

The Tao of the Ed-Fi Alliance

This is a living document authored by the Ed-Fi Alliance's technology staff. It owes a conceptual debt to [The Tao of IETF](#), which serves a similar purpose for a different, complex standards organization.

In This Documentation

Introduction

The Ed-Fi Alliance was initially led by a small internal team, a community consisting of a few state education agencies, and supported by a single, contracted technology vendor. In the years since, the internal team has grown, the community has expanded far beyond its initial group of state education agencies, the technology is supported by multiple vendors, and the community is developing open source solutions that are distributed by the Ed-Fi Alliance.

This rapid expansion is a classic good problem to have. However, the breadth of Ed-Fi Alliance activities can be a bit daunting for newcomers or even current supporters who are looking to broaden their involvement in the Ed-Fi Alliance and its various technologies. This document describes the many aspects of the Ed-Fi Alliance, and is intended to provide newcomers and current supporters with the information they need to know to participate effectively and enjoyably in various activities.

What is the Ed-Fi Alliance?

The mission of the Ed-Fi Alliance is to empower a community of educators and innovators with real-time, comprehensive data from any technology tool, supporting every learner's success. You can read more about the Alliance's mission and vision [here](#).

In service of that goal, the Alliance and its community supports the following, widely varied activities:

- Governance of the Ed-Fi Data Standard
- Development of the Ed-Fi Implementation Suite software, which is aligned to the Ed-Fi Data Standard
- Publication of free, open source software aligned to the Ed-Fi Data Standard in the Ed-Fi Exchange
- Development and hosting of software tools that support adoption and use of the Ed-Fi Data Standard
- Convening and coordinating the Ed-Fi Community through an Ed-Fi Summit meeting and various other contexts, including in-person and online

The sections that follow detail the whys and wherefores.

History

The Ed-Fi Alliance, LLC, was formed on July 16, 2012, with its launch [announced in March 2013](#). At the time, its technology consisted of a draft XML data standard and a dashboard starter kit developed by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation for the Texas Student Data System, an initiative of the Texas Education Agency. At that time, only a few organizations had licensed the data standard and/or the dashboard technology from the Foundation.

As of 2017, the Alliance has over 275 licensees. The technology directly supported by the Ed-Fi Alliance includes a relational ODS with a RESTful API, a more polished and performant Dashboard starter kit, a high-performance ETL Application to populate the Dashboards from an ODS, and several supporting tools, including an online Ed-Fi Validation Tool and a hosted data mapping application.

Future

The suite of technology and supporting tools will continue to expand. We'll need help from the community as we grow, which is why we're publishing these guidelines.

The next section in the Tao is [Organization & Events](#), which, together, form the engine for getting work done.