



## **PAA opposes federal and state initiatives that undermine student data privacy**

Parents Across America is very concerned about new threats to the privacy of public school students and their families.

- More and more information about our children and families is being collected and stored.
- Business interests are pushing states and school districts to expand online learning which increases opportunity for student data collection by private companies.
- State tracking of all students using the same Common Core standards and tests raises the specter of a national database of private information about children and families.

### **Changes resulting from U.S. Department of Education initiatives have increased threats to student data privacy**

- As part of its Race to the Top program, the Department of Education under Arne Duncan required states to adopt new learning standards and tests in order to qualify for certain grants. States were allowed to write their own, but time pressure and massive funding from the Gates Foundation pushed most to adopt the **Common Core State Standards** and **CCSS tests** written by one of two test writing groups (known as PARCC and Smarter BAC).
- Federal funding also required states to track all student assessment scores and other information from year to year in a longitudinal database. This information used to stay at the school district level – when a student moved out of the district, these records did not follow him or her. Now states will track all of their students.
- Twice in recent years, the US Department of Education rewrote the regulations for carrying out the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), allowing student data to be shared with third parties - even for-profit companies - without parents' permission.

Growing public opposition to student data sharing programs has led to decisions by several states and districts to reverse course and opt out of programs run by third parties such as inBloom. However, many concerns remain.

### **PAA recommends:**

- Restoring parental authority over student data that was removed by USDE changes to FERPA.
- Enacting state laws that include parental opt out provisions in any statewide data sharing program.
- Strictly regulating in-school use of electronic hardware and software that collect student information.
- Including significant parent representation on any advisory or other committees overseeing student data collection.

For more information on Parents Across America, check out our website at [www.parentsacrossamerica.org](http://www.parentsacrossamerica.org) or email us at [info@parentsacrossamerica.org](mailto:info@parentsacrossamerica.org)