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Student Data's Future

To the Editor:

New platforms for collecting, storing and displaying data about students can help educators make instructional decisions (“[Deciding Who Sees Students' Data](#),” Oct. 5). But first we must have safeguards to protect students' privacy and teacher-student interactions. Educators can lead the way by fostering discussion on these questions:

- How secure is confidentiality when students' names are coded to protect their identities?
- Who owns and controls access to student data?
- How do students and parents consent to the data collected about students? Are they informed about all the various possible uses for that data, and about security procedures?
- More data can help educators improve learning, but at what cost to the personal aspect of interaction with students? Will the premium placed on what's measurable depreciate teachers' perception and judgment? Will recorded early missteps limit students' ability to get a fresh start as they move on?

SUSAN H. FUHRMAN

Manhattan, Oct. 7

The writer is the president of the National Academy of Education and of Teachers College, Columbia University.

To the Editor:

I agree with the suggestion of the Nassau County school superintendent, Thomas L. Rogers, that New York State form an oversight board to manage practices of its outside data collection. More generally, individual states nationwide must exert more oversight over the collection, use and storage of students' information.

This role would best be served by a state education chief privacy officer who would be appointed by

a state's governor and be the primary gatekeeper and expert on student privacy and security matters.

This C.P.O. would advise students and parents on how they can protect their personally identifiable information; make recommendations on privacy and security to the governor, state legislatures and agencies, and schools; and oversee and audit the privacy and security activities of organizations using student data.

Students deserve a strong advocate for their privacy rights amid data-driven education reform initiatives. State C.P.O.'s would be a major step toward protecting the rights of students and preventing data leaks and breaches that may jeopardize their futures and safety.

SHEILA KAPLAN

Brooklyn, Oct. 7



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