



School Information System (SIS) and SISSC: July 06 Update

from Dr. Joseph Tafoya, Director

Just prior to the close of the past school year, I provided you with a status report outlining the challenges we have faced with our student information system (SIS) and the Student Management Solutions (SMS) implementation over the past year. In that update, I highlighted two tracks that are critical for us to examine in order to eventually secure a viable student information system that serves our customer and employees well.

The first of those tracks was to identify the critical areas we need to operate, such as grades, transcripts, and class schedules and then to make the system function. We need to ensure that we have viable systems in place for the coming school year including functions that are absolutely essential to running our schools. I've asked my SIS task force to answer the question, "What are the most important things that we need the system to do?" I have tasked my staff with getting these functions operational.

The long range picture causes us to look at the entire school information system and specifically identify what it needs to do. Because it takes time, analysis, and field testing, there is no way for us to move away from SMS for the near future.

To accomplish this task, we have established a Student Information System Steering Committee (SISSC) comprised of school level representatives, support personnel, and the Area Deputy Directors from each of the three DoDEA Areas, as well as staff from the DoDEA HQ Education and Information Technology divisions. During the last week in June, the SISSC, along with the Area IT Chiefs and Area union representatives, convened to review current issues relating to SIS and to propose a plan to better facilitate the implementation of SMS for the coming school year. As a result of that meeting, the following priorities were established:

PERFORMANCE ASSISTANCE: Eliminate long delays and other roadblocks through immediate improvements to hardware/software configuration.

COMMUNICATION: Establish an intranet website to keep all users informed about status of the SIS.

USEABILITY: Increase ease of use, for example: reduce multiple screens and keystrokes.

TRAINING: Provide local user training.

FUNCTIONALITY: Expand system capability.

The following issues/problems will be addressed by DoDEA in the following timeframes:

NLT July 8th -- Before 6.5 SMS Upgrade

1. Establish a system to track and resolve issues or problems. (COMPLETED)

NLT July 27th -- Before School Starts in DDESS

1. Orphan Courses – Problem isolated to Europe where SMS could not properly track courses and course changes and reconcile them for grade reporting. Resolving this problem was completed with an in-house upgrade to 6.5. Credit is now correct for student transcripts. (COMPLETED)
2. Delete Class Master Schedule – Presently, sections that have no students remain in the system. This solution will allow schools the needed ability to delete sections with no students. Appears to be resolved in SMS 6.5 Update. Waiting to confirm in field testing. (IN PROGRESS)
3. Assigned Role Deletions -- As staff members move, access needs to be removed or reassigned. This was not resolved in SMS 6.5 Upgrade. Chancery is working the defect. (IN PROGRESS)
4. Performance Tuning – CSSG will evaluate the current system configuration and recommend improvements. (IN PROGRESS)
5. Standardization of Hardware – CSSG will evaluate the hardware configuration and recommend improvements. (IN PROGRESS)
6. Connectivity – DoDDS-Europe is working a process developed to inform users whenever there is an interruption of internet service. (IN PROGRESS)

NLT September 1st -- Before 1st Progress Report

1. SMS Gradebook email -- A DoDEA created program to email progress reports to parents is currently under development. This program will need evaluation before implementation can take place. (IN TESTING)
2. Health Immunization Script – Adds an entry to the record to reflect the administration of an immunization. (IN PROGRESS)
3. Health Requirements Analysis -- Will determine the functional requirements for the health module. (IN PROGRESS)
4. Historical Data Entry Tool -- A DoDEA modified tool to import historical data for students. (IN TESTING)
5. Behavior – Provide additional training for administrators. (IN PROGRESS)

NLT September 28th -- Before 1st Marking Period

1. Behavior Analysis Report – Create a discipline report. (IN PROGRESS)

NLT December 10th -- Before 2nd Semester

1. Historical Data Upgrade - Chancery enhancements to be included in a Fall 2006 upgrade. (PENDING)
2. Health Screens Planning Calendar – Ensure student health data is displayed only at school of current enrollment. (IN PROGRESS)
3. Student Schedule Training - Provide training to counselors for revisions and changes to second semester schedules. (SCHEDULED)
4. Standards Document - Provide a standard for data entry. (IN PROGRESS)

5. Attendance Options - Research an option for tracking student attendance. (PENDING)

NLT May 24th, 2007 - Before End of School Year

The SSSC plans to initiate actions on the following issues prior to the end of the school year:

- Data Warehouse
- Test Equipment for Areas
- Task Manager – Pacific only
- Thread Context – Pacific only
- Reduce Screens on Student Enrollment/Sponsor Data
- Student Schedule – Display improvements
- Student Schedules – Printing improvements
- Health -New requirements/immunizations/medical alerts
- Behavior screens – Product update by Chancery
- Gradebook – Semester average calculation and customization of reports
- Revision of Form 600
- LAN upgrade
- School Ability for Ad Hoc Reporting
- Revision of Report Cards
- Explore Unique Student Identifiers

I can assure you that we are working tirelessly to produce a fully functioning student information system to all users as soon as possible. This will not be an easy task, nor is there a quick fix. We cannot change an entire school information system overnight as we tried to do with SMS. To protect the data that we have on current students, it will take time to find solutions. There will be continuing inconveniences. But as quickly as possible, we'll deliver a system to you and to our parents and students that can do the job. I will be providing additional details on our plans to you in the near future. Your continued patience and understanding are appreciated.

