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Education NEW YORK

“Opt-Out” Bracelets Raise Awareness of Threats to Student Privacy

National Campaign Urges Parents to Learn How to Protect their Children’s School Records

New York, N.Y. -- A national campaign to inform parents of their rights under federal law to protect the privacy of their children’s school records is now offering free bracelets to raise awareness of the issue nationwide. The rubber bracelets emblazoned with the words “Opt Out” and “Protect Kids” are available from Education New York’s National Opt-out Campaign, which alerts parents to their rights under the federal Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) to restrict third-party access to their children’s information and encourages them to review their school’s annual FERPA notification at the beginning of the school year.

FERPA was enacted in 1974 to protect the privacy of education records and directory information, which includes name, address, phone number, date of birth, and e-mail address, among other personally identifiable information. But under FERPA, directory information may be disclosed without consent. When parents do not “opt-out” of disclosure of directory information their children’s personal and identifiable information may be exposed to privacy breaches.

Schools are a rich source of personal information about children that can be legally and illegally accessed by third parties. With incidences of identity theft, database hacking, and sale of personal information rampant, parents more than ever need to know about their rights under FERPA and the gaps in the law that may compromise their children’s privacy. The Federal Trade Commission also alerts parents to the risk of children’s identity theft and urges them to safeguard their children’s school records and directory information.

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt056.shtm>

For a free Opt-Out/Protect Kids bracelet and to learn more about protecting students’ privacy, visit <http://www.educationnewyork.com/optoutnow>. View the video “It’s 3PM: Do You Know Who’s Watching Your Children?” <http://tinyurl.com/Opt-out-video>

Education New York is an independent source of education data management and information policy news. Education New York was founded in 1995 by Sheila Kaplan, an education and information policy expert and researcher. For more information, visit <http://www.educationnewyork.com/> or e-mail Sheila@EducationNewYork.com.