

## IS YOUR CHILD TAKING THE PSAT/SAT/ACT/AP EXAM?

**IMPORTANT WARNING** about the privacy of their personally identifiable information & **WHAT TO DO** to safeguard their data from being sold for profit

Many families don't realize that both ACT and College Board (PSAT, SAT, AP) sell personal student data so that colleges and universities, as well as other non-profit and for-profit organizations, can recruit students and/or market their products and services. The data sold may include the student's race, ethnicity, self-reported grades, religious interests/activities, and/or test scores (within a certain range), as well as other confidential information. ACT has also been sued for sharing information on student special needs status.

### THE GOOD NEWS:

There are relatively simple steps to prevent the capture and sale of this data.

for **PSAT, SAT, or AP** tell your test taker:

- **Do not fill out any optional questions** online or in the **Student Questionnaire** given before the administration of the exam. Generally, the only information necessary is *name, date of birth, gender, address, & sometimes student ID.*
- Do not check the box **to opt into the "Student Search"** program

for **ACT** tell your test taker:

- **Do not fill out any of the questions** in the ACT Student Profile section.
- **Do not opt into** the Educational Opportunity Service (EOS).

### BACKGROUND/WHY THIS MATTERS:

- The College Board makes approximately \$100 million per year from its "Student Search" program, for which it charges organizations 47¢ per student name.
- Last year, ACT was sued via a class action lawsuit because they allegedly included student disability information in the data they sold to customers.
- Answering lengthy survey questions prior to the exam takes considerable time and can add stress to an already pressure-filled situation.
- Students who opt into College Search or EOS, but who later decide not to submit scores to test-optional colleges, may have already enabled the testing company to have shared the *range* in which their scores fell.
- Students and families can become so overwhelmed by wasteful solicitations and brochures that it is difficult to identify the materials they requested from colleges that they are actually interested in applying to.
- The *NY Times* reported that student data sold in this way can end up in the hands of unscrupulous for-profit companies that use the information to market dubious products and services to families, and/or be acquired by data brokers.
- The disclosure of student data by school or district vendors without parent consent may be illegal according to federal law; in New York as well as 22 other states, they are prohibited from selling student data *under any circumstances.*

*Sources for the information above can be found at (URL)*