

Student Data Privacy Frequently Asked Questions

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of data is collected about students?

Our district collects demographic information (names, parents’ or guardians’ names, address, gender, date of birth, etc.), as well as information such as test scores, copies of assignments and homework, report card grades, student attendance, eligibility information for free or reduced price lunch and other programs, information about special needs and services, graduation and remediation rates, and disciplinary actions. Some additional data about students we may collect includes student use of school-provided software, networks and technology devices, as well as the use of school-provided communications services such as email.

What kind of information is collected about parents?

We collect name, address, and contact information from parents and may also collect income information to verify eligibility for programs such as free and reduced-price lunch. We may also store information about your communications with district staff (e.g. in a teacher’s or administrator’s email archive). Our district **does not** collect or store sensitive information, such as parents’ or guardians’ social security numbers, driver’s license numbers, political views and religious affiliations.

How is student data used?

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Administrative | Student registration, Course scheduling, Guidance counseling, Attendance, School lunch programs, Busing services |
| Instructional | Homework assignments, Instructional tools and learning apps, Working collaboratively online, Engaging with teachers and classmates, Tailored course curricula, and Support services |
| Assessment and Measurement | Measuring the quality of education, Standardized tests, Course assessments, Reshaping classroom materials, Measuring effectiveness of student learning |
| Optional and Non-Educational | School yearbooks, Class photos, PTA fundraising, School paraphernalia |

Student Data Privacy Frequently Asked Questions --- Continued

What is the difference between personally identifiable data, de-identified and aggregate data?

- Personally identifiable information refers to any information that could identify your child. This includes, but is not limited to their name, parent or family members' names, address of student or family, birth date, email address, telephone number, social security number, geolocation information, screen names, user names, photographs, and videos.
- De-identified data refers to the process of anonymizing, removing or obscuring any personally identifiable information from student data to prevent the unintended disclosure of the identity of the student and information about him/her.
- Aggregated data is summarized information about a group of students and does not include any identifiable information on individual students.

Who has access to data about my child?

Our district has developed policies that limit access to personally identifiable data based on an individual's role within the district and what is referred to as their "legitimate educational interest" in information about a student. For instance, a bus driver needs to know a child's address and possibly limited health information in order to get students home safely, but access to information about student test scores is not needed for the bus driver to properly carry out his or her job.

Teachers, principals, and other administrators will have access to the widest range of information about your child in order to monitor their progress in school. Outside service providers to the school receive only the information about your child needed to provide particular services. This could mean letting a tutor know what a child needs help on or providing a student's name to a math software company so the child can log in and their teacher can monitor their progress.

School board members, the state department of education and the U.S. Department of Education receive aggregated information that allows them to understand how our schools are performing and make decisions about programs and resources. Personally identifiable information may be shared in limited situations such as to review appeals of school decisions or to audit and monitor programs.

Who is responsible for protecting student data?

Our schools and district officials closely safeguard education records and the personally identifiable information that make up those records. Access to this data is restricted to trained, qualified individuals who only have access to the specific data they need in order to do their jobs. Our district has a comprehensive student data privacy policy that all staff, faculty, and service providers are required to follow. This policy outlines security mechanisms that protect student data and also governs who has access to data and how it can be used.

Student Data Privacy Frequently Asked Questions --- Continued

What kind of security measures are used?

In order to ensure that our students' data is properly protected, our district has contracted with independent information security experts to review our policies and practices to protect student data. We have also deployed strategies to protect our information systems such as encryption, firewalls, intrusion detection software, activity logs and regular training of staff with access to sensitive information.

Are there existing laws that protect student data?

Yes, there are multiple federal and state laws that are designed to protect student data and prohibit any misuse. If student information is misused or compromised, school districts, including our own, can be subject to strict penalties.

How do schools hold outside service providers accountable for maintaining the confidentiality of the student data they receive?

Our school district is responsible for holding outside service providers accountable and ensuring they have the appropriate protections in place to safeguard the student data they receive. Our contracts with service providers include protections. And, just like any member of the school/school district staff or faculty, outside service providers are expected to adhere to our student data privacy policy. Companies working with schools and the district are only permitted to use student information for its authorized purpose. Any misuse of the data would constitute a breach of contract and may also violate state and federal laws, which may result in penalties.

Who owns student data?

Our schools and school district retain ownership of student data and are the stewards of this data.

Can parents access their child's education records?

Yes. Under federal law, parents have the right to review their child's education records. Please contact the BCS Main Office at (203) 393-3350 to request access to and a copy of your child's record.

If you wish to learn more about the software and tools used in your child's classroom, please contact their teacher who will provide access to a parent account or share relevant reports about your child's use of these tools with you.