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Learning Consortium

IMS Global Announces Ground-Breaking Initiative by Leading Organizations to Create a Highly Interoperable Assessment Ecosystem to Accelerate Transition to e-Assessment

Newly Formed Group of Executives Pledge to Establish a Highly Interoperable End-to-End Assessment Architecture to Enable Growth of e-Assessment Content, Applications, and Innovation

Lake Mary, Florida – 4 May 2015 - IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global/IMS), the world leader in EdTech interoperability and impact, announces the formation of the Executive Board on Assessment (EBA). The EBA's mission is to set industry direction for years to come and to accelerate the transition to e-assessment by building on the success of the QTI[®]v2 (Question & Test Interoperability[®] v2) and APIP[®] (Accessible Portable Item Profile[®]) standards to improve content portability, outcomes data interoperability, enable deeper integration with assistive technologies, and remove barriers to accelerate industry adoption of assessment standards.

Over the last several years there has been aggressive movement toward digital assessment that is being spurred by state and national programs, such as Race to the Top Assessment (RTTA) in the U.S. Indeed IMS Global has seen great progress in the market over the last three years as a result of industry adoption of the IMS QTIv2 and APIP standards, as demonstrated by PARCC in delivering to date over 7.5 million tests using QTI and APIP. There is now additional demand by states and school districts to evolve the standards to improve portability and interoperability of assessment content and to remove the barriers to achieving industry-wide conformance.

The newly formed EBA group will serve as an extension of the [IMS Board of Directors](#) and will be chaired by Open Assessment Technologies (OAT) Co-Founder and CEO, Marc Oswald. Participation is open to all IMS [Contributing Member](#) organizations, but requires an executive pledge to provide the leadership and resources needed to lead the market in charting the next phase of IMS standards to build strong end-to-end interoperability, make portable content a reality, and accelerate standards compliance. Charter members include [ACT](#), [CITO](#), [College voor Toetsen en Examens](#), [ETS](#), [Florida Virtual School](#), [Houston ISD](#), [McGraw-Hill Education](#), [Measured Progress](#), [Minnesota Department of Education](#), [National Center and State Collaborative \(NCSC\)](#), [NWEA](#), [Open Assessment Technologies \(OAT\)](#), [Pacific Metrics](#), [PARCC](#), [Questar Assessment](#), [Smarter Balanced](#), and [WIDA](#).

“With the accelerated adoption of e-assessment all around the world it is absolutely critical that as an industry we advance the usability and end-to-end interoperability of e-assessment solutions,” said Marc Oswald, Co-Founder and CEO of Open Assessment Technologies (OAT). “The EBA will address this head-on by providing additional QTI 2.x compliance levels that will make it easier for users to match content with platforms. In addition, the EBA will organize collaborative Plugfests during which content and platform vendors work together to establish end-to-end interoperability while new versions of the standard are being finalized.”

“A key point that needs to be understood is that many of the suppliers and end-users organizations that have been attracted to adopt the APIP and QTI standards to date have not been the creators of the standards. Therefore, as we move to the next phase there is opportunity to motivate leadership from a set of leading e-Assessment organizations to take charge of the next phase,” said Rob Abel, Chief Executive Officer of IMS Global. “To do this there must be more than “technical” ownership. There must be alignment of business and technical strategy to drive this work forward to meet market needs.”

IMS Global and the EBA charter members will provide further information regarding the group's mission, objectives, and milestones this week during the IMS [Learning Impact Leadership Institute](#), May 4-7 in Atlanta and in the coming months. Contact EBA@imglobal.org for additional information.

Statements of industry commitment and support

"Houston Independent School District (HISD) has committed to align the selection criteria for digital resources with the IMS Global Interoperability Standards. This allows for mapping of learning objectives according to Texas and other curriculum standards and minimize interoperability challenges stemming from various proprietary formats. As an extension to this commitment, HISD is pleased to become a Charter Member of the IMS Executive Board on Assessment (EBA) whose mission is to promote QTI e assessment interoperability standard. We strongly encourage our vendors to adopt this open, ubiquitous standard for test development, delivery, scoring, and reporting," said Leng Fritsche, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent of Student Assessment, HISD.

"Pacific Metrics is committed to creating meaningful content and providing a full range of software solutions to support efficient assessment delivery. We believe that the value of learning and assessment content becomes much greater when it is portable. Given our long history of supporting open standards and creating open software, we are delighted to be a Charter Member of the IMS Executive Board on Assessment (EBA). Through the EBA, we will continue to address assessment innovation and will advocate for the adoption of practical standards that facilitate the interoperability of high-quality e-Assessments and items. We look forward to working collaboratively with the EBA members to accelerate the creation and adoption of standards that will have a positive impact on learning outcomes worldwide," said Bill Mistretta, Vice President for Service and Technology Operations, Pacific Metrics.

"The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is committed to improving the practice of academic assessment through the use of open source software, open standards, and strong cooperation between organizations. To this end, Smarter Balanced has invested in a complete online assessment software suite and released the software as open source and openly-licensed specifications. Smarter Balanced has adopted many standards and is actively improving compatibility with IMS QTI and APIP. IMS Global serves a vital need by organizing the community to collaborate on common standards and supporting the adoption of standards with fidelity. Smarter Balanced therefore applauds the creation of the new IMS Executive Board on Assessment and is pleased to be among its Charter Members, working collaboratively to advance content interoperability based on the QTI and APIP standards. As Smarter Balanced invests in innovative new assessment technology, it also commits to sharing that technology with the IMS community and supporting its incorporation into future standards," said Brandt Redd, Chief Technology Officer at Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

"Questar Assessment supports innovation and open standards — in our own work and that of IMS Global. That's why I am honoured to be the company's representative on the Executive Board of Assessment and have the opportunity to collaborate with other charter members to lead the development of the next generation of K–12 assessment standards, technologies and best practices," said Keith Koch, Questar Assessment's Chief Technology Officer.

"For years, Cito has played an active role in the promotion of QTI. It has become an integral part of Questify, Cito's platform for assessment construction and delivery, and we have already seen the advantages of this interoperability standard in working with our clients and partners," said Mark Molenaar, Head of Information Management, Cito. "For example, for the Dutch government we have developed the Dutch Exam Profile (DEP), a QTI based standard. Cito is proud to be one of the Charter Members of the IMS Executive Board on Assessment in support of this initiative and to collaborate with leaders in the industry for the further development of this

industry standard.”

“State and consortia assessment programs invest significant resources and effort in test content. The benefits of content ownership are severely limited when digital content is structured to be compatible with a single proprietary system. Anyone who has transitioned an assessment program’s content from one testing vendor to another knows what a costly and time consuming process it is. Going forward, those responsible for assessment programs must require that their content be easily ported among systems for item development, item banking, online test delivery, and scoring and reporting. The Minnesota Department of Education therefore joins the IMS Executive Board on Assessment (EBA) as a Charter Member with the mission to improve the interoperability of assessment content and to further the adoption of QTI through its technology selection process,” said Cheryl Alcaya, Test Development Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Education.

“The Dutch government states that the use of open standards is crucial for the improvement of interoperability and supplier independence. The Department of Education in the Netherlands embraces open standards for test interoperability. They offer good opportunities for schools, teachers and test developers to cooperate and easily exchange content and scoring models. The National Exam board of the Netherlands (named College voor Toetsen en Examens – CvTE) has chosen QTI as the open test interoperability standard for its own system (Facet) to be able to work with multiple content providers in a consistent way. The CvTE is pleased to be a Charter Member of the IMS Executive Board on Assessment (EBA). We believe that the EBA will play a key role in improving the quality, the user-friendliness and the interoperability of the QTI standard and will contribute to a broader adoption,” said Nynke de Boer, Manager Computer-based Exams, College voor Toetsen en Examens.

“WIDA is honored to be a charter member of the IMS Executive Board on Assessment,” said Carsten Wilmes, Assessment Director for WIDA, an assessment consortium housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “We want to contribute to interoperability from the end-user perspective and look forward to having technology standards in place to allow for better test item sharing among our platform providers.”

“ETS has been a longtime supporter of open standards and IMS from its very beginning by contributing the Evidence Centered Design foundation upon which QTI is based,” says Gary Driscoll, ETS Senior Strategic Advisor IT. “We are pleased to be a member of the new IMS Executive Board of Assessment and are looking forward to collaborating with the other charter members. “The convergence of QTI and APIP into the new aQTI is a key milestone in the evolution of assessment standards,” Driscoll adds. “The new standard will improve consistency as well as portability of content and user experience. This will safeguard educational organizations’ investments in their digital assessment content by enabling it to be ported among systems for item development, item banking, online test delivery, and scoring and reporting.”

About IMS Global Learning Consortium (IMS Global)

IMS Global is a nonprofit organization that advances technology that can affordably scale and improve educational participation and attainment. IMS members are leading suppliers, institutions and government organizations that are enabling the future of education by collaborating on interoperability and adoption initiatives. IMS sponsors the Learning Impact Leadership Institute, a global program focused on recognizing the impact of innovative technology on educational access, affordability, and quality while developing the people and ideas that are going to help shape the future of educational technology. The [2015 Learning Impact Leadership Institute](#) will be held May 4-7 in Atlanta, Georgia.

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