

Building a Trusted Learning Environment: Understanding the Professional Development Practice



A variety of stakeholders across school systems have access to student data and make decisions every day that could impact student data privacy. Part of creating a holistic organizational privacy program means ensuring that everyone who has access to student data is trained on how to properly protect it, and that parents and other community members are provided with information about school system privacy and security practices.

CoSN recognizes the importance of privacy and security training in any student data privacy program and sets out professional development as one of the 5 core practice areas of the Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) Seal Program. This guide provides a detailed explanation of the TLE Seal Program Professional Development requirements.

WHY THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE MATTERS

Everyone in a school system has a role to play in protecting student data privacy, and everyone must be trained on how to do just

Privacy training is a fundamental requirement of any privacy program. Individuals simply can't be expected to know how they are to behave in order to properly protect student data privacy unless they are provided with the training and guidance.

Reading the laws or school system policies isn't sufficient. For training to be effective, the requirements must be translated into concrete action steps in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the intended audience.

There is a variety of subject matter to address in privacy and security training, including why protecting student data privacy matters, requirements of applicable federal and state student data privacy laws, school system policy requirements, cybersecurity hygiene, and more. Of course, this doesn't all need to be delivered at once, and can sometimes be easier for teams to digest if it's delivered at different times in different formats

In addition to providing training to school system employees, parents should be provided with training resources to help them understand how the school system protects student data privacy. (The CoSN Trusted Learning Environment program also requires that school systems provide privacy guidance to students, as part of the Classroom Practice.)

The CoSN Trusted Learning Environment Seal Program recognizes the significant work in creating a school system program to provide privacy and security training for all employees and parents, and the critical support such training provides in helping to ensure the success of the student data privacy program.

COSN TRUSTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

The TLE program includes 4 specific requirements for school system professional development practices. These are not all-inclusive, but are considered fundamental to any school system student data privacy program, and are required in order to qualify to receive the TLE Seal.

Here are the practice requirements:

1. PRIVACY FOUNDATION

Privacy and security of student data is embedded into training and professional development in all areas of school operations and academics.

Privacy and security training should be provided for all school system processes and practices involving student data. Whether it is a teacher in a classroom accessing student data or engaging with classroom technologies, an athletic coach accessing student grades or health information, an administrator accessing a student transcript, or a communications professional updating the school system website, all stakeholders should be trained on the privacy and security fundamentals that are foundational to their work.

2. TRAINING RESOURCES

The school system provides employees with up-to-date, easily accessible resources and documented processes, including exemplars and templates that facilitate student data privacy and security.

Privacy and security training doesn't need to be expensive to produce. It needs to be accurate, relevant, and meaningful for the intended audience. As part of the training, employees should be provided with resources in the form of documented processes, exemplars, templates, tip sheets, and more, to help guide their privacy and security behaviors and to serve as ongoing reminders of the lessons learned in training.

3. PRIVACY TRAINING FOR PARENTS

Parents are offered awareness training and resources about student data privacy.

School systems have a role to play in helping parents understand the steps being taken to protect student data privacy so that parents may be better informed about how their children's data is protected. Explaining why privacy matters and how the school system manages that responsibility can help to provide meaningful reassurance about a school system's technology program and build trust in the community around the efforts being made to protect student data. In addition, providing privacy guidance to parents can support them in helping to ensure adherence to responsible use policies and improving privacy practices in the home.

4. ANNUAL, COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING

All staff members participate in annual student data privacy training related to applicable federal and/or state laws.

All employees must be provided with annual training addressing requirements of all applicable privacy laws. Training should be required, and should be tailored to explain how the legal privacy requirements apply to staff members, including the behaviors staff members are expected to engage in to properly protect student data and support school system compliance with applicable laws and school system policies.

GETTING STARTED

CoSN makes a variety of resources available to school system leaders to support their ongoing student data privacy education. Take the first step by taking the [Trusted Learning Environment Self-Assessment](#) or downloading information on [how to approach your application](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

From CoSN

School System Privacy Stakeholders:

A snapshot of the many different roles across a school system that have an impact on student data privacy. As you review this, consider: what does each individual need to know to properly protect student data privacy?

Training

The Privacy Technical Assistance Center of the Student Privacy Policy Office at the US Department of Education offers a variety of privacy training resources, available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training>.

COSN TRUSTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

From Our Partners

Center for Democracy & Technology:

[Navigating the New Normal: Ensuring Equitable and Trustworthy EdTech for the Future](#)

Future of Privacy Forum in Partnership with Connect Safely and PTA:

[A Parent's Guide to Student Data Privacy](#)

Data Quality Campaign:

[What is Student Data?](#)

[Who Uses Student Data?](#)

About the CoSN Trusted Learning Environment Seal Program

The Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) Seal Program is the nation's only data privacy seal for school systems, focused on building a culture of trust and transparency. It was developed by CoSN (the Consortium for School Networking), in collaboration with a diverse group of 28 school system leaders nationwide and with support from AASA, The Superintendent's Association, the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), and ASCD. The TLE Program requires school systems to have implemented high standards for student data privacy around five core practice areas: Leadership, Business, Data Security, Professional Development, and Classroom. School systems that meet the TLE Program requirements will earn the TLE Seal, signifying their commitment to student data privacy to their community. TLE Seal recipients commit to high standards and continuous examination and improvement of their privacy practices.

About CoSN

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), the national association of school system technology leaders, believes that technology is an essential component of learning today, and is deeply committed to the use and distribution of technology in school systems. However, all technologies must be properly assessed for design and appropriateness in the modern classroom. Educators and companies alike must recognize and uphold their responsibilities to protect the privacy of student data. Working together, educators and the private sector serve millions of students by providing them with the rich digital learning experiences and access needed to succeed in college, work and life. That partnership is critical to ensuring that students will have the tools necessary for success in the 21st century.