

Guide to Purchasing a Student Information System



Let's get started.

Evaluating and selecting a new student information system (SIS)

for your district is no small feat. There are many different things to consider beyond product functionality and price when navigating the purchasing process. This guide (and additional resources available from a Campus Sales Rep) can be used as a checklist to help inform your district's SIS search.

Checklist

■ Identify the context for your evaluation.

- Evaluate your current SIS vendor and their shortcomings.
- Educate yourself on products in the market.
- Define transition timeline.

**See Transition Timeline: Evaluation & Implementation.*

■ Form an evaluation committee.

- Determine appropriate stakeholders for committee.
**See Evaluation Committee: Stakeholder Profiles.*
- Identify the district's current processes and procedures.
- Determine how district goals and initiatives relate to a new SIS.
- Establish criteria for the type of vendor you wish to partner with and the experiences they offer.

■ Engage with SIS vendors.

- Engage in vendor conversations about your needs – not their products and services.
**See Vendor Conversations: District Talking Points.*
- Conduct one-on-one demonstrations tailored to meet your interests.
- Facilitate discussions about vendor's services offerings.

■ Make a decision.

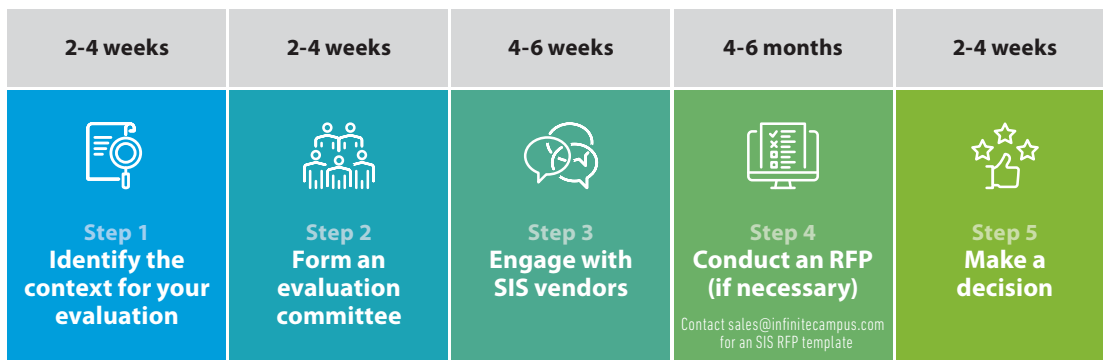
- Ask for a price quote.
- Connect with vendor's district references.
- Pursue an RFP if necessary.

Transition Timeline

When in the preliminary stages of looking for a new student information system (SIS), it's important to determine how much time is necessary to allot for an evaluation and implementation process. Many times, districts fall into the trap of making an SIS vendor selection too late and leaving little time to go through a comprehensive implementation before using the system. With that said, let's take a look at the appropriate timelines necessary for a successful transition.

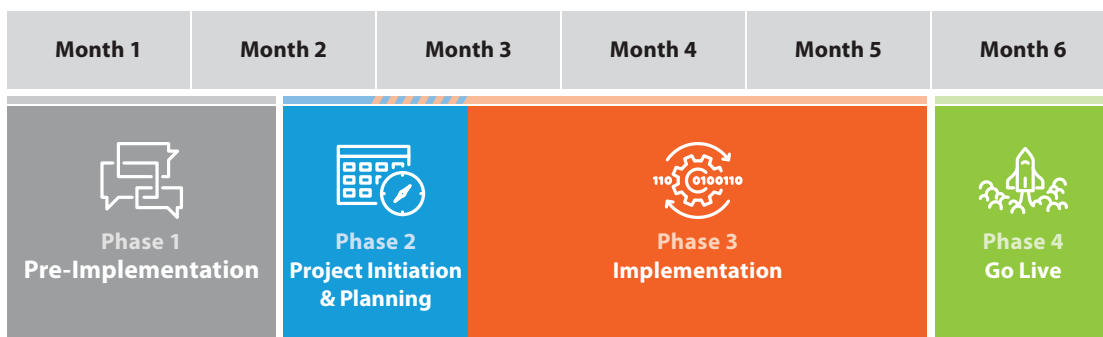
Evaluation Timeline

The following items below relate to the District Guide to Purchasing a Student Information System document. This timeline is meant to be a guide – actual timelines may vary based on the scope of the evaluation process.



