Common Student Information System
Alliance Management Office Report
May, 2009

1. Initiative Overview

The Common Student Information System (known as BCeSIS) is a shared School District application that has replaced many of the existing standalone student information systems that have become increasingly obsolete and unable to keep pace with growing school and School District management needs. The systems replaced include student registration, enrolment, scheduling, recording of marks and outcomes, special education, and reporting. The new common application provides the underlying systems infrastructure needed by school authorities (i.e. Boards of Education, Independent School authorities and First Nations School authorities) to improve education management and ultimately drive student achievement.

In March 2004, the Ministry of Education completed a competitive process and purchased student information system software from Administrative Assistants Ltd. (AAL) of Burlington, Ontario. On June 30, 2005, the Ministry of Education entered into a contract with Fujitsu Consulting (Canada) Inc. to deliver central application hosting and integrated support services to meet the initial and future needs of schools, school authorities, and the Ministry. Fujitsu was originally contracted to provide the following: a secure facility and the servers to operate the shared service; level-two application support and help desk services; training logistics, data loading and conversion, security and privacy, and service delivery management services. In April 2006 the contract was amended and Fujitsu's services were expanded to include the following implementation services roles: BCeSIS training, data conversion support, and application management services.

All sixty school districts, 120 independent schools, five First Nations schools and the Yukon Territories have committed to implementing BCeSIS. Responsibility and funding for the project is shared between the school authorities and the Ministry of Education. School authorities are responsible for implementing and supporting the use of the system in their schools. The Ministry of Education is responsible for contracting the centrally-hosted system and delivery of support services to schools. The Ministry provides one-time implementation grants and school authorities pay a portion of the annual system operating cost to the Ministry.

The advantages of a common student information system include:
- Improved management of student achievement by schools and school districts, providing them with timely and accurate access to student performance data that enables evidence-based planning;
- Improved economies of scale, especially for smaller School Districts;
- Increased control and access to information for more effective management of schools, and improved quality and standardization of data for accurate reporting;
- Shared responsibility between the Ministry and school authorities for the systems that support changes to education practices and policy; and
- Improved benefits and reduced costs of system customization, operation, and maintenance.

2. Status Update (as of April 30, 2009)

BCeSIS is in the fourth year of a five-year implementation program. BCeSIS has been implemented in 1280 of the province's 1622 public schools and in 72 of the 120 independent schools that signed agreements to participate. In addition BCeSIS has been deployed in five First Nations Schools and 185 StrongStart BC Centres. More than 480,000 active student records are currently contained in BCeSIS. In 2008/09 there were 579,492 students in provincial public schools and 69,138 students in independent schools.

Participating school authorities have, through the Service Management Council, approved a plan for 2009/10 that focuses on the following high-level priorities:

1. *continuing to provide a stable, sustainable service that addresses the operational needs of schools and districts*

2. *promoting increased BCeSIS use, both by deploying BCeSIS in new schools and by implementing available functionality*
3. *supporting student achievement*
4. *creating end-user support capacity within schools and districts*
5. *implementing new functionality when there is demonstrated value*

Implementing a system of this scale and complexity has been challenging for many users in the schools and School Districts. Some of the issues encountered and their mitigating strategies include:

Local infrastructure and connectivity	The BCeSIS team has worked with schools, vendors and the Provincial Learning Network to ensure network and workstation issues are minimized.
User training	A train-the-trainer program was developed for districts to use during initial implementation. The service provider has gradually instituted a just-in-time training strategy that is tied to the business cycle. Efforts are being made to develop collective training capacity within districts.
Communications between the BCeSIS team and participating districts/schools	A comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy has been developed that includes newsletters, frequent communications with district contacts, weekly technical conference calls, an annual users' conference, and web sites designed for support personnel and end users. In addition formal procedures for reporting incidents and escalating and resolving issues have been established.
Standardizing business practices	Working groups and formal processes have been set up to develop and get agreement regarding standard business practices. An active network of users has been maturing in the districts to provide mutual support and share best practices.
Implementation planning	An implementation roadmap and templates for planning documents have been developed by the BCeSIS team for use by districts. The team works very closely with districts that are doing their first implementation to ensure that there is adequate preparation and planning. Conversion tools and lessons learned by early adopters are shared widely.

The uptake of the system has been steady, and there are indications that users in the schools are working more closely together and adapting to the new software and processes.

3. Contract Objectives

In January 2008, Fujitsu and the Ministry met to set joint goals and objectives for the 08/09 year. The following objectives were agreed to:

1. School District implementation – By December 2009, 80% of public schools, and 50% of independent and first nation schools are implemented and paying their agreed on portion of the operating costs.

2. Develop and implement a sustainable training and support model and financial model for school districts to be effective after December 2009.

3. Improve governance by putting a Ministry/Fujitsu Joint Executive Committee in place that functions at the strategic level and focuses on effectiveness in service provision.

4. Continue to achieve operational stability, meet service level targets and implement operational efficiencies

5. Develop and/or integrate the remaining in-scope functionality. Target dates are: Student Services module March 2009, Student Assistant module January 2009, Distributed Learning module December, 2009, Data Exchange, Operational Reporting and Mobile Assistant – to be determined;

6. BCeSIS is perceived as a valuable tool for measuring student achievement and is contributing to the success of the Common Systems Initiatives program

Implementation schedules are determined by the school authorities themselves, and it is projected that effectively all schools will have BCeSIS in place by 2010. Significant progress has been made on the first four objectives. Progress on objective 5 has slowed due to the slowing economy. The last objective will be fully realized when the use of the system matures and becomes more widespread.

