



*Using Data
to Improve
Student
Achievement*

July 14, 2015

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators Blumenthal and Daines,

As an organization committed to empowering everyone with a stake in education with the data they need to make good decisions for students, we strongly support your Safeguarding American Families from Exposure by Keeping Information and Data Secure Act (the SAFE KIDS Act). In proposing robust data protection and governance measures while allowing for the effective and innovative use of education data and technology in service of learning, this bill affirms that we do not need to choose between safeguarding student privacy and harnessing the incredible power of data to support students.

In recent years education technology has made it possible to use data in incredible new ways, from empowering students and families to understand and take control of their own learning, to helping educators personalize instruction, to allowing states to engage students in rural areas, and more. The SAFE KIDS Act recognizes the valuable role of data and technology in education and proposes new protections that ensure data, including data collected through the use of online apps and websites, are used appropriately to benefit students.

In order to truly harness the value of data, parents, educators, and the public must be able to trust that these data are protected and are being used only for educational purposes. While laws are necessary, it is not possible to legislate trust; building the trust of families that students' data will be kept safe requires focus on developing the policies, practices, and norms required for everyone with a stake in education to understand their role in keeping student data safe and secure.

We want to express our appreciation and strong support for your efforts to protect our students' privacy and to champion the effective use of education data to support students and families. When students, parents, educators, and policymakers have the right information to make decisions, students achieve their best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paige Kowalski'.

Paige Kowalski
Vice President, Policy and Advocacy
Data Quality Campaign