Implementation Timeline

To maximize your investment in an SIS, it's important to engage in a comprehensive implementation process. These timelines can vary greatly based on district size, needs, and project goals. On average, districts spend about 6 months on an SIS implementation to allow for in-depth discovery on district process and procedures, multiple data conversion trials from the legacy system, and numerous training opportunities. However, when your current vendor is working with your new vendor on data migration between systems, this process can be streamlined significantly.



Evaluation Committee: Stakeholder Profiles

When exploring your student information system (SIS) options, it's imperative you have the right team of individuals behind you. The stakeholder profiles below indicate the key district personnel that you should have on your evaluation committee to help make the right decision and to support the overall outcome.

Executive Sponsorship

District and/or school-level administrator that serves as the champion for the SIS evaluation process.

- Considers district goals and initiatives and how they align to the SIS evaluation
- Provides quick executive-level decisions to allow the evaluation to move forward
- Communicates evaluation status and decisions to school board and other district leaders

Technology

Administrator or specialist that brings technology expertise into the SIS evaluation process.

- Understands how a new SIS would fit into the district's current technology ecosystem
- Compares underlying technologies and database structures between systems
- Provides insight into how the technology department will support the new system

SIS Administration

District professional that will support district processes and procedures in the new system.

- Understands the district's current student data collection and state reporting workflows and how they will be impacted by a new system
- Considers the training needs of all district users
- Compares vendor services offerings that will support the use of the new system

Curriculum

Administrator or specialist that understands the district's current instructional practices.

- Considers the district's use of digital learning technologies and how they relate to a new SIS
- Understands the district's grading policies and how they should be supported in the system
- Aware of new instructional initiatives that could be supported by a new system

Office Staff

District professional that understands the day-to-day operations of the district and/or school offices.

- Understands school and district offices' processes and procedures as it relates to an SIS
- Compares registration and enrollment procedures between systems
- Considers third-party systems utilized by the district and how they could be consolidated by a new system

Counseling/Student Services

District staff member that understands special programs and counseling initiatives to support the whole learner.

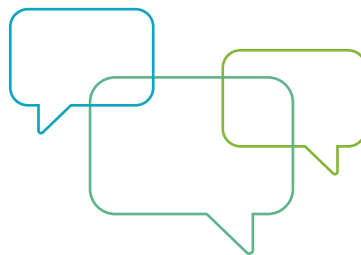
- Understands how a new SIS would impact student academic plans and progress monitoring efforts
- Considers how staff could collaborate with one another to support student success
- Compares student data reporting options related to student interventions and special program participation

Vendor Conversations: District Talking Points

Before participating in one-on-one demonstrations with student information system (SIS) vendors or diving into an RFP process, it's important that you take the time to converse with the leading SIS vendors that you're considering. Use this as an opportunity to express your priorities as you navigate this procurement process – this shouldn't be a time for vendors to sell their products and services to you. With this information, vendors should be able to tailor their presentations to your unique circumstances.

Some questions to consider before engaging with vendors:

Motivations	Current Processes	Goals & Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is implementing an SIS a priority today?• Where is implementing an SIS on your list of priorities?• Who in your district cares about implementing an SIS?• How much of an impact does this SIS have on your district? Why is that?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does your SIS operate today?• Are you having problems with your current SIS or related processes?• What are some processes or features that you use today that you hope will be supported by your next SIS?• How are your users using your SIS today?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any major district initiatives related to this SIS evaluation?• How would you feel that this SIS could improve your overall district operations?• What would a successful SIS implementation look like?• If you implement this SIS, how do things look different a year from now?



Learn more about the Infinite Campus Student Information System:

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