



What is Interoperability?¹

Interoperability is the seamless, secure, and controlled exchange of data between applications. Interoperability allows data to easily flow among applications that are developed for different purposes using a standardized vocabulary, structure, and cadence. **Example:** One commonly understood example of interoperable systems and data standards is ATMs. The banking industry has adopted a data standard that allows the consumer to securely access their bank account, transfer data, and receive money at virtually any ATM in the world.

Background: State Leadership & Leveraging Data for Academic Excellence

State leaders across agencies and departments must work collaboratively to provide the information, resources, and capacity necessary to support the education vision and goals of their state. To be most effective, this cross- and inter-agency collaboration should include an understanding of the importance of data interoperability and a plan to achieve these goals. The [Council of Chief State School Officers \(CCSSO\)](#) and the [State Education Technology Directors Association \(SETDA\)](#) share a belief that data is powerful when used to support teaching and learning and have been working extensively with state and private sector leaders to improve data interoperability within the education ecosystem. Progress has been made but much more needs to be done to provide the right information, tools, and resources at the right moment to state leaders, educators, and students.

Project Summary

CCSSO is partnering with SETDA to strategically align efforts on improving State Education Agency (SEA) data and system interoperability by expanding the adoption of standards, solutions, and practices necessary to impact the education community broadly. CCSSO and SETDA both share a belief that improving data interoperability is an important element to improving student outcomes. With funds made available by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, CCSSO and SETDA are collaborating on an interoperability themed project titled Project Nessie (*Nurturing Engagement & Support for State Education Interoperability Efforts*). The Project Nessie timeline is March 2019 through February 2020 and the high-level project objectives are listed below:

Objective 1



Task Force

Organize state leaders to prioritize and provide leadership around state education interoperability by facilitating the formal creation of an SEA interoperability task force.

Objective 2



Commitment to Principles

Foster the development, promotion, and adoption of principles for state-level interoperability that SEAs can commit to.

Objective 3



Interoperability Roadmap

Develop and maintain a state education interoperability roadmap/guide, including a living, iterative use case matrix.

¹ [Digital Promise](#)