

APPENDIX D.

Additional questions to ask your teacher or principal

Check out Section V for a list of introductory questions you can ask your child's teacher. Here are additional questions you can ask.

Questions to ask about student information the school or district collects, uses and shares

■ **WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DOES THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT COLLECT** about students and why? Who is it shared with? Will parents be notified about which personal data is collected or shared, as is considered best practice?¹

HELPFUL HINT:

The U.S. Department of Education Privacy Technical Assistance Center recommends that schools and/or districts should:

- Develop and publish a data inventory listing the specific information it collects from or about students; and
- Explain why it collects each piece of student information (e.g., for state or federal reporting, to provide educational services, to improve instruction, to administer cafeteria services, etc.).

■ **IF DATA IS STORED IN A STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIS)**, like InfiniteCampus or PowerSchool, who has access to my child's data, and what are they permitted to do with it? Can only her/his teachers, counselor and principal see it, or can other teachers and district officials access it? What about individuals or organizations outside the school or district?

■ **IF I WOULD LIKE TO ACCESS AND REVIEW** my child's information stored in his or her education records as well as the data in the SIS, as is my right under federal law, how can I do this?

■ **WILL THE SCHOOL INFORM PARENTS** when there is a breach of their children's data by the school or district? What methods will be used to inform parents, and how quickly will it happen?

■ **WHEN WILL THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT DELETE** my child's personal data? Once she/he graduates from high school, or if we move? And will all data be deleted or just some of it?

Questions to ask about student information the district shares with the state department of education, the federal government or researchers

■ **EXACTLY WHAT STUDENT INFORMATION** is the school or district required to share with the state education department?

■ **IF I WOULD LIKE TO ACCESS AND REVIEW** this information for my child, as is my right under federal law, how can I do this?

■ **IF THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT PARTICIPATES IN A STUDY** by independent researchers or the U.S. Department of Education, will they notify parents before sharing personal student information and explain why de-identified or aggregated data are not sufficient for the study?

■ **IF YOU DON'T KNOW** the answers to the above questions, who should I ask?

Questions to ask about your child's use of online programs and classroom applications (apps)

- **WHICH CLASSROOM APPS** and online programs are going to be assigned to my child, and what are their privacy policies?

HELPFUL HINT:

The U.S. Department of Education Privacy Technical Assistance Center recommends that schools and/or districts "provide parents with a list of online educational services or 'apps' that are approved for use in the classroom."

- **DO YOU KNOW WHAT INFORMATION VENDORS COLLECT** about my child, how it is being used, and with which other third parties or contractors the vendors may be sharing the data?

- **IS THE VENDOR OR CONTRACTOR ALLOWED** to use my child's data for marketing purposes? Will my child see ads as part of the program, or will ads be delivered to my child or to me? If so, how can we opt out of this?

HELPFUL HINT:

If your child is under the age of 13, the federal law known as COPPA requires your school to know how the company will use your child's private information before they are allowed to sign up your child to use the classroom app or online program on your behalf. If the company will use your child's private information for any purpose outside of the educational context, the school (or a teacher) may not sign up your child for that classroom app or online program without your permission.

- **HAVE THESE PROGRAMS BEEN VETTED** by the school, districts, or state for privacy and security? If so, what are the standards for approval?

- **IF NOT, WHAT ACTIONS HAVE YOU TAKEN TO ENSURE** that my child's data will be safe from breach or abuse, and to ensure that these apps comply with state or federal law?

- **HOW CAN I ACCESS AND REVIEW** my child's private information held by these companies and/or request that the information be deleted?

HELPFUL HINT:

Schools or districts that designate companies as "school officials," and then disclose students' personally identifiable information from education records to them, should consider their obligations under the federal law known as FERPA. According to the U.S. Department of Education Privacy Technical Assistance Center: "Whenever a provider maintains a student's education records, the school and district must be able to provide the requesting parent (or eligible student) with access to those records. Schools and districts should ensure that their agreements with providers include provisions to allow for direct or indirect parental access."

