COMMON CREDENTIAL PROPOSED STANDARD RELEASED FOR 30 DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

UPDATED XML TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION INCLUDED FOR COMMENT

Washington DC – The Board of Directors of PESC is pleased to announce the release of the *Common Credential for Certificates, Degrees and Diplomas*, a proposed standard, for a 30 day public comment period. The XML development work which started in early 2016, has been meticulous, collaborative and transparent, and leaders have worked painstakingly to ensure major stakeholders participated in the development, analyzed and evaluated development work, and contributed to a more robust and usable standard.

"This credential standard will promote interoperability where presently there is none for credentials that serve as alternatives to the academic transcript," states Thomas Black, Associate Vice Provost & University Registrar, Student and Academic Services at Stanford University and Chair of PESC's Academic Credentialing and Experiential Learning Task Force. "There is great potential to innovate using this standard, and now it is time for our respective communities to embrace the ideas and concepts that are incorporated in the standard for the betterment and prosperity of our students and graduates holding these credentials," Mr. Black continues.

The PESC directive that launched this development concluded that while the traditional transcript contains comprehensive information about a student's educational experience, in some instances only a simple verification of a degree, diploma, certification or other credential is needed. While this standard does not propose to replace the traditional transcript, the PESC community looks to meet the growing demand, now emerging across the landscape but especially in transfer, labor and workforce sectors, to verify credentials.

"In true collaboration, PESC's Technical Advisory Board has also released an updated version of PESC's XML Technical Specification, on which the Common Credential is based, and we're asking for public comment on the XML Technical Specification as well," states Michael Sessa, PESC President & CEO. "The XML Technical Specification is the result of merging PESC's original specification with that of the U.S. Department of Education's specification in 2003, a major milestone in the history of PESC, as with a combined, single XML Technical Specification, technical interoperability is now baseline enabling applications and data to flow throughout the education network," Mr. Sessa continued.

LEADING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ADOPTION OF DATA EXCHANGE STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

The proposed standard is posted at www.PESC.org. Included as the 'standard' are the Implementation Guide, XML Schema and Sample Instance Document. The PESC community is also asked to review and comment on the newly updated *PESC XML Technical Specification*. All comments from the PESC community and the general public must be made by e-mail to PESC President & CEO at Michael.Sessa@PESC.org. Public comments can address any and/or all part of the standard being proposed. The comment e-mail should clearly identify the:

1) Responder full name and appropriate contact information (phone, email, organization, etc);
2) Source of the comments, i.e., whether the comments are individual or originate from a group the responder represents;
3) Nature of the responder's interest in the standard (what is the issue and why is it important?);
4) Element(s) of the proposed standard with which issue is taken;
5) Changes suggested resolving the issue(s).

The Process for PESC APPROVED STANDARDS

Within 30 calendar days after the close of the public comment period, the Change Control Board (CCB) of PESC's Standards Forum for Education will address and consider all public comments and make, in consultation with the Academic Credentialing and Experiential Learning Workgroup any necessary revisions. All public comments will be posted to the PESC website during the review process. The CCB's consideration/revision period expires on March 23, 2017 unless extenuating circumstances exist which require further deliberation.

Once any changes resulting from the public comment period have been incorporated, the CCB will recommend to the PESC Board of Directors that the proposed Common Credential standard be submitted to a vote by the PESC members. The PESC office will issue electronic ballots to the official contacts of PESC member organizations. Completed ballots, including the reason(s) for any rejection, must be returned to the PESC office via e-mail attachment, fax, overnight delivery, or U.S. Postal Service within ten (10) business days.

Acceptance of the specification as a PESC APPROVED STANDARD requires an affirmative vote of at least 80% of all votes cast. Once the PESC members accept and approve the specification, the PESC Board of Directors will within seven (7) calendar days ratify the vote or refer it back to the CCB with specific instructions for further work.

PESC staff is responsible for the administrative process, including tabulation of the ballots, publication and posting of all necessary documents and communications, and implement version control on all documents, as needed. PESC APPROVED STANDARDS are freely accessible at www.PESC.org.

ABOUT PESC

Established in 1997 at the National Center for Higher Education and headquartered in Washington, D.C., PESC is an international, 501 (c)(3) non-profit, community-based, umbrella association of data, software and education technology service providers; schools, districts, colleges and universities; college, university and state systems; local, state/province and federal government agencies; professional, commercial and non-profit organizations; and non-profit associations & foundations.

Through open and transparent community participation, PESC enables cost-effective connectivity between data systems to accelerate performance and service, to simplify data access and research, and to improve data quality along the education lifecycle. PESC envisions global interoperability within the Education domain, supported by a trustworthy, inter-connected network built by and between communities of interest (systems, states, districts, etc.) in which data flows seamlessly from one system to another and throughout the entire eco-system when and where needed without compatibility barriers but in a safe, secure, reliable, and efficient manner.

To achieve its mission and vision, PESC organizes committees, activities and events to: accelerate performance and service, reduce cost, lead collaborative development, set and maintain common data standards, promote best practices, link public and private sectors, and serve as data experts.

#   #   #

LEADING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ADOPTION OF DATA EXCHANGE STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

What is PUBLIC COMMENT and why is it important?

Under the PESC development, approval and maintenance policies and procedures process for PESC Approved Standards, public comment period is a necessary and critical step. Organizations use PESC (a 501c3 non-profit) as a neutral link to the education community to ensure an open, transparent process when new electronic reporting or digital formats for data exchange are needed.

With collaboration at its core and an ANSI foundation, this process requires mandatory, proactive efforts be made by PESC to ensure the public and all education stakeholders have equal, sufficient time and preparation in knowing about upcoming standardization initiatives that may directly or indirectly impact their business and/or their processes.

The public process starts when two or more PESC members submit an open *Letter of Intent* requesting that PESC establish a workgroup for development of a standard. PESC publishes this *Letter of Intent* so that PESC members can join the development workgroup; and non-members (the public) can prepare to use the standard once completed (all PESC Approved Standards are open and free to the public.)

Prior to completion, the second primary public effort made by PESC is asking the public to comment on the proposed standard *before* it is released as an international standard. The standard, once approved and released, will stipulate how reporting should be performed electronically, what data elements are included, and will include supporting documentation to describe how the electronic reporting or digital process should be implemented.

In asking the public for comment *now*, we seek the public's opinion on the proposed documentation (e.g. XML Schemas, Implementation Guides, Instance Documents, etc.) to ensure that when used together the proposed standard, if implemented according to how it is described, will serve the need that is envisioned. In providing comment, the public can recommend improvements and/or edits so that the standard once finalized and released is that much more improved. If no public comments are made, then the proposed standard in most cases becomes the final approved and released standard.