



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

DATE: August 26, 2016
TO: Members, Board of Trustees
FROM: David Lasic, Chief of Staff
Ed Grassia, Chief Information Officer
SUBJECT: Information on Student Data Privacy

There have been concerns raised by the public that we do business with companies that mine student information and sell that data to third parties. Based on the agreements and contracts we have in place with companies like Microsoft, Google, and others, those claims are unfounded. In fact those companies are signers of the [Student Privacy Pledge](#). This pledge is an intentional statement by the organizations that sign it to be transparent with why they need student data, how they handle and protect that student data, and what they do with it.

We have put together a District webpage which highlights these facts and can serve as a reference for staff and the public. It is titled "DATA SECURITY & PRIVACY FAQ's" and can be found here: <http://www.washoeschools.net/site/default.aspx?PageID=5371>. We will expand this page to include information on IC, BIG, Business Plus, and NDE. The goal of this page is to provide documented facts regarding student data so anyone with a question or concern can see what the district has in its possession, why we have it, what we share and with who, and what we do to protect the data we have.

Besides companies like Microsoft and Google there have been specific questions raised about Edmodo and the way it handles student data. Edmodo follows the same guidelines as the companies already discussed.

Below is information from Edmodo on how they handle student data.

Details about how we have designed Edmodo's products to protect user privacy and some of the practices and policies we have adopted to make Edmodo as safe as possible are detailed in our Privacy Policy, available at <https://www.edmodo.com/corporate/privacy-policy>, and our Privacy-specific web page, <https://www.edmodo.com/privacy>, which contains a number of privacy and data-related resources, including a Commitment to Privacy that describes what Edmodo does and doesn't do with student data. To summarize, here are a few of the key points from these documents:

- Edmodo collects very little personally identifiable data from users. The only information required for a student to create an account is a first and last name. (For teacher users, we require an email address as well.)
- Edmodo does not collect geo-location tracking information about users.

- Edmodo users own their own data; Edmodo does not own users' data.
- Edmodo does not rent or sell user information to third parties.
- If a user asks us to delete their account, we honor that request. Similarly, if a teacher or parent requests the deletion of a student account with whom they are associated, we honor that request too.
- Edmodo allows parents to create parent accounts that are tied to their child's Edmodo account, to ensure that the parent is involved and understands what the child is doing on Edmodo.

Edmodo was also one of the original 12 companies to sign the Student Privacy Pledge, http://studentprivacypledge.org/?page_id=213, which contains a number of specific commitments about what companies will and won't do with student data. That Pledge has been endorsed by President Obama and numerous other politicians from both parties, and it has now been signed by over 200 companies.

With that background and context, there has been inaccurate information from certain parents in the Incline community. There have been questions and statements emailed to District staff where we have asked Edmodo to provide answers. Below are the questions and statements posed and the answers from the Edmodo.

Parent: If your child uses Edmodo at IHS, the company will likely be "amassing a profile" on your child, as this Education Week article suggests: bit.ly/1r2Hhh4

Edmodo: Edmodo does not amass profiles on students for marketing or advertising purposes. Edmodo collects very little personally identifiable data from students. The only information required for a student to create an account is a first and last name. For teacher users, we require an email address as well. If a user asks us to delete their account, we honor that request. Similarly, if a teacher or parent requests the deletion of a student account with whom they are associated, we honor that request too. Edmodo is an education-specific company; our mission is to help teachers teach and students learn, and the information we obtain about our users is utilized to help our teachers teach and our student users to learn.

Parent: In addition, Edmodo will share your children's personal information with others. Read the privacy policy here: edmodo.com/privacy#policy.

Edmodo: Edmodo does not rent or sell Student data to third parties. The part of the Privacy Policy that the author is paraphrasing does not say what the author suggests it says. It merely says that Edmodo "may" share this information with others, in order to, for example, ensure that our users can use the services. For example, if Edmodo may

need to "share" information about a user with the user's web browser to permit the user to access our website.

Parent: The bottom line is: WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT STUDENT DATA COMPANIES LIKE EDMODO WILL COLLECT, STORE, ANALYZE AND SHARE ABOUT OUR CHILDREN; MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE DON'T KNOW HOW IT WILL AFFECT THEIR FUTURE.

Edmodo: Again, Edmodo is not collecting, storing, analyzing, or sharing information about students with third parties for marketing or advertising purposes. Although there are some companies in the education space that collect highly personal and sensitive information about students, such as whether they receive free lunches or see mental health counselors, Edmodo does not do any of those things. The only personally identifiable information we obtain from students is a first and last name. We need to collect that information so teachers know who the students in their Edmodo groups are, who is making certain comments, who is turning in their homework, etc. In other words, we collect personally identifiable information solely to help our teachers teach and our student users learn.

To summarize, there is no evidence that any of the companies we do business with are guilty of the things they get accused of. In fact, we are only aware of evidence to the contrary.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.