

## APPENDIX F.

# Tips for media outreach and sample press materials

When holding a town hall meeting or other gathering to educate and advocate on issues related to student privacy, don't forget to invite the press by sending a "media advisory." Use our helpful tips and the sample below to begin writing your own today!

## How to write a media advisory

**STEP 1:** Start with today's date.

**STEP 2:** Select a contact for your group, including the individual's name, phone number, and email address, who will respond to reporters' queries. Other people in your group can and should speak to media, but it's good to have a one person in charge.

**STEP 3:** Pick a concise and catchy title.

**STEP 4:** Write a brief description of your event.

**STEP 5:** Add the "Five Ws" (see sample below).

**STEP 6:** Conclude with a reminder for interested media to connect with your contact, and provide details.

**STEP 7:** Place three hashtags or number signs (###) at the end of your advisory.

**STEP 8:** Send your advisory to local newspapers, television and radio stations one week before your event.

**STEP 9:** Follow up with phone calls to make sure your advisory was received and to ask if they will be sending someone to cover your event.

**STEP 10:** Send your advisory again the day before the event, no later than 2 pm.

**NOTE:** You should send the media advisory in the body of an email. Include the date of the event in the subject line, telling what, where, and when.

## Sample media advisory

Date: October 20, 2017      Contact: Lynn Jones, (555 -555-1212; lynn.jones1982@gmail.com)

### **Smithville Parents To Host Student Privacy Forum**

Increasingly, the Smithville Unified School District (SUSD) is mandating that students use online programs and apps for in-school assignments and homework. Yet the district has no procedure for vetting the privacy policies of those apps, and one app used by SUSD middle schoolers was breached last year. Smithville parents asked SUSD officials to host a public forum to address privacy concerns, but they refused. So Smithville Parents for Student Privacy will host their own forum to discuss what SUSD can do to better protect sensitive student data.

**WHAT:** Smithville Student Privacy Forum

**WHO:** Speakers include parent Jill Brown; SUSD senior John Doe; 4th grade teacher Frank Allen; and privacy expert Dr. Rhonda Little, Professor of Computer Science, Smithville University

**WHERE:** 100 Main Street, Smithville

**WHEN:** Tuesday, April 12, 2017 at 7:00 PM.

**WHY:** Current SUSD policies do not adequately protect sensitive student data.

For more information, or for news organizations interested in covering this event, please contact Lynn Jones at 555-555-1212 or [lynn.jones1982@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.jones1982@gmail.com)

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While media advisories are teasers to get media to cover an event, press releases tell a whole story and don't necessarily have to be linked to an event. Because local papers will sometimes quote from press releases without any changes, your release should include everything necessary to tell your story. It should also be written to capture the attention of reporters who may want to follow-up and write their own stories.

### How to write a press release

**STEP 1:** Start with today's date.

**STEP 2:** Select a contact for your group, including the individual's name, phone number, and email address, who will respond to reporters' queries.

**STEP 3:** Add the statement "For Immediate Release"

**STEP 4:** Pick a concise and catchy headline.

**STEP 5:** Keep your release to one and a half pages. If you're hosting an event, briefly describe details of the event, the participants, and the issue discussed. Include quotes and soundbites. If there's a newsworthy event such as a data breach or the publication of new privacy research that you can link your local efforts to, it may make your release more compelling. Include important details about any contact with the school or experts. The point isn't to embarrass school officials or violate their confidence, but to demonstrate to the press that you have already engaged officials about your concerns. Include any recommendations or demands, such as to improve privacy policies or schedule public hearings.

**STEP 6:** Conclude with a strong quote.

**STEP 7:** Place three hashtags or number signs (###) at the end of your release.

**STEP 8:** Send your press release in the body of an email after the event to local newspapers, television and radio stations, and parents, officials, and others who could not attend.

### Sample press release

Date: October 20, 2017

Contact: Lynn Jones, (555 -555-1212; [lynn.jones1982@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.jones1982@gmail.com))

For Immediate Release

#### **Coalition Demands Better Privacy Protections for SUSD Students**

SMITHVILLE, NC — In the wake of a recent hack of educational software that left millions of students' personal information vulnerable, a coalition of concerned parents and teachers is demanding that Smithville Unified School District (SUSD) take immediate steps to protect sensitive student data. The coalition says that SUSD's privacy policies are outdated and don't reflect the growing use of apps and cloud based services by the district.

“Technology can play an important role in education but it shouldn’t come at the expense of privacy,” said Phillip Grant, a Smithville High School parent. “In today’s digital era, our student data is a valuable commodity and it’s not clear to me that SUSD is taking the necessary precautions to protect against commercial misuse or hacking.”

The coalition first reached out to school officials after hackers infiltrated Edufile, a cloud-based system that allows approved district vendors to access student data. On February 18th, a group of concerned parents met with Superintendent Paul Harris. During that discussion, it became apparent that SUSD’s privacy policies were deficient and didn’t even prohibit the use of apps that collected personal information from students for marketing purposes.

“I was shocked to discover that the online program my daughter was assigned to use for homework was compiling a dossier of her likes and interests,” said Jill Brown, a parent of a Smithville Middle School student. “I understand why free apps would be appealing to a teacher, but I don’t want my daughter paying for her education with her privacy.”

The coalition is urging the district to adopt policies that incorporate the national Parent Coalition for Student Privacy’s principles to protect student privacy, available at <http://www.studentprivacymatters.org/five-principles-to-protect-study-privacy>. Those principles include:

- **Transparency:** Parents must be notified by their children’s school or district in advance of any disclosure of personal student information to any persons, companies or organizations outside of the school or district. All disclosures to third parties should also require publicly available contracts and privacy policies that specify what types of data are to be disclosed for what purposes, and provide a date certain when the data will be destroyed.
- **No commercial uses:** Selling of personal student data and/or use for marketing purposes should be banned. NO advertising should be allowed on instructional software or websites assigned to students by their schools, since ads are a distraction from learning and serve no legitimate educational purpose.
- **Security protections:** At minimum, there must be encryption of personal data at motion and at rest, required training for all individuals with access to personal student data, audit logs, and security audits by an independent auditor. Passwords should be protected in the same manner as all other personal student information.
- **Parental/student rights:** NO re-disclosures by vendors or any other third parties to additional individuals, sub-contractors, or organizations should be allowed without parental notification and consent (or students, if they are 18 or older).

Added Grant, “As a parent, I should have the right to control who has access to my child’s personal information.”

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