




**Memorandum of Record**

**Date:** April 27, 2017

**To:** Santa Fe Public Schools Community

**From:** Dr. Tom Ryan   
Chief Information and Strategy Officer

**RE:** Schoolzilla Data Breach

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I am writing to inform you of a data breach which occurred in Schoolzilla, a company used by the District. We have determined that there is no cause for alarm -- no one with malicious intent accessed educational data. The District takes data security very seriously and believes it is important to keep you informed.

A data breach is the intentional or unintentional release of secure or private/confidential information. The breach occurred when a self-identified data security researcher tested Schoolzilla's data security measures in place. As soon as the researcher was able to access the backup folder containing educational data, he contacted Schoolzilla so they could quickly repair the security problem. The researcher signed a legal document guaranteeing that no other person saw or had access to the data and that any downloads of the data were immediately destroyed.

The accessed data included student names, birthdates and demographic information, test scores, participation in English Language Learning, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Special Education accommodations. The data also included staff names and email addresses.

Schoolzilla's immediate, thorough security response was praised by the data security researcher, who stated on his blog (<https://mackeepersecurity.com/post/schoolhouse-data-breach>):

*Schoolzilla was quick to respond when I submitted a data breach notification ticket. They secured the data and opened dialogue with me to learn the full extent of the issue. I applaud their incident response. This was the first situation of its kind for them and they reacted professionally. It must have been grueling for the CEO to phone each client and relay the unpleasant news, but they did it within only a few days of my report.*

*Additionally, Schoolzilla understood the problem and took responsibility. They did not try to shoot the messenger or claim that I had somehow "hacked" them. That's worth an extra-large gold star on the board for them.*

District staff spoke extensively with the CEO of Schoolzilla to understand what happened and what heightened security measures were enacted to ensure the safety of your data now and in the future. To our knowledge, Schoolzilla has instituted and will continue to implement the most rigorous security practices available (see <https://schoolzilla.com/commitment-information-security/>).

While we have no reason to believe that anyone with malicious intent accessed the data, we are very sorry that this breach occurred. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jeff Gephart at [jgephart@sfps.k12.nm.us](mailto:jgephart@sfps.k12.nm.us) or (505) 470-6197.