



A Non-Profit Organization
Dedicated to the Education of Youth

For immediate release

For more information contact:

Sandra Perez
Owen Media
206-322-1167
sandyp@owenmedia.com

EDUCATION AND TECH LEADERS JOIN FORCES TO SET EDUCATION IT STANDARDS

JES & Co., Intel, Dell, Microsoft, OneNet, SAP Public Services, Inc., EdVISION and Riverdeep announce Managed Learning System Research and Development Program

TUCSON, Ariz., April 30, 2001 – Leading education and technology organizations today announced their support of the Managed Learning System Research and Development Lab, part of a new vendor-neutral program to set the standards for technology in education. While initially funded by Intel, Dell, Microsoft, OneNet, SAP Public Services, Inc., EdVISION and Riverdeep, the lab is now open to sponsorship and use by other education providers and vendors to ensure interoperability. The Managed Learning System (MLS) is a program of JES & Co., the leading non-profit developer of education technology solutions and integration.

“Schools spend nearly \$6 billion a year on information technology and spending is rising dramatically as schools strive to meet new goals of accountability and reporting,” said Diny Golder-Dardis, MLS Program developer and executive director of JES & Co. “Unfortunately, schools’ efforts are often stalled due to the complexity of the systems. The Managed Learning System provides a standards-based framework so that all elements of an educational IT system can communicate and interoperate – making the entire education system more efficient.”

The MLS Program is the only educator-driven initiative to facilitate interoperable IT solutions, independent of vendor, integrator or platform. The educator-run MLS Steering Committee, representing the United States Department of Education, State Departments of Education, higher education, and K-12, will guide development of these standards to address the needs of education.

MLS specification and lab

Version 1.0 of the MLS spec is the result of more than three years of integration and prototype development, including the deployment of a fully operational system for the state of Oklahoma. With version 1.0 operating in Oklahoma, the MLS Program will focus on soliciting participation from additional technology and education leaders, revising the current specification and publishing a 2.0 version in 2002.

Sponsors and members of the MLS Program have access to the specification while it's in development. The MLS Program includes a hosted Research and Development Lab in Tucson, Arizona; bi-annual member meetings and ongoing Steering Committee and workgroup meetings. The lab is available for sponsors to test and demonstrate their products for interoperability relative to the MLS specification.

IT interoperability and schools

Quality Education Data, a leading education industry analyst firm, reports the market for education IT spending by school districts surpassed \$5.6 billion in 1999 and will be greater than \$5.8 billion in 2001.

Nearly every state has an initiative in legislation or on the books requiring school accountability for funding, which often drives IT spending. Information technology lowers the cost of tracking student attendance and performance. Additionally, it allows schools to track expenditures.

Many school districts and state departments of education establish multi-million dollar contracts with single vendors to supply IT solutions. However, the MLS specification gives education a way to build powerful IT systems by choosing products from dozens of vendors with interoperable products, thus reducing initial cost, vendor lock-in and complexity.

A leader in bringing education to schools

JES & Co. is a 501(c) (3) non-profit educational organization comprised of educators and education policy makers and the leading technology consultant for schools. Founded in 1997, the organization has programs operating in 18 states and hundreds of schools nationwide. JES & Co. administers education programs and consults to departments of education at state and regional levels on projects that integrate technology with administration, content, and people throughout the education process. The organization has developed and executed programs for secondary and post secondary schools that offer training and technical curriculum as well as opportunities for youth to earn school credit and compensation while learning about technology. For more information about JES & Co., please visit www.jesandco.org.

#