



---

## *Education Data Management Solutions*

**News Release**  
For Immediate Release

**DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS HELP SCHOOLS IMPROVE SERVICES  
FOR FASTEST-GROWING SEGMENT OF SCHOOL POPULATION**

*More than 300 districts in Southeast alone using STI SETS  
to monitor progress of special needs students*

MOBILE, ALA. (Oct. 26, 2005) – Significantly reduced paperwork, more time for instruction and cost savings are just some of the reasons a growing number of schools are turning to special education management systems. More importantly, schools are purchasing these systems because of their potential to help educators improve educational quality and results for special needs students.

As parents and teachers have become better informed about student disabilities and the process for identifying these students has improved, more students are being placed in special education in public schools. According to a recent report by the Center for Education Policy, the number of students served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has increased by nearly 75 percent in two decades. This is a faster rate than the overall increase in the general school-age population.

Kentucky and Alabama are among the few states with a statewide special education management system. State education officials in both states enlisted STI, the nation's leading provider of education data management solutions for K-12 schools, for a comprehensive, web-based special education management system. STI *Special Education Tracking System* (SETS) enables educators to more effectively and efficiently collect, store and analyze special education data to measure quality and proficiency of services. In Kentucky and Alabama alone, STI SETS is used in more than 330 districts.

Following the reauthorization of IDEA in December 2004, policymakers and educators expressed the need to move beyond ensuring access to special education services toward enhancing the quality of instructional services and improving academic outcomes for students with disabilities. QED's *10<sup>th</sup> Annual Technology Purchasing Forecast* reported that 35 percent of districts planned to purchase special education management software during the upcoming school year. The expressed need for special education tracking systems is indicative of a larger trend occurring in schools toward using technology as a tool for measuring return on investment. Districts are beginning to merge data from the instructional and financial side of school operations to better inform decisions on resource allocation and educational programs.

MORE

“It takes intensive academic efforts to ensure special education students are prepared for post-secondary education, well-paying jobs and lead productive independent lives,” said Edmundo Gonzalez, vice president of product management and marketing for STI. “In addition, standards-based reform and accountability mandates have created new challenges for special education. STI has created an integrated system that allows educators to clearly identify benefits and results of special education services, including the ability to pinpoint areas where students need further intervention. It is accessible anytime, anywhere to provide educators with detailed student information at the critical times they need it.”

The rapidly rising costs of special education has raised questions about program effectiveness and accountability. The Center for Education Policy’s report states that one of the challenges ahead is the need for better data. Key program decisions and educational interventions can not be effectively answered without accurate data, collected over time.

Because Kentucky and Alabama use STI *SETS* throughout their public school systems, state and district administrators can compare results among districts and across programs. The system enables consistency in data collection to facilitate closer monitoring and ensure more accurate reporting.

For more information, visit [www.sti-k12.com](http://www.sti-k12.com) or phone 800-844-0884.

#### **About STI**

STI is a leading provider of *Education Data Management* solutions to the K-12 market. STI’s fully integrated suite of products addresses attendance, scheduling, special education, assessment, discipline, grade reporting, professional development, fund accounting, health, and parent/teacher communications. More than 5,000 schools in 28 states use STI solutions. The company was founded in 1982 and is headquartered in Mobile, Ala. For more information, phone 800-844-0884 or visit [www.sti-k12.com](http://www.sti-k12.com).

###

For more information contact:

--Edmundo Gonzalez, (646) 303-3483, [egonzalez@sti-k12.com](mailto:egonzalez@sti-k12.com)

--Charlene Blohm, (608) 839-9800, [charlene@cblohm.com](mailto:charlene@cblohm.com)