

## Lower Merion School District Announcements

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### Letter from Dr. McGinley to parents/guardians regarding laptop security

Dear LMSD Parents/Guardians,

Our history has been to go to great lengths to protect the privacy of our students, whether it comes to student health, academic or other records. In fact, many of you may remember the heated debate over whether to have security cameras monitor some of our food vending machines. Privacy is a basic right in our society and a matter we take very seriously. We believe that a good job can always be done better.

Recent publicity regarding the District's one-to-one high school laptop initiative, and questions about the security of student laptops prompted our administration to revisit security procedures.

Laptops are a frequent target for theft in schools and off school property. District laptops do contain a security feature intended to track lost, stolen and missing laptops. The security feature, which was disabled today, was installed to help locate a laptop in the event it was reported lost, missing or stolen so that the laptop could be returned to the student.

Upon a report of a suspected lost, stolen or missing laptop, the feature would be activated by the District's security and technology departments. The security feature's capabilities were limited to taking a still image of the operator and the operator's screen. This feature was only used for the narrow purpose of locating a lost, stolen or missing laptop. The District never activated the security feature for any other purpose or in any other manner whatsoever.

As a result of our preliminary review of security procedures today, I directed the following actions:

- Immediate disabling of the security-tracking program.
- A thorough review of the existing policies for student laptop use.
- A review of security procedures to help safeguard the protection of privacy, including a review of the instances in which the security software was activated. We want to ensure that any affected students and families are made aware of the outcome of laptop recovery investigations.
- A review of any other technology areas in which the intersection of privacy and security may come into play.

We are proud of the fact that we are a leader in providing laptops to every high school student as part of our instructional program. But we need to be equally as proud of the safeguards we have in place to protect the privacy of the users, as well as to safeguard district-owned property while being used by students.

We regret if this situation has caused any concern or inconvenience among our students and families. If you have any questions or concerns, please email us at [info@lmsd.org](mailto:info@lmsd.org). Additional information has been posted on our website, [www.lmsd.org](http://www.lmsd.org).

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher W. McGinley  
Superintendent of Schools  
Lower Merion School District

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