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iAssessment to Provide Arizona Teachers with Online Educator Assessment Services

iAssessment's diagnostic learning tool allows educators to determine their level of technology proficiency, compare their results against others and improve their skills

SALT LAKE CITY – June 18, 2001 – iAssessment, an application service provider for the education marketplace, today announced it has been awarded a contract from Arizona School Services through Educational Technology (ASSET) to provide online assessment services to Arizona's K-12 educators. Financial terms of the agreement were not released.

Beginning June 2001, more than 40,000 of Arizona's educators will have the opportunity to gauge their aptitude for technology and determine what measures they need to take to improve their skills.

Under the direction of ASSET, iAssessment customized its Diagnostic Learning System (DLS) for Arizona teachers. The project is funded through the Arizona Schools Facilities Board computer deployment project and has been named "MyCompass" (<http://mycompass.asset.asu.edu>).

"Both state and federal governments are recognizing the need to equip public schools with up-to-date technology," said Dan Cookson, co-founder of iAssessment. "However, if the technology is simply provided to the schools without properly training teachers, little progress is made if educators are then expected to integrate that technology into the classroom, without having sufficient background, knowledge or skills to teach their students. iAssessment allows educators to privately evaluate their skills, then take steps to improve their technology proficiency. The goal is to fill in the gaps so teachers can better integrate technology to support learning and, ultimately, improve student achievement."

iAssessment's DLS was customized by Arizona's educational technology experts to efficiently determine technology competencies. It is based on rubrics or criteria that align with Arizona's Academic Standards and the National Educational Technology Standards. Users gauge their aptitude in a variety of subjects and categories, such as expertise in various graphics, presentation, spreadsheet and word processing applications, as well as classroom instruction skills, technical troubleshooting and the ability to integrate technology into the curriculum.

"The School Facilities Board in Arizona has launched a significant statewide systemic technology initiative," said Kathryn Kilroy, executive director, ASSET. "This initiative requires accountability to our stakeholders – the taxpayers. Using iAssessment's DLS is an important step for our educators to measure their proficiency, identify areas where they need improvement and measure their progress after completing professional development courses. By increasing our efforts to evaluate and improve teacher performance, we are ensuring our teachers are more than competent. As a result, our schools will be able to demonstrate that our teachers are using today's technology in their classrooms and our students are prepared to prosper in tomorrow's workplace."

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Once a teacher takes the assessment test and learns his or her proficiency level, the DLS will recommend a personalized individual development plan to help that teacher bridge competency gaps and further increase skill levels. The training programs draw from a database of hundreds of affordable and targeted development courses offered both in classrooms and online, such as the PBS TeacherLine online modules. The training programs are provided by both third-party providers and educational institutions. iAssessment's DLS can serve as a marketing arm for state education training by offering the continuing education courses that districts, regions and state education boards currently provide. At any time, users can reassess themselves to monitor their progress, growth and response to their prescribed training.

Teachers can only access iAssessment's DLS by entering a Personal Identification Number and password, ensuring both their privacy and the privacy of other educators. The results of the assessment are confidential and are never shared with any supervisors, principals, superintendents or superiors. The aggregated results of a district, county, region or the entire state of Arizona are, however, available for all educational users and organizations in the state for comparisons. This approach helps administrators determine where additional training and support is needed.

According to a 1999 report by the U.S. Department of Education, almost two-thirds of all teachers feel they are not at all prepared or only somewhat prepared to use technology in their teaching. A survey conducted by Merrill Lynch & Co. in 2000 stated, "Almost two-thirds of teachers (65 percent) had never used a computer before being introduced to one in the classroom. These teachers need basic technology training, especially those who are receiving computers and using the Internet in their classrooms for the first time."

About iAssessment

iAssessment helps educational institutions identify educator, administrator, and student challenges with technology and other curriculum subjects using customizable Web-based assessment tools. iAssessment's Diagnostic Learning System provides formative assessment, diagnosis and resource alignment specific for each user, delivering real-time personalized charting and learning plans to improve individual skills and competencies. Administrators use iAssessment's aggregated learning plans and real-time results to support funding qualification, project continuation or re-scoping, quantify participation, secure fiscal appropriations, and focus professional development objectives, while helping educators to use and apply technology in curriculum-development, lesson planning, and meeting professional development standards. For more information, visit <http://www.iassessment.com>.

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