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Glenda Sheffield, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools



Marsha Robinson, Board Chair
Hannah Priester, Secretary
Kari Foy, Parliamentarian
Debra Holmes, Member
Doug Jarrell, Member
Richard Long, Member
Mary Wilson, Member

PowerSchool Security Incident - January 13, 2025

On January 9, 2025, we received notification from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) regarding a cybersecurity incident involving PowerSchool, our student information system provider. Hampton County School District administration are actively investigating the potential impact of this breach on our district.

Key Points for You to Know at this Time:

- SCDE, SLED, and other state and federal agencies are actively investigating this incident.
- The breach occurred through a compromised customer support credential belonging to PowerSchool.
- PowerSchool has taken full responsibility for the breach and has taken efforts to contain and mitigate the incident.
- Students, parents, and staff should have awareness for a potential increase in email, text, and voice scams.

The SCDE has shared the following release, and the district will provide updates as they are available.

SCDE responds to PowerSchool Data Breach

This breach resulted in unauthorized access to data from multiple states and school districts across the country.

WEST COLUMBIA, SC – Late Tuesday, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) was informed by PowerSchool of a cybersecurity breach involving its PowerSource portal. This was an international incident over which the state and local districts had no control.

This breach resulted in unauthorized access to certain customer data from PowerSchool's Student Information Systems (SIS), including data from multiple states and school districts across the country.

During a meeting with PowerSchool's senior leadership, they confirmed that personally identifiable information (PII) was compromised. The SCDE is currently working to understand the full scope of the breach.

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PowerSchool has stated that this breach has been contained and has informed the SCDE that it has taken steps to secure its systems, engage cybersecurity experts, and is also coordinating with law enforcement to address the breach.

The SCDE is actively communicating with PowerSchool, legal counsel, and local districts to assess the full impact on South Carolina schools, students, and educators and to determine next steps. The SCDE is also in direct communication with the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED), the Attorney General's office and has notified the Governor and legislative leaders.

Commenting on the seriousness of this incident, State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver said, "The protection of our South Carolina students' and educators' personal data is non-negotiable. We fully recognize the anxiety this raises for them and their families." She continued, "While PowerSchool has taken accountability for this breach, our Department will take uncompromising action to ensure we uncover the complete extent of this incident. We will insist that PowerSchool not only notify affected individuals but also provide them with credit and identity monitoring services."

The SCDE will continue to engage and support districts and schools throughout this process as more information becomes available.

Should you require additional information or need assistance regarding this matter, please contact Carole McGrath or Akosha Hinkson at 803-943-4576.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Glenda Sheffield'.

Glenda Sheffield, Ed.D.
Superintendent