- **IF I REFUSE TO ALLOW MY CHILD TO USE** one or more of the classroom apps or online programs, what alternative forms of instruction and assessment will be made available to my child?

- **WILL THE SCHOOL INFORM PARENTS** when there is a breach of student data by a third party or service provider? If we learn of such a breach, what will be done to minimize impacts? Does the vendor have any liability or responsibility to provide credit monitoring or a credit freeze for families who are affected?

HELPFUL HINT:

Also known as a security freeze, a credit freeze lets you restrict access to your credit report, which in turn makes it more difficult for identity thieves to open new accounts in your name. If you believe you or your children are a victim of identity theft, visit <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>

Questions to ask about one-to-one computing (1:1) and bring your own device (BYOD) programs

■ **WHEN USING A SCHOOL-ISSUED DEVICE**, does the school/district or the company that provided the device have access to my child's emails, video chats, pictures, documents, or other content? Will my child's information be monitored, collected, or recorded?

■ **CAN MY CHILD USE HER/HIS OWN DEVICE?** If so, what information will be monitored or collected by the school?

■ **IF THERE ARE DEFAULT SETTINGS** on school-provided devices to collect personal student data, how can the school or I change those defaults?

HELPFUL HINT:

Schools and districts often use Chromebooks, pre-loaded with Google's G Suite for Education (G Suite), for their 1:1 programs. The Electronic Frontier Foundation recommends changing the Chromebook and G Suite default settings to improve student privacy. Step-by-step instructions can be found at <https://www EFF.org/issues/student-privacy/device-settings>

■ **WILL MY CHILD'S DATA** collected from school-issued devices be de-identified?

■ **WILL THE SCHOOL/DISTRICT** or party that provided the school-issued device have remote access to the device? If so, who can access my child's device—the school system administrator, people who work for the software company, administrators, teachers, or more?

■ **CAN EITHER THE PROVIDER** or the school turn on the web cam or audio device of a school-issued device? Are they able to remotely access files and documents or view the device screen?

HELPFUL HINT:

A Pennsylvania school district admitted that it remotely accessed the webcams of school-issued laptops, secretly taking pictures of students in their own homes. The spying incident prompted the district to pay \$61,000 to settle multiple lawsuits.²

■ **DOES THE SCHOOL** have physical or remote access to my child's passwords on the device?

■ **IF I DON'T WANT** my child to be monitored and tracked, will my wishes be respected? Can my child still participate in the one-to-one or BYOD program?

■ **DOES THE SCHOOL** use location tracking software to monitor the location of school-issued devices? If so, who can access the location of my child's device and under what circumstances?

■ **DO SPECIAL RULES APPLY** if other members of our family use the school-issued device?

■ **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE** if the school-issued device breaks or is lost?

Questions to ask about online learning in general

These questions have been adapted from materials developed by Parents Across America. To learn more, visit www.parentsacrossamerica.org

- **HOW MUCH TIME PER DAY** in school is my child spending on an electronic device?
- **HOW MUCH ADDITIONAL TIME**, if any, is my child being asked to spend on an electronic device outside of school hours?
- **HOW MUCH IS THIS PROGRAM COSTING** the school or district?
- **IS THE VENDOR PLANNING TO PROFIT** by using my child's data for marketing or other commercial purposes?
- **FOR EACH SPECIFIC PROGRAM** attached to an electronic device that my child is using, please share the purpose of the program, the reason for its inclusion in the curriculum, and evidence of its effectiveness.

If you don't receive sufficient answers to your questions, consider advocating against excessive use of online programs with strategies outlined in Section VI, or consider having your child opt out of one or more of these programs.

Questions? Visit www.studentprivacymatters.org/toolkit for more information, including free webinars on how to use the resources in this toolkit.

REFERENCES

1. <http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/LEA%20Transparency%20Best%20Practices%20final.pdf>
2. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/610k-settlement-in-school-webcam-spy-case/>