

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

July 3, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Student Information System (05-30-19-01-B)

During Public Comments, Board Members requested the following information:

Question B

Ms. Silvestre requested information regarding the new Student Information System and the use of MCPS data as raised in Ms. Zavian's testimony. [Ms. Zavian did not provide written testimony.]

Response

Ms. Silvestre requested information in response to concerns expressed by Ms. Ellen Zavian during the May 30, 2019, Board meeting. During Public Comments and through Ms. Zavian's written testimony submitted after the meeting, she expressed concerns in two particular areas with respect to unsanctioned mobile device applications (apps): trademark infringement and unlawful access to student information.

To the best of our knowledge, the mobile apps referenced in the letter to the Attorney General are as follows:

- myMCPS Helper (iOS)
- myMCPS Helper (Android)
- Helper for MCPS (iOS)

Each of these apps uses the abbreviation "MCPS" in reference to Montgomery County Public Schools. While the use of this abbreviation suggests they are sanctioned by MCPS, the app overviews include language indicating that they are not affiliated with the district. Technical assessments of the apps indicate they use web browser portals to load a web page and surface data based on a user's level of permissions. The apps act as a conduit to the information and do not grant students or parents/guardians access to information they would not otherwise be able to access through MCPS-sanctioned systems such as the *myMCPS* Parent and Student portal. We have no reason to believe that these apps are nefarious in nature, and the developers

have been working with us when questions or concerns arise. We will communicate the concerns raised about compliance with the *Children's Online Privacy and Protect Act* to the developers to remind them of their obligations as a service provider under the law. The current parent/guardian and student portal is hosted by PowerSchool and with the implementation of the new student information system, Edupoint's Synergy, in the 2020–2021 school year, these apps will become defunct. Demonstrations of the apps can be provided to members of the Board of Education as needed to reaffirm the integrity and security of student and parent/guardian information. In light of the foregoing information, we do not see a need to issue a cease and desist letter at this point, especially given the commitment of these application developers who are both current and former students of MCPS, to work with us going forward.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, chief operating officer, at 240-740-3050 or Mr. Peter Cevenini, chief technology officer, at 240-740-2903.

JRS:AMZ:PC:sjk

Copy to:

- Dr. Navarro
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- Mr. Civin
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- Ms. Diamond
- Mr. Turner
- Mr. Cevenini
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