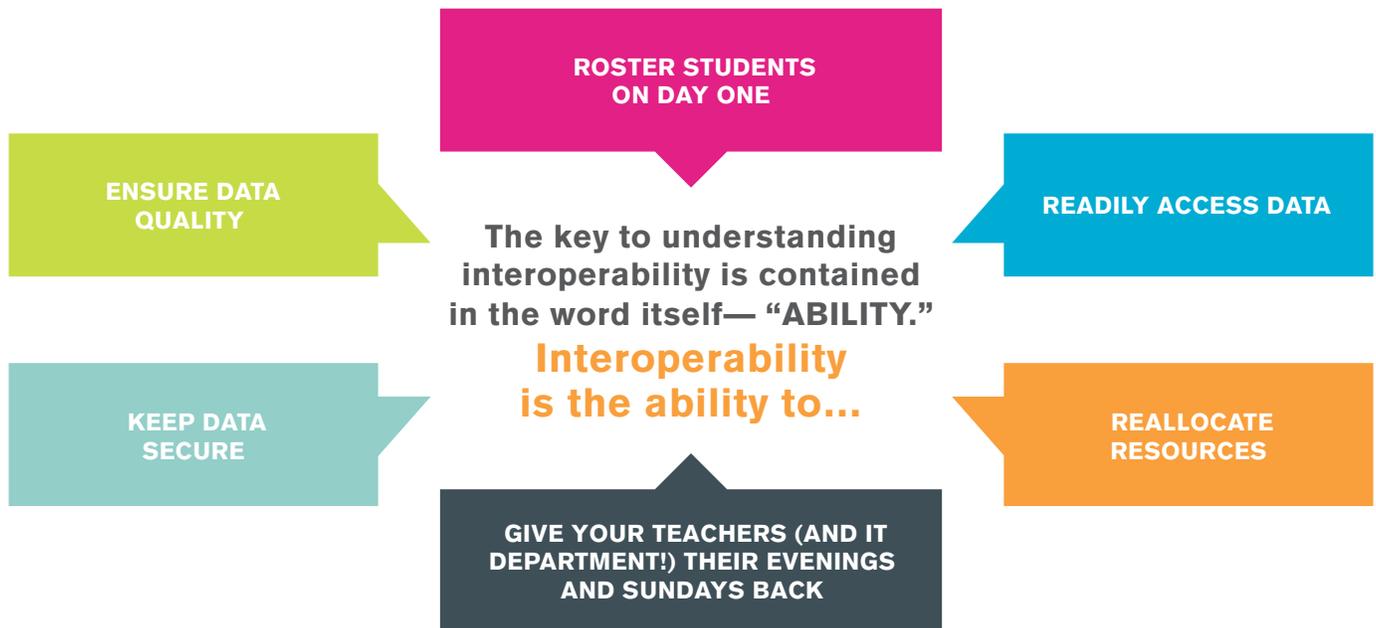


# THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEROPERABILITY IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS

## INTEROPER—WHAT?

Interoperability is the seamless sharing of data, content and services among systems or applications. Anyone who's traveled overseas and didn't bring a power adapter understands interoperability, or rather the lack of it. An analogous situation exists in districts' digital ecosystems. Most systems were not designed to work together. IT departments spend a lot of time and their school systems' money connecting systems that need to work together. Michigan did an extensive study and found the lack of interoperability costs the state \$163,000,000 per year.\*

As districts' ecosystems become increasingly digital, the need for interoperability between systems becomes increasingly apparent—for cost efficiencies as well as teaching and learning effectiveness. The IT world is shifting from a product-oriented to a service-oriented environment while schools struggle to make ends meet. Therefore, it is essential for K–12 leaders to learn how to maximize the benefits of existing enterprise systems while adding new solutions that are cost-effective and scalable.



Unless we solve this interoperability challenge, the education sector will continue to have siloed data, difficulties in student rostering, inaccuracies in data transfer, end-user frustration of managing multiple log-ins, and unnecessary and costly expense retrofitting solutions together, as well as inherently inefficient systems. That's why understanding interoperability is crucial for any edtech leader.

CoSN has developed an interoperability toolkit to support your technology and leadership. [cosn.org/interoperability](https://cosn.org/interoperability).

“ Sometimes, when they talk about Interoperability, they're talking about instructional software systems but it goes so much deeper than that. ”

MELISSA TEBBENKAMP, DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY,  
RAYTOWN QUALITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

“ ...the term 'interoperability' alone was overwhelming. I couldn't fathom the concept of being able to achieve interoperability within our own district. I believe we didn't have the resources to pursue the concept. My experience taught me that while interoperability was the end goal, there were absolutely things I can do to help our district move forward. ”

TERRY ALLEN, DIRECTOR- ASSESSMENT, IT AND TITLE 1,  
MORGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT