

## **Uniquely Identifying Students – Not As Easy As It Seems**

### **eScholar Software Helps Districts and States Go Beyond Social Security Number**

**White Plains, N.Y., November 10, 2009** - State and local education agencies are facing increasing challenges in surprising places as they build out systems to help educators improve the quality and effectiveness of education. A critical requirement for these systems is to uniquely identify students such that student information can be effectively tracked over the student's educational history.

A student unique identifier system is the basis for a Longitudinal Data System. Without this component, tracking students over time will be exceedingly difficult if not impossible. The Data Quality Campaign which has been leading the effort to define the use of data within education recently outlined the importance of unique student identification.

“A unique statewide student identifier is a single, non-duplicated number that is assigned to and remains with a student throughout his or her P-12 career. Assignment of a unique statewide student identifier to every student in the P-12 system provides a way to follow students as they move from grade to grade and across campuses and/or districts within the state. This component, among other things, can help to show 1) the academic value-added of a school or program, 2) the achievement levels in early grades that indicate that a student is on track to succeed in subsequent grades, and 3) the test scores in early grades which should be thresholds for intervention.”

“Many people think that this is a simple challenge to overcome,” said Andrea Hartman, senior product manager at eScholar. “The issue really is much more complex. Schools have student identification numbers which they assign to a student, but as students progress to middle school, high school and on to postsecondary institutions, often new student identifiers are assigned. This makes tracking of individual student progress very difficult if not impossible. To address the issue, some states rely on Social Security Number or other identifiers generated based upon student information such as name and date of birth but these approaches raise many privacy concerns. This is exactly why we introduced eScholar Uniq-ID® for Students.”

eScholar Uniq-ID® for Students is a comprehensive software product to collect student identification data, match, de-duplicate that data and assign unique student identifiers. The system assigns a unique student record identifier that can be used to track student records across time, geography and the wide variety of systems in which student data is found. In addition to assigning IDs to newly enrolled students, the system provides an easy interface for administrators to identify students who have already been included in the system but may be registering for the first time in that particular location or district. A perfect example of how a product like eScholar Uniq-ID® for Students can make a big difference in resolving

duplicate IDs was seen in Yancey County Schools in Burnsville, North Carolina. "Our district had a situation where eScholar Uniq-ID® identified one of our students having the same social security number as a student in another district", said Stacey McEntyre, NcWISE and Testing Assistant at Yancey County Schools. "Research was done on both children and we learned that the children did in fact have the same social security number. The mothers wanted to say thank you to the eScholar Uniq-ID® team for catching this problem. The students were only in Kindergarten but they are glad to have found this out now rather than years later that someone else had the same Social Security Number."

The eScholar Uniq-ID® for Students product is currently the statewide student ID system for nine states plus the Department of Defense Education Agency (DODEA) and the Department of Education's Migrant Exchange System (MSIX) representing approximately 9 million students.

Organizations can learn more about eScholar Uniq-ID® for Students by visiting [www.escholar.com](http://www.escholar.com).

#### *About eScholar*

*eScholar is the nation's leading education data management company focused exclusively on improving education by providing educators with the most effective data management tools possible. eScholar products are the most broadly deployed data warehousing and student/staff identification systems. eScholar customers are realizing significant improvements in their ability to meet mandated reporting requirements but more importantly in their ability to improve pre-K through postsecondary student achievement. The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® products are the most comprehensive solutions available for integrating, cleansing, and managing thousands of education related data elements. The eScholar Uniq-ID® products are the leaders in generating, assigning, and managing statewide unique student and staff identifiers. Relied on by 11 state education agencies and over 3,500 districts across the country, eScholar products are transforming the way educators use data.*