

Minutes for March 8, 2013

SGC Meeting

Present: Nick Yaffe, Kerry Crosby, Sarah Marshall, Laura Quilter

1. **Corrections to February Minutes**--attendees to send corrections and approve over email.
2. **Children's privacy and the role of the school:** Laura shared current "best practices" regarding children's privacy and parents sharing information about children on social networking websites. This discussion followed up on an issue raised at a previous meeting regarding parents posting information about their children's classmates on Facebook. Laura summarized current recommendations:
 - *Recommendation 1:* Given the diversity of family practices and needs, it is recommended to check with other family members before sharing any information about their children. Never assume another family would be comfortable with the same level of sharing information that your family would be.
 - *Recommendation 2:* Given the inherent "leakiness" of electronic information, parents should understand and be comfortable with the level of online sharing that is possible when information about their children is sent via email or posted in secured or private online spaces.

A more comprehensive DRAFT document is attached.

3. **Morning Walk around the School.** We discussed briefly the brain research supporting the idea of the Walk Around the School. We discussed supervision during the walk--volunteers will be stationed at several routes along the way. Students are to enter through the school and start walk from the back of the school. There will be a place for students to drop off instruments. We discussed how younger students with heavy backpacks might need to leave their backpacks in a specified place.
4. **First-Come, First-Serve Clubs:** Kerry brought up a concern about clubs being first-come, first-serve because of the lack of uniformity with which parents receive communications home. A suggestion was made to make the selection process fairer through a lottery system with a deadline vs. first-come, first-serve. We also discussed how some clubs are offered to after-school students first in order to provide enrichment for the kids enrolled in this program. We discussed equity issues in terms of offering some clubs only to children who stay after school. We also discussed how an afterschool club becomes a school-sponsored club vs. an LSSE club and some of the issues surrounding this, like after school space. The school is continuing to look at this. A suggestion was made that Michael White might be able to provide a quick "how-to" guide for starting school sponsored clubs. We also talked about equity in terms of transportation, etc.

Next meeting dates were decided as April 5, May 3 and June 7.

Social Networking and Information About Children : Guidelines for School Community Members

DRAFT 2013/01/10

Background and Context:

Communicating and sharing information is a key way that humans build community and relationships. It can also be a source of harm or negative feedback or risk, as in traditional harms such as defamation or threats, and modern versions of those same harms, such as online bullying or cyberstalking. In addition to one person hurting another "with words", people can expose themselves to harm without realizing it -- sharing financial or location information can pose identity theft or other risks, and even simply sharing personal information may be embarrassing in different contexts or times.

Federal and Massachusetts law regulate student privacy in a couple of significant ways. Both federal and Massachusetts law regulate school officials' disclosure of student information, and federal law regulates online sites that collect children's information. Beyond those sets of statutes, the basic right to share information and communicate is protected by the First Amendment. So sharing information -- even about kids -- on social networking sites like Facebook raises very few strictly "legal" issues.

However, while it may not pose many legal issues, parents sharing information about kids raise ethical or community issues.

Some best practices have been evolving. These best practices seek to help educate families about how information is shared, and the possible implications of sharing information.

First : Respect Other Families' Standards

These include, first and foremost, a recognition and respect for the different standards that individual families may have. Some families do not share information online about their children; other families may share only limited sorts of information, or limit access to the information in only private and secure forums; other families share information openly but pseudonymously; and still other families impose few or no restrictions on the information.

Any information about another family's child might be considered sensitive: medical, educational, and financial information, obviously, but also religious, familial, even locational information. In short, any personally identifiable information might be significant to a particular individual or their family, even if it would not be significant to another individual or family.

Recommendation: Given the diversity of family practices and needs, it is recommended to check with other family members before sharing any information about their children. Never assume another family would be comfortable with the same level of sharing information that your family would be.

Second : Understand the "Leakiness" of Electronic Information

Second, it is important to recognize that information is inherently "leaky". While this applies to information in print, it is especially true for electronic information. Emails -- even with warnings or requests to keep secure -- are notoriously easy to share accidentally, and the transmission medium itself is fundamentally not secure. For this reason computer security experts advise never sending personally identifiable information, such as social security or credit card numbers, in email.

Similarly, websites and social networking sites, although they often offer privacy settings, are subject to numerous vulnerabilities. First and foremost, the users themselves may not understand the privacy settings, or may mistakenly alter them. Second, people who have access to information may share it themselves, and *they* may not understand their privacy settings, or the intentions of the original user. Third, the sites may alter privacy settings, even unintentionally, or be vulnerable to security attacks or accidents. It is important that parents realize that American law provides very little legal recourse against a social networking site that discloses or exposes private information to third parties.

Recommendation: Given the inherent "leakiness" of electronic information, parents should understand and be comfortable with the level of online sharing that is possible when information about their children is sent via email or posted in secured or private online spaces.

Quick Guidelines

- * Don't talk online about other people's kids by name or in other identifiable ways unless you have direct permission from their parents to do so.
- * Don't assume email or secured websites or "private" postings on Facebook will stay secure or private.
- * Understand that federal and state law protect students from disclosures by schools, not from disclosures by other families.
- * Understand that correspondence between a school and a family about a student creates a student record that is subject to state and federal law on educational records.

Further Reading

Edutopia / How to Create Social Media Guidelines for Your School, available at https://fbcdn-dragon-a.akamaihd.net/cfs-ak-snc6/84979/105/266778453422817-/edutopia_social_media_guidelines.pdf

Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Massachusetts 603 CMR 23.00, Massachusetts Education Laws and Regulations on Student Records, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr23.html>

Children's Law Center of Massachusetts, "Student Records in Massachusetts", available at <http://www.clcm.org/edrecords.html>