

# BUYER'S **guide**

## Student Information Systems

Most schools are required to complete complicated reporting to parents; district, state, and federal entities; and other stakeholders. Student information systems can help you meet these requirements.

You need to spend some time listing your specific needs before you even begin to look at the systems available. Do you have a solid database, but need a few tools to help teachers move their gradebooks online, communicate with parents, and access student data? Or do you need a complete solution that will house all data in one central location for access in specialized reports by teachers, administrators, and parents? Do you want to install client software on all machines that will be used to access data, or would you prefer a Web-based solution that will allow all users in your system to access data, no matter what computer they are using? Do you need administrators and teachers to be able to download data to their handhelds? Finally, do you want teachers, students, and parents to have 24/7 access to data on the Web, or would you prefer to give teachers tools to personalize their home-to-school communication?

After you have done a complete needs assessment, you might want to invite specific vendors to make a presentation. Or you might want to open up an RFP process to allow all vendors to submit their proposals. You will find that few vendors give pricing info until they have gotten an idea of your needs and the size of your school system.

The systems profiled here run the gamut from module-based systems that can integrate into your current data structure to district-level server-based repositories of real-time data. The descriptions are not exhaustive—most of these systems simply offer too many features to list in one table—but they can help you decide what type of tool you need and what questions to ask of the vendors.

Product Name	Distributor	URL	Features
AERIES	Eagle Software	<a href="http://www.aeries.com">http://www.aeries.com</a>	Gradebook, attendance, scheduling, seating charts, cafeteria management, health, special education, accounting, standards, standardized testing
Centerpoint	Pearson	<a href="http://pearsonschools.com/products/centerpoint">http://pearsonschools.com/products/centerpoint</a>	Gradebook, attendance, scheduling, seating charts, cafeteria management, health, special education, accounting, standards, quiz making
Chancery SMS	Pearson	<a href="http://www.chancery.com">http://www.chancery.com</a>	Gradebook, attendance, scheduling, discipline, health, staff management, course catalog
CIMS Student	Pearson	<a href="http://www.pearsonschools.com/products/cims_st">http://www.pearsonschools.com/products/cims_st</a>	Grading, attendance, scheduling, discipline, health, accounting
eSIS eSENTIALS	aal	<a href="http://www.aalsolutions.com">http://www.aalsolutions.com</a>	Grading, scheduling, attendance, discipline, assignments, seating charts
PowerSchool	Pearson	<a href="http://www.powerschool.com/">http://www.powerschool.com/</a>	Gradebook, attendance, scheduling, seating charts, lunch counts, home access for teachers
SASI	Pearson	<a href="http://www.pearsonschools.com/products/sasi">http://www.pearsonschools.com/products/sasi</a>	Grading, scheduling, attendance, discipline, health
School Management Systems	Skyward	<a href="http://www.skyward.com">http://www.skyward.com</a>	Gradebook, report cards, attendance, scheduling, seating charts, cafeteria management, health, human relations, financial, guidance, gifted and talented, special education
Schoolmaster	Olympia Computing Company	<a href="http://www.schoolmaster.com">http://www.schoolmaster.com</a>	Gradebook (optional), grading, scheduling, attendance, discipline, assignments, seating charts, testing, guidance
STI	STI	<a href="http://www.sti-k12.com/mainsis.asp">http://www.sti-k12.com/mainsis.asp</a>	Gradebook, attendance, lesson plans, seating charts, progress reports, textbook tracking, health, accounting, home access for teachers, standards

\*Information not applicable or unavailable at press time.

Architecture	Interoperability Standard	Reporting	Communication Options	Handheld Integration	Compatibility	Notes
Client-server	SIF	Standard and customizable reports	Web-based access to student information (optional)	Palm OS or Windows Mobile	Windows or Macintosh. Novell server compatible.	
Web-based	SIF	Standard and customizable reports	E-mail and Web-based access to student information	None	Macintosh or Windows	
Web-based	SIF	Predefined report types, Crystal Reports compatible	Web-based access to student information	Windows Mobile	Macintosh or Windows	Allows customization without programming
*	*	*	*	Third-party solutions	*	Module-based system
Web-based	SIF, ODBC	Includes all mandatory Florida reports. Report generation using natural language	Web-based access to student information. Personalized letters and other direct communication tools	*	Macintosh or Windows. Linux and UNIX server compatible	Targeted toward districts. Supports single network login for access to all programs, even third-party programs
Web-based	SIF, ODBC	Standard and customizable reports	E-mail and Web-based access to student information	None	Macintosh or Windows	
Customizable, with both Web-based and client-server products	SIF	Standard forms, report designer feature	Web-based access to student information	Third-party solutions	Macintosh or Windows	
Client-server	SIF	State and federal standardized reports	Web-based access to student information	Palm or Windows Mobile	Macintosh or Windows. UNIX server compatible.	Multiple integrated software programs
Client-server	SIF	Standard and customizable reports	Web-based access to student information (optional)	Palm OS (optional)	Windows or Macintosh. Novell or Linux server compatible	
Client-server design, Web interface available	SIF	Reporting module includes predesigned and customizable reports	Phone management and online access modules available	Palm OS module available	Windows	Module-based system