



Parents 4 Teachers

CReATE



Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood



October 10, 2013

Christopher Koch  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 N. 1st Street  
Springfield, IL 6277

Dear Superintendent Koch:

The undersigned groups have learned that the Illinois State Board of Education has contracted with inBloom to pilot a data sharing program (“the Program”) in the Bloomington and Normal school district, and that this project is scheduled to expand to the Chicago Public Schools and other Illinois districts as soon as January 2014. The project is also known as the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE).

We have many concerns about the Program. We oppose the overall concept of sharing student and teacher confidential information with third parties without permission of parents or teachers, especially for commercial purposes. We are also concerned about the possibility of data breaches and potential unintentional misuse or future inappropriate use of the extensive private information about children, families and school employees that will be gathered and stored.

We would appreciate answers to the following questions about the Program:

*General:*

1. What is the purpose of the Program? Please describe any proven benefits to students of the Program.
2. What has been learned during the Program's implementation in the Bloomington and Normal school districts? What problems have been identified? What, if anything, has been done to address any problems that have been identified? What benefits, if any, have been identified?

*Sharing data with third parties:*

3. Is there an option for Illinois to develop or use an already-existing internal data system (such as the CPS IMPACT program) that would provide the functionality of the Program without requiring or allowing third-party data sharing? If not, why not?
4. What is the rationale behind sharing confidential student and teacher data with third parties? Are there any proven benefits of such data sharing? If so, please explain.
5. Can districts choose whether they want their data to be shared with SLC? Is there a requirement that districts that are part of Illinois' Race to the Top grant participate?
6. Exactly what data points will be shared under the Program?
7. When exactly does ISBE plan to begin uploading the data and who will do it, the state or districts?
8. How will the data be shared?
9. How will the data be protected from security breaches?
10. Who will hold financial and legal liability if there are data breaches?

*Accountability to parents:*

11. How were parents in Bloomington and Normal school districts informed about the Program prior to its implementation? How were they involved or informed during the first year of the Program's implementation?
12. When will you make comprehensive information about the Program available to parents in Chicago and around the state so they can contact their school board members to let them know how they feel?
13. What opportunities have parents had so far and what opportunities will they have in the future to share their concerns about the Program?
14. Will parents have the right to decide if their child's data can be included in the Program? To agree to share their child's data with third parties?

*Financial concerns:*

- How much has the Program cost so far?
- What are the long-term cost implications?
- How much money has been spent out of RTTT funds on this program?
- How much will the Program cost districts? Individual schools? Please be specific about costs of staff time, resources, hardware, software, training, recurring fees, etc.

We look forward to receiving a timely response to these questions.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Julie Woestehoff on behalf of the organizations listed below  
pure@pureparents.org

More Than a Score ([www.morethanascorechicago.org](http://www.morethanascorechicago.org))  
Parents United for Responsible Education ([www.pureparents.org](http://www.pureparents.org))

Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education ([ilraiseyourhand.org](http://ilraiseyourhand.org))

Parents 4 Teachers ([www.parents4teachers.net](http://www.parents4teachers.net))

American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois ([www.aclu-il.org](http://www.aclu-il.org))

Chicago Teachers' Union ([www.ctunet.com](http://www.ctunet.com))

Chicagoland Researchers and Advocates for Transformative Education ([www.createchicago.org](http://www.createchicago.org))

Parents Across America ([www.parentsacrossamerica.org](http://www.parentsacrossamerica.org))

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood ( [www.commercialfreechildhood.org](http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org))