



Unity Data Model Summary of Changes

SIF Data Model Implementation Specification (NA) 4.0

Updated: May 22, 2019

This “change” document follows the Policy and Procedure processes for Specification Development within the A4L Community. This draft endeavors to outline the changes from two previous North American specification releases (2.8 & 3.5) to Unity (4.0). *The North American Technical Board (NATB) recommends to the North American Management Board (NAMB) that the Unity Data Model Specification (North America) be made available for public release.*

V 4.0 Scope:

1. SIF (NA) 2.8 Data Model
2. xPress Roster objects
3. IEP objects
4. Address and Student Program Association objects
5. Support of UUIDs and legacy GUIDs
6. Pluggable Code Sets throughout
7. CEDS Mapping

The final Data Model as it was released can be found here:

<http://specification.sifassociation.org/Implementation/NA/4.0/>

SIF (NA) 2.8 Data Model:

We started this process with the 2.8 Data Model inputs, so all of it was included from the start and the work summarized below only endeavored to keep it all together, make it better, and add to it. In the end the 2.8 Data Model comprises all but a dozen of the data objects present in Unity. This in turn paves a clear path forward for the typical SIF adopter, taking their established data model and supporting it going forward!

xPress Roster:

Those that adopted the 3 Data Model, primarily did so through xPress Roster. These objects were added to the 3 Data Model after its initial release and were designed to simplify the most common interoperability use cases. Known to be supported by fifty-one different products, these eight objects have been carried forward into Unity.

IEP objects:

Our support for Individualized Education Plans is a first in the marketplace and was the primary work effort of our most recent North American release before Unity (3.5). Believing it is still too soon to know if IEP interoperability will be a success, these two objects have been converted straight over and included in the 4.0 Data Model because of strong interest.

Address and Student Program Association objects:

These newer objects address use cases cannot be handled using just the 2.8 Data Model objects. While it makes sense that the ability to associate a student with a program is now necessary, separate address handling seemed less fundamental. However, the liability of enrolling students with unverified addresses has become unacceptable to some adopters. So, the separate address object made the Unity cut and additions were made to some related objects to ensure it can be used just like in the 3 Data Model. Additionally, these objects have been reworked to change their capitalization and blend in with the objects from the 2.8 Data Model.

Support of UUIDs and legacy GUIDs:

The restricted format for RefIds was relaxed wholesale throughout the data model to allow for both of these formats. Everyone in the community should continue to encourage the use of proper UUIDs wherever possible. As we position ourselves as leaders in the Privacy space, we need everyone in the community to work against packed values and natural or composite keys that may leak data through unrestricted fields.

Pluggable Code Sets throughout:

Introduced with the 3 Data Model, the ability to specify the code set used for a field has proven both necessary and effective. However, the advent of CEDS has made it much simpler to specify exactly what code set has been applied (all you need is a place for a URL). So, a much simpler scheme has been added to almost all objects in Unity. This change has been made with the exception of objects designed to leave the zone (xPress).

CEDS Mappings:

While the currently available CEDS mappings have been applied to Unity, a great opportunity exists to expand this mapping to additional CEDS elements. ED Facts reporting is already being discussed as the target scope for our next wave of work in this area.

Special Thanks need to go out to:

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Respectfully submitted,

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