

August 13, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx  
Education and the Workforce  
Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Education and the Workforce  
Committee  
United State House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Alexander, Senator Murray, Representative Foxx and Representative Scott:

Our organizations strongly support using data and research to improve teaching and learning and to inform decision-making by schools and higher education institutions, school districts, and states. Protecting each student's personally identifiable information is an inherent component of this important work and the U.S. Department of Education's Privacy and Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) has been an unmatched and invaluable privacy resource for the education community.

PTAC's rich technical assistance has improved student data privacy nationally by helping public and private education leaders better understand the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendments (PPRA), while also helping schools and other data holders implement privacy best practices. PTAC's value is illustrated by the incredible demand for its technical assistance tools and resources. The Department of Education's records show that in FY 2016-2017 alone:

- PTAC addressed over 3,200 help desk questions from stakeholders in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education;
- 30,000 educators took PTAC's online FERPA training course; and
- Educators and other interested stakeholders viewed PTAC's privacy instructional videos 45,000 times.

PTAC's accessible, capacity-building approach advances student privacy, even as layers of new requirements and heavy-handed enforcement often fall short. As leading decision makers for the nation's students and their families on Capitol Hill, we hope you will take time to learn more about PTAC and steadfastly support their continued success separate and independent of the Department's compliance activities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We appreciate your leadership on behalf of the nation's students.

Sincerely,



Paige Kowalski  
Executive Vice President  
Data Quality Campaign

With support from:

- AASA, The School Superintendents Association
- Access 4 Learning (A4L) Community
- The Alliance for Excellent Education
- American Educational Research Association
- Association of Educational Service Agencies
- Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
- Association of School Business Officials, International
- Center for Democracy & Technology
- Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)
- Future of Privacy Forum
- iKeepSafe
- Knowledge Alliance
- KnowledgeWorks
- Institute for Higher Education Policy
- National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Association of States Boards of Education
- National Center for Learning Disabilities
- National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)
- National PTA
- National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
- National Rural Education Association
- National School Boards Association
- New America
- PlayWell, LLC
- The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)
- SIIA - The Software & Information Industry Association
- Workforce Data Quality Campaign