

# 4 QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOU

## WHEN PURCHASING A NEW Student Information System

### 1. How intuitive is the user interface?

A product can be loaded with features, but if they are too difficult to understand or require weeks of training, no one will use them.

*Intuitive Interface: a software program that has a friendly design and works logically, the way users would expect instinctively, without thought process.*



### 2. Is the product agile to support your requirements and market trends over the next 5 or even 3 years?

With the dynamic changes in education and client needs, purchasing a SaaS\* solution developed by a company that is focused on continuing to develop their product as the market dictates will enable your school or college to keep its competitive edge. This eliminates the need to go through the cost and expense of transitioning to a newer SIS again in a few years.

A company that is primarily driven by revenues and gaining market share is not likely to be putting the interests of their clients first. As one IT director puts it ‘We see other SISs that are loaded with new features, while ours has grown long in the tooth!’ Don’t let that happen to the SIS that your institution selects.

*\* A SaaS solution is a multitenant architecture, in which all users and applications share a single, common infrastructure and code base that is centrally maintained. Because clients of a SaaS vendor are all on the same infrastructure and code base, vendors can innovate more quickly and save the valuable development time previously spent on maintaining numerous versions of outdated code.*

*A customizable SaaS can be adapted to the business processes of each client without affecting the common infrastructure. Because of the way a SaaS is architected, these customizations are unique to each company or user and are always preserved through upgrades. That means SaaS providers can make upgrades more often, with less customer risk and much lower adoption cost.*

### **3. What happens if your institution experiences a burst of growth, or takes on partner institutions?**

There are many SIS vendors who can handle a small to moderate amount of data without having an impact on performance, but very few that can handle major loads with hundreds of thousands of records, without a degrade in performance. Storing student data year after year can become cumbersome to performance without a well-designed infrastructure to support it. Talk is cheap, so ask for proof of scalability when vetting vendors!

*As in any major purchase, seek value when evaluating price.*

### ***The most important question of all...***

#### **4. How good is post implementation support?**

Does the vendor you are considering answer phone calls and emails, or send you through a maze of questions, only to end up with a recorded message? How long does it really take them to get their clients up and running? How quickly do they address critical issues?

Don't be misled into partnering with a company based on price. If they don't have the resources to support your needs or provide you with updates, you'll end up spending more in the long run. Your SIS runs the business of your school, so be selective with your search to find a true partner that collaborates with you.