the state sponsored SIS – Region Centers? | We have not determined who will support the state-sponsored SIS. If the regional ESCs are a viable option, we will consider that. |
| Do you want to provide teachers and administrators mobile capability to interact with the SIS? | This capability is part of the desired, long-term feature set. |
| Would a SIS based on software as a service with integration to DCD be considered? | Yes, a SIS based on Software as a Service with integration to the DCD would definitely be considered. |
| How will districts be charged for the state sponsored SIS? | We have not determined a pricing strategy for the SIS, yet. |
| What is the timeframe for the state sponsored SIS? | The general timeline in the presentation is what we are working from at this time. |
| Is the state SIS going to offer all the ancillary functions mentioned? i.e. fee management, curriculum management, lesson plans, etc.? | The goal is to solicit the best solution. This may include a SIS that supports multiple features or integrates with products that supports these features. |
| Who will provide support for the state SIS? ESCs or the State? | It is likely that vendors, ESCs, and the state will provide support. |
| Are the results of the SIS functionality survey available in the public domain? | The results of the SIS functionality will be available once we post them. |

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| Will the state sponsored SIS now be called a state sponsored administrative (student and business) system? | We are only funded at this time to implement the SIS. We will develop what specifications we can for the business system, but we will implement what can be funded. |
| Who is going to host, TEA, ESC...? | We have not determined how the SIS will be hosted. |
| For the hosted SIS solution, is it TEAs intent to host the SIS or for the vendor to host the SIS? | We have not decided who will host the SIS. |
| What is your anticipated business model for each of SIS and DCD? | We plan to develop the business model for the SIS and the DCD during the coming months as we develop the specifications for the SIS. |
| Could you say more about “curriculum maps” and lesson planner as part of state SIS or DCD? | We need to clarify these features with the LEAs. |
| Are the SIS specifications developed by TEA publicly available? | The specifications are not complete. They will be made available after the Request for Information (RFI) process is finished. |
| Will TEA consider an integrated multi-vendor, multi-application solution for the SSIS, assuming no single vendor will be capable of delivering all the required functionality? | Yes, the TEA will consider a multi-vendor, multi-application solution for the SIS. |
| For non-SIS vendors who serve Texas School Districts, is TEA going to allow us to integrate with the new SIS? | Yes, the TSDS initiative includes the development of standard interfaces to allow other vendors to integrate with the SIS. |
| Is there an overlay of regions, districts, SIS, district size or a DB that can be queried? | We have not completed our documentation on this. |
| What are your plans to find the “commercial partner” for the s-s SIS? What is the timeline? Who will administer it? | We do not yet know the plans to find the commercial partner. The timeline is available for review in the PowerPoint presentation. We do not yet know who will administer it. |
| The conclusion of the legislative study in 2005-2006 was that no state had been successful in the development of a “state software system”. What has changed in 4 years? | McConnel Study. This study stated that there is no single product that will satisfy the financial accounting needs of all school districts (some of which are less than 100 students and some over 100,000). That is still true. |
| Will the solution include a combination of vendors? | This is a possibility if it is in the best interest of the state. |
| District Connections Database (DCD) | |
| Is the DCD internally developed at TEA? | Yes |
| For the build of the DCD, will TEA specify the software tools for the development? | Yes, as part of the requirements and architecture design, the software tools will be delineated. |
| You stated the DCD pilot is underway, can you clarify what the scope of release 1 is? Will there be an RFP for building/buying a DCD data warehouse? If so, when? | See the timeline in the presentation for the scope of release 1. There is currently no plan for buying a DCD. The current plan is to build a DCD. |
| Your first slide showed 2 sides, district and state. Subsequent slides seemed to show the DCD on the district rather than the state side. Is the DCD viewed as a state system? | The hardware and software platforms will be provided by the state – hosting is yet to be determined. The data in the DCD is owned by the districts. |
| Where will the DCD be housed? All districts’ data in one place? How will the security be done? Via TEASE accounts or existing security? | Hosting is yet to be determined. Security will be provided by a replacement for TEASE. The new security system development is currently in progress. |

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| For the DCD, TEA has specified snapshot reports. Does TEA anticipate specifying a work flow and approved process to support the snapshot results? | Yes – the current plan is to employ some version of the workflow and process that is used with PEIMS today. |
| Who is developing the DCD now? | The DCD is not yet under development. The pilot will guide these efforts. |
| TEA said...“the DCD is owned by the school district”. Will there be 1200 DCDs? Will districts support/maintain the DCD? Please clarify. | Each of the school district’s data will be within the DCD. From a security and access point of view each district will only see their own data. TEA will provide the design, architecture and data standards for the DCD. Each of the districts will be responsible for their data within the DCD. |
| What tools, software, or approaches are being used for the DCD pilot? | TBD |
| PEIMS, TPEIR, and Other Data Reporting | |
| Is TEA working with the Texas Workforce Commission to define the data and benchmarks for “workforce readiness”? | TEA is working on an MOU with the Workforce Commission to include this data in TPEIR for reporting. |
| Do you see PEIMS and TPEIR being enhanced or replaced? | TPEIR will be expanded and enhanced. Once the DCD is established, PEIMS data collections will be submitted through the DCD. |
| What is the level of capability of the individual school districts to use the additional data? How is this being addressed? | TEA is focusing on generating usable information including early warning reports in addition to data. |
| What is the vision for a unique student identifier in TSDS? | There are currently no plans to implement a unique statewide student identifier as part of TSDS. TEA may consider options in the future, but no decision has been made at this time. |
| Funding | |
| What would occur if Texas does not receive the grant monies earmarked for the state sponsored SIS? | Funding for the implementation was granted in May, 2010 with funds from the ARRA SLDS Grant. |
| How will local district activities be funded? For example will the local districts assess where they are in comparison to the vision? How will this be funded? | TBD |
| Has all funding for this initiative been secured? | We are still assessing financial needs. |
| Timeline and Next Steps | |
| What is the approximate release date of the RFI? | Based on our current plan, the RFI for the state-sponsored SIS will be released at the end of August or beginning of September, 2010. |
| What is the approximate release date of the award? | Based on the current plan, the award will be released in mid-March, 2011. |
| What are the specific next steps from here? What should we, the vendors, expect over the next 3-6 months? | See timeline provided in the power point presentation. |
| For the DCD, SIS, PEIMS, and TPEIR, what is the priority or sequence for these mini-initiatives? | Our best understanding and timeline are outlined on the website. |

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| Other Vendor Questions | |
| Are you considering more direct integration with “optional data” vendors such as formative assessment? | It’s a consideration but the requirements and specifications have not been completed. |
| What vendor(s) are engaged in current pilot? Will there be solicitations for future pilots and or pilot support? | Project support for the DCD prototype is being funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. |
| Will the vendor attendee list for this meeting be posted (support collaboration)? | Yes |
| How do you see the individual procurements (RFIs) being divided? For example will the DCD be a separate procurement, will PEIMS enhancement and TPEIR be separate, will there be one big TSDS bid? | There will not be one TSDS RFI. Currently there is only one RFI planned, for the state-sponsored SIS. Other procurements are a possibility if it is in the best interest of the state. |