Detailed reporting on contract objectives can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Service Commitments

The clients of BCeSIS are primarily educators and staff working in schools and School Districts. They include teachers, counselors, clerical staff, school-level administrators and district-level administrators. A fully realized vision for BCeSIS includes the option of providing parents and students with direct access to information in BCeSIS.

School authorities are responsible for local infrastructure and for determining how the service is to be provided to their stakeholders. Service commitments are not defined at an enterprise/provincial level.

Appendix A – Contract Objectives: Reporting on Results

Objective 1

School District implementation – By December 2009, 80% of public schools, and 50% of independent and first nation schools are implemented and paying fees.

Activities (undertaken to achieve objective)	Results (Year-To-Date)
Work with school authorities to deploy BCeSIS in schools	As of April 2009, BCeSIS was being used to store records for more than 480,000 students in 1280 schools (79%). BCeSIS has been implemented in at least one school in 55 of the 60 districts, and in 72 independent schools. BCeSIS has replaced the legacy systems of over 1134 schools.
Work with School Districts to deploy BCeSIS in StrongStart BC Centres	All StrongStart BC Centres are required to use BCeSIS for recording participation by early learners and to report to the Ministry. BCeSIS is being used in 185 StrongStart Centres. (even in districts that have yet to come on to BCeSIS)
Develop reusable procedures and tools for converting student records from legacy systems	Standard processes have been developed for converting, cleaning and loading data from legacy systems. Reusable conversion tools have been developed for the most common legacy systems (TurboSchool, Windsor, NCS SASI).

Objective 2

Develop and implement a sustainable training and support model and financial model for school districts to be effective after December 2009.

Activities (undertaken to achieve objective)	Results (Year-To-Date)
Review and redefine existing Application Management Services (AMS), including training and implementation services by June 30, 2008 to ensure alignment with outcomes.	Better information is now available about the use of resources and services provided. Fujitsu's Monthly Operating Status Report has also been refined over the year to provide more meaningful information to the Ministry and School Districts. The Ministry and Fujitsu continue to work to refine the quality of financial reporting over time.
Provide a clear definition of services that can be accessed by school districts and communicate those services. Draft a service catalogue and define	The Ministry and Fujitsu are working together to determine training and implementation service options including which services could be provided by the school districts (self-sustainability).

associated service levels.	A draft service catalogue and service levels are currently being reviewed by the Ministry.

Objective 3

Improve governance by putting a Ministry/Fujitsu Joint Executive Committee in place that functions at the strategic level and focuses on effectiveness in service provision.

Activities (undertaken to achieve objective)	Results (Year-To-Date)
Review of membership and role of governance bodies described in the master agreement	A Joint Executive Committee (JEC) has been re-established and terms of reference, standing agenda items and membership defined. Quarterly meetings are held and agenda items are brought forward by both parties. The Contract Management Committee membership has been rationalized based on the JEC membership. Meetings are monthly with quarterly updates to the JEC

Objective 4

Continue to achieve operational stability, meet service level targets and implement operational efficiencies

Activities (undertaken to achieve objective)	Results (Year-To-Date)
Ensure that application hosting service can address user demand.	'Capacity and availability' planning procedures based upon ITIL standards have been implemented. System availability and performance measures have exceeded service level agreements. Hardware upgrades, as defined within the agreement, have been completed and services are meeting the forecasted demand
Document service levels for application management services, with the intent of providing a baseline for future contract negotiations	Fujitsu has provided a first draft of service levels for application management services for the Ministry's review.

Objective 5

Develop and/or integrate the remaining in-scope functionality. Target dates are: Student Services module March 2009, Student Assistant module January 2009, Distributed Learning module December, 2009, Data Exchange, Operational Reporting and Mobile Assistant – to be determined;

Activities (undertaken to achieve objective)	Results (Year-To-Date)
Begin development of a Distributed Learning (Continuous Entry Learning) module to meet the needs of BC School Districts	Throughout 2008/09, the Ministry, school district representatives, Fujitsu and aal worked jointly on a project to define requirements and

	develop a module for BCeSIS to meet BC School Districts' requirements for continuous entry learning. As of April 2009, the Province has received and tested approximately 70% of the functionality.
Test and implement the Java version of the Student/Parent Assistant module.	The Province has tested the Java version of the Student/Parent Assistant module. The module was implemented in January 2009 with limited functionality relating to student course selection. Rollout of additional functionality and use by parents has been deferred pending a review of authentication options for the new Java technology.
Develop a phased project to implement Operational Reporting functionality for BCeSIS.	A pilot with representatives from four school districts and the Ministry was undertaken between December 08 and March 09. The purpose of the pilot was to assess the functionality of the Executive Assistant (EA) module and to provide findings and recommendations for meeting the operational and ad-hoc reporting needs of schools and School Districts not currently met by existing BCeSIS reporting components. The results of the pilot are currently under review.
Implement the Student Services (Special Education) module.	The Student Services module went into production July 1, 2008. School Districts are implementing the module in groups of five. As of April 2009, the fourth group of school districts has begun implementation.

Objective 6

BCeSIS is perceived as a valuable tool for measuring student achievement and is contributing to the success of the Common Systems Initiatives program

Activities (undertaken to achieve objective)	Results (Year-To-Date)
No specific additional activities undertaken to achieve this objective. The activities for other objectives all contribute to this overall objective.	Anecdotal feedback is that perception of the application is improving School Districts reported the required annual enrollment reporting for 2008 was the best/easiest ever.