

Dear Education Colleagues:

The Arizona Department of Education is in the process of implementing the Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS) as a more secure, efficient, and immediate way to submit and report data currently being processed by SAIS. The AzEDS team is working closely with SIS vendors to configure their systems to use the AzEDS protocols and certify those systems as ready. As the diagram below illustrates, we are rapidly approaching the stage where each LEA will need to verify that its own SIS configuration is sending data correctly.

AzEDS IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



The configurations being made by SIS vendors essentially boil down to isolated software updates, which always include some degree of risk. To mitigate this risk, we encourage each LEA to work with their SIS vendor (or IT department) to create a testing environment that can test the new configuration and validate that its data is being sent to ADE in the right formats.

Please review the information below on testing environments and consider using one for this critical step in the state’s transition to a better education data reporting system.

Testing Environment

A *testing environment* is a separate computer or system that is almost identical to the one you want to use for the final product. The purpose of the testing environment is to have a place to make updates or fix issues without disrupting “live” work. In concept, working in a testing environment is similar to how auto manufacturers build prototypes and run them on test tracks before going into full production. When they fail to catch all the problems before production, they end up having to recall vehicles and fix them afterwards. The testing environment helps cut down on such recalls.

For the purposes of AzEDS data validation, the testing environment will allow LEAs to test the new AzEDS data submission protocol without risking corruption of “live” data. Ideally, each LEA will validate the data submissions using a duplicate instance of its SIS and a duplicate of its database. With such a setup, any errors in the test will only affect the test data and not the “live” data used for the LEA’s day-to-day operations.