

Keeping student information private

10-minute building meeting trainer agenda

Materials needed:

- Keep student information private one-pager
- Sign-in sheet

Welcome (1 minute)

Welcome your members to the meeting and have them sign in via the sign-in sheet. Provide quick snacks if possible.

Introduction (1 minute)

Talk about why it is important to keep student data private.

- State and federal privacy laws protect most student data that educators deal with on a daily basis.
- Sharing information when there is no valid educational reason for doing so may subject you to discipline by the district and to civil liability.

Content (4 minutes)

Highlight the fact that there must be a valid educational reason for sharing identifiable student data with others.

- Most student information is private and should not be released to anyone but students, their parents or staff with a legitimate educational interest.
- Privacy laws cover all forms of data. If you can't release something in written form, you can't release it orally.
- Redacting names does not make releasing or sharing the data permissible. The data itself, rather than just the identity of the student who created it, is private.
- Review your classroom practices to make sure you aren't unnecessarily sharing information about students in class. Don't publicly list the names of top scorers or students who need to turn in work. Do not permit students to grade their peers' work.
- Do not post students' work or photos on your class website unless you have their parents' permission.
- Ask if your district allows you to display photos of students or send home videos of students. This will probably require a permission form, and many districts do have "media release" forms for this purpose.
- If in doubt, when anyone asks you for information, withhold the requested information until you check with your principal to determine whether it can be released.



- If anyone questions you about a student, whether it be the media, law enforcement or a parent of another student, respond simply that the information is private student data and you cannot discuss it (unless your supervisor directs you to share it).

Note: Allow time for questions. If there are too many questions to address in the time provided, move to the next item on the agenda and offer to connect after the meeting.

Connect content with the local (2 minutes)

Share that (your local name) is sharing this information because you want all members to respect the rights of students to privacy. Remind members that students deserve to be treated with dignity and some of that is protecting their privacy.

Additionally, this is an opportunity to highlight the work of the union in two distinct ways:

- **Advocacy:** Just as we work to protect student data, we work as a union to protect information about our own members' privacy at the bargaining table and in representation issues with the district.
- **Professional development:** Our state-level union frequently provides updated professional development about legal rights and responsibilities. We can always learn more about how to navigate public/private boundaries in our increasingly transparent society.

Wrap up (2 minutes)

Leave them with the reminder that colleagues and union representatives can help clarify when something is private data. Emphasize that the union is an existing structure that provides guidance, advocacy and support for its members, and encourage members to come to the union with questions.

Note: After the meeting, the meeting facilitator should send a copy of the list of participants to the local field office.