



Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

JOB-Personally Identifiable Information

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to protect the privacy and confidentiality of students' personally identifiable information. It defines what information is protected, establishes when parent or eligible student consent is required for disclosure, and identifies circumstances when information may legally be shared without prior consent.

What is your experience with this policy:

Student information privacy policies are fundamental to maintaining trust between schools, students, and families. This policy provides important safeguards by establishing consent as the general expectation while identifying specific circumstances in which disclosure is legally permitted. Its equity impact will depend on consistent implementation and ensuring all families can meaningfully understand and exercise their privacy rights.

What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families? What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Is this policy:

Easy to locate for staff?

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Accessible to students and families?

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Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy will be communicated to staff at their meetings and to the Board at its next Regular Session meeting as well as be available in the handbook. The policy will also be posted on the district website for easy access.

Clear and easy to understand?

Overall, yes. The policy clearly defines personally identifiable information and distinguishes between disclosures requiring consent and legally permitted exceptions.

Because the exceptions are numerous and involve technical legal requirements, families and staff may benefit from plain-language guidance explaining when and why student information can be released.

People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

The policy positively affects students and families by protecting sensitive information and giving parents and eligible students control over most disclosures. It also permits necessary information-sharing for educational services, health and safety, enrollment, child welfare, and other legally authorized purposes.

Potential barriers include difficulty understanding privacy rights, consent requirements, and the many exceptions to consent. The policy reduces barriers associated with unauthorized disclosure, misuse of student information, and loss of privacy.

Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

The policy applies to students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Strong privacy protections may be particularly important for students and families who have experienced discrimination, institutional mistrust, or concerns about how personal information may be used.

The policy also specifically permits appropriate information-sharing with tribal organizations responsible for the care and protection of a student, supporting educational continuity for students served by those organizations.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

The policy does not indicate whether students, families, or particular communities were directly involved in its development. It primarily reflects state and federal student privacy requirements, including FERPA and IDEA.

Future review could include student and family feedback about whether privacy notices and consent processes are understandable and accessible.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

The policy communicates strong commitments to student privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, educational access, and legal compliance. It recognizes parents and eligible students as having important rights regarding access to and disclosure of student information.

At the same time, it recognizes circumstances where appropriate information-sharing is necessary to support education, safety, and student welfare.

Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

The policy creates an environment that values privacy, trust, transparency, and responsible stewardship of student information.

Barriers to equitable outcomes may include language differences, digital literacy, unfamiliarity with FERPA and other privacy laws, or difficulty understanding consent forms. Families may also have different levels of comfort or trust regarding institutional collection and sharing of personal information.

Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

The policy provides meaningful decision-making authority to parents and eligible students by generally requiring signed and dated consent before personally identifiable information is released. It also requires disclosure requests to identify what information will be released, why it will be released, and to whom.

This helps families make informed decisions about their information. Power-sharing can be strengthened by ensuring consent forms and privacy information are provided in accessible, understandable, and culturally responsive formats.

Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?

The policy has the potential to improve equity by establishing consistent privacy protections for all students and limiting discretionary disclosure of sensitive information.

Possible unintended consequences include families consenting to disclosures without fully understanding them or, conversely, necessary services being delayed because consent requirements are unclear. Inconsistent staff understanding of the exceptions could also result in either inappropriate disclosure or unnecessary withholding of information.

Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Negative impacts can be reduced through staff training, clear and multilingual privacy notices, plain-language consent forms, consistent procedures for determining when disclosure is permitted, and strong data-security practices.

MESD can also ensure that families know whom to contact with questions about their privacy rights and periodically review disclosure practices for consistency and compliance.