



AMTC

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News

Caring involves protecting the individuals we serve. Safeguarding the data and information of our clients is essential.

— ANGELA TURNER

AMTC News

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Caring Means Protecting

At AMTC, we care deeply for our clients and the individuals they serve. Among many things, caring involves protecting those we serve. Safeguarding the data and information of our clients is essential.

AMTC & Associates recently delivered a webinar on protections under the guidelines of two federal acts, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and the Children's Online Personal Protection Act (COPPA), which is the topic of our first article.

In addition to understanding these laws, other goals of the webinar included identifying ways schools should notify parents, recognizing the importance of state and school district policies, and differentiating types of consent.

The second article focuses on how **Peacemakers Family Center** of Miami-Dade County, Florida, balances protecting youth and curricular transparency for parents. For example, parents are notified before programs are implemented to ensure they are on board every step of the way and can view the curricula at any time. A parent may also withdraw consent to

participate. At the same time, strict measures are taken to protect student information, such as locking hard copies of assessments in restricted areas, with access to select personnel only.

Cindy Walker is one AMTC team member who helps ensure AMTC and our clients stay current on youth protection. A research methodologist with extensive real-world experience, she is featured on page four. Please find more information about PPRA and COPPA throughout this newsletter.

Wishing you good health in the new year and beyond,

Angela Turner
Principal





PROTECTING OUR YOUTH'S PRIVACY

It's no secret that data is being mined about all of us, bringing privacy issues into the spotlight. Still, in our work at AMTC & Associates and our clients' operations, measures are taken to ensure that we uphold the protection of program participants. It's not only our ethic—it's the law. Recently, AMTC held a webinar for its clients who work with youth on adhering to, and the importance of, the federally mandated Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and the Children's Online Personal Protection Act (COPPA).

PPRA requires schools and partner agencies to notify parents of minors when a government-funded survey, study, or evaluation will be administered to their child. The law further restricts specific analyses of student data. Parents have the right to view surveys beforehand and/or can exempt their children. PPRA applies to several asking points: political affiliations; potentially embarrassing psychological problems; self-incriminating and illegal behavior; privileged relationship protections, such as between patient and physician; religious beliefs; and income.

These considerations are relevant to AMTC and our clients because they work with youth and administer surveys/assessments. The COPPA is

likewise applicable. Some clients of AMTC host online services, for example, delivering asynchronous online curricula modules that include individual profiles of youth and may also host online student data. Further emphasizing its applicability to clients, Brandon Osborn, AMTC Research Associate and Internship Program Director, said, "The more we can share about PPRA and COPPA, the more prepared staff can be to make sure they are compliant in their local communities."



Brandon Osborn, AMTC Research Associate and Internship Program Director

Compliance is not one-size-fits-all. Every jurisdiction (i.e., community, school board, university, etc.) has its own set of protocols and standards that must be followed. Ethical considerations are established by what's known as an Institutional Review Board (IRB). While each IRB has its regulations, the bottom line is that each IRB is tasked with protecting human subjects.

After all, the very purpose of assessing youth is to help them grow and for AMTC and our clients to learn how to serve youth better. Protecting youth is essential to this mission.

PPRA

PROTECTED Topic Areas

The following require notification to parents and parental consent when collecting data:

- Political affiliations
- Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to students and their families
- Sex behavior and attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such a program)

Source: AMTC webinar, "The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)," November 12, 2021.

TRANSPARENCY & PROTECTION:

Peacemakers Strikes a Perfect Balance

Recent news coverage centers on parents wanting more transparency about school curricula. AMTC & Associates and its clients believe that parental involvement fosters student success. AMTC clients provide health curricula that elicits sensitive information, so protections must be in place to protect students' names and other confidential data, such as private information that youth provide on surveys. Transparency and protection are not mutually exclusive.

Peacemakers Family Center is an AMTC client that strikes a balance between parental access to curricula and protecting the confidentiality of the students it serves. Based out of Trinity Church in Miami-Dade County,

“Our highest goal is always to protect the students in the schools we are serving... We shift to make sure whatever they’re sharing, they feel safe.”

– CRYSTAL AGNEW



Crystal Agnew of Peacemakers Family Center

Florida, Peacemakers delivers within schools evidence-based curricula focused on healthy relationships, teen pregnancy prevention, and positive youth development, to name only a few of their many services.

“Our highest goal is always to protect the students in the schools we are serving,” said Crystal Agnew of Peacemakers. These efforts include training staff in steadfast protocol to protect youth and to emphasize the importance of protections. Answers to surveys and assessments are strictly guarded; only select AMTC evaluation staff have access to de-identified data. At the same time, Peacemakers is completely transparent with its programming. Parents may view the entire curricula at any time, and in the coming months, curricula will be posted on the school district website.

Protections and parent access are mainstays of youth programming, but shifts in procedures might reflect the times, such as with COVID-19. Students receive protections at home, such as not completing certain forms that they would have otherwise completed in-person (in case they are in an unsafe environment). “We shift to make sure whatever they’re sharing, they feel safe,” emphasized Agnew.

PPRA

WHEN Does It Apply?

PPRA applies to public school programs and DOE-funded programs.

- Programs and activities of schools
- Recipient of funds under any program funded by the U.S. Department of Education
- Any research funded by the U.S. Department of Education
- Research/Evaluation/Surveys in public schools receiving USDOE funding

Source: AMTC webinar, “The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA),” November 12, 2021.



Meet our *Associates*

Our diverse team delivers fast, relevant results for our clients. Here is one individual who contributes to those efforts.



CINDY WALKER
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
RESEARCH ANALYTICS
CONSULTING, LLC

EDUCATION:
MS, BS in Mathematics; PhD
in Educational Psychology,
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign

“I love this work because it makes a difference in the lives of youth and young adults... AMTC and their clients have figured out how to do it exceptionally well.”

– CINDY WALKER

Name some recent work with AMTC.

I oversee all AMTC evaluation projects in some capacity. However, lately, I have been spending a lot of time on the Personal Responsibility Education Innovative Strategies Program (PREIS), a research grant that **Peacemakers Family Center** received to study its healthy relationship and pregnancy prevention program. We have been finalizing our processes to get Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval [see page two]. I have also been working to ensure all AMTC clients with new grants in 2022 receive IRB approval. Another large part of my work is for our Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education clients. I have been working to ensure we have valid and reliable measures for evaluation purposes.

How does this work impact AMTC and its clients?

It helps to ensure all of our evaluation work is as rigorous as possible, feasible, and adheres to federal regulations, such as the protection of human subjects.

How does your work impact your sense of fulfillment?

I love this work because it makes a difference in the lives of youth and young adults receiving programming from AMTC clients. It's a community-engaged scholarship. It's everything they talk about doing at the university level but don't do well. AMTC and their clients have figured out how to do it exceptionally well, so I am constantly learning.

What takeaways do you have about PPRA and COPPA?

The purpose of the IRB is to make sure that the evaluation and research protects human subjects. The PPRA and COPPA must be adhered to, or we wouldn't get IRB approval.

What's new personally?

We have a new camper to explore my new state of Florida.

PPRA

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn more about PPRA and how it might impact your organization, be sure to explore these resources.

- **USDOE, What is PPRA FAQ:**
<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra>
- **USDOE, Regulation Language:**
https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/content/ppra#se34.1.98_14
- **USDOE, History of PPRA:**
https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/privacy/section_2c.asp
- **Language on Students Rights in Research, Experimental Programs, and Testing:** <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-98>
- **Student Privacy PPRA FAQ:**
<https://studentprivacycompass.org/faqs-ppra/>