

**NEW**

**Letter to Employees Regarding Protecting the Privacy of Social Security Numbers**

*On District Letterhead*

Date

Re: Protecting the Privacy of Social Security Numbers (SSNs)

The Illinois Identity Protection Act, 5 ILCS 179/, contains requirements applicable to school districts and their employees. This letter's purpose is to help you understand the protections and requirements of this law.

In implementing this law and the Board's policy, I am seeking to:

1. Increase the awareness of the confidential nature of the SSN and the risk of identity theft related to unauthorized disclosure;
2. Have every employee understand that he or she is prohibited from collecting, displaying, or using another individual's SSN unless authorized by a member of the District administrative staff; and
3. Ensure the use of consistent protocol regarding SSNs throughout the District.

I have copied below sections of the Identity Protection Act that must be followed by every school employee. I have also attached the School Board's policy 4:15, *Identity Protection*. Please carefully read these documents. You will be contacted if you are scheduled to receive training on the protocol for collecting, using, maintaining, and disclosing SSNs.

An employee who has substantially breached the confidentiality of social security numbers may be subject to disciplinary action or sanctions up to and including dismissal, in accordance with District policy and procedures.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

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**Attachment #1: Relevant Sections from the Identity Protection Act, 5 ILCS 179/**

**Section 10. Prohibited Activities.**

- (a) Beginning July 1, 2010, no person or State or local government agency may do any of the following:
  - (1) Publicly post or publicly display in any manner an individual's social security number.
  - (2) Print an individual's social security number on any card required for the individual to access products or services provided by the person or entity.
  - (3) Require an individual to transmit his or her social security number over the Internet, unless the connection is secure or the social security number is encrypted.
  - (4) Print an individual's social security number on any materials that are mailed to the individual, through the U.S. Postal Service, any private mail service, electronic mail, or any similar method of delivery, unless State or federal law requires the social security number to be on the document to be mailed. Notwithstanding any provision in this Section to the contrary, social security numbers may be included in applications and forms sent by mail,

## NEW

including, but not limited to, any material mailed in connection with the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act, any material mailed in connection with any tax administered by the Department of Revenue, and documents sent as part of an application or enrollment process or to establish, amend, or terminate an account, contract, or policy or to confirm the accuracy of the social security number. A social security number that may permissibly be mailed under this Section may not be printed, in whole or in part, on a postcard or other mailer that does not require an envelope or be visible on an envelope without the envelope having been opened.

- (b) Except as otherwise provided in this Act, beginning July 1, 2010, no person or State or local government agency may do any of the following:
- (1) Collect, use, or disclose a social security number from an individual, unless (i) required to do so under State or federal law, rules, or regulations, or the collection, use, or disclosure of the social security number is otherwise necessary for the performance of that agency's duties and responsibilities; (ii) the need and purpose for the social security number is documented before collection of the social security number; and (iii) the social security number collected is relevant to the documented need and purpose.
  - (2) Require an individual to use his or her social security number to access an Internet website.
  - (3) Use the social security number for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was collected.
- (c) The prohibitions in subsection (b) do not apply in the following circumstances:
- (1) The disclosure of social security numbers to agents, employees, contractors, or subcontractors of a governmental entity or disclosure by a governmental entity to another governmental entity or its agents, employees, contractors, or subcontractors if disclosure is necessary in order for the entity to perform its duties and responsibilities; and, if disclosing to a contractor or subcontractor, prior to such disclosure, the governmental entity must first receive from the contractor or subcontractor a copy of the contractor's or subcontractor's policy that sets forth how the requirements imposed under this Act on a governmental entity to protect an individual's social security number will be achieved.
  - (2) The disclosure of social security numbers pursuant to a court order, warrant, or subpoena.
  - (3) The collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers in order to ensure the safety of: State and local government employees; persons committed to correctional facilities, local jails, and other law-enforcement facilities or retention centers; wards of the State; and all persons working in or visiting a State or local government agency facility.
  - (4) The collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers for internal verification or administrative purposes.
  - (5) The disclosure of social security numbers by a State agency to any entity for the collection of delinquent child support or of any State debt or to a governmental agency to assist with an investigation or the prevention of fraud.
  - (6) The collection or use of social security numbers to investigate or prevent fraud, to conduct background checks, to collect a debt, to obtain a credit report from a consumer reporting agency under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, to undertake any permissible purpose that is enumerated under the federal Gramm Leach Bliley Act, or to locate a missing person, a lost relative, or a person who is due a benefit, such as a pension benefit or an unclaimed property benefit.

## NEW

- (d) If any State or local government agency has adopted standards for the collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers that are stricter than the standards under this Act with respect to the protection of those social security numbers, then, in the event of any conflict with the provisions of this Act, the stricter standards adopted by the State or local government agency shall control.

### **Section 15. Public inspection and copying of documents.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act to the contrary, a person or State or local government agency must comply with the provisions of any other State law with respect to allowing the public inspection and copying of information or documents containing all or any portion of an individual's social security number. A person or State or local government agency must redact social security numbers from the information or documents before allowing the public inspection or copying of the information or documents.

### **Section 20. Applicability.**

- (a) This Act does not apply to the collection, use, or disclosure of a social security number as required by State or federal law, rule, or regulation.
- (b) This Act does not apply to documents that are recorded with a county recorder or required to be open to the public under any State or federal law, rule, or regulation, applicable case law, Supreme Court Rule, or the Constitution of the State of Illinois. Notwithstanding this Section, county recorders must comply with Section 35 of this Act.

### **Section 25. Compliance with federal law.**

If a federal law takes effect requiring any federal agency to establish a national unique patient health identifier program, any State or local government agency that complies with the federal law shall be deemed to be in compliance with this Act.

### **Section 30. Embedded social security numbers.**

Beginning December 31, 2009, no person or State or local government agency may encode or embed a social security number in or on a card or document, including, but not limited to, using a bar code, chip, magnetic strip, RFID technology, or other technology, in place of removing the social security number as required by this Act.

### **Section 45. Violation.**

Any person who intentionally violates the prohibitions in Section 10 of this Act is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

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