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Jason B. Atkinson, Ed.D.
Superintendent

January 14, 2025

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff of Bladen County Schools,

We are writing to inform you of a cybersecurity incident involving PowerSchool, the student information system previously used by Bladen County Schools and school districts across North Carolina. Late on Friday, January 10, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) confirmed that our district was affected by a data breach within PowerSchool.

According to PowerSchool, the breach began on December 19, 2024, when the credentials of a PowerSchool contract employee were compromised. Unauthorized access to student and teacher data occurred during this incident. PowerSchool and CyberSteward, a professional advisor with experience in handling cybersecurity threats, have confirmed that the threat has been contained, and the accessed data has been destroyed. PowerSchool is actively working with law enforcement to monitor the dark web for any signs of further data exposure.

We understand that you will have concerns regarding this incident and the security of your personal information. At this time, there is no evidence to suggest that any of the compromised data has been shared.

We want to emphasize that neither Bladen County Schools nor NCDPI could have taken any actions to prevent this breach. The breach occurred within PowerSchool's systems, specifically within a secure maintenance tunnel that we do not have access to.

In the coming days, PowerSchool will complete its analysis and provide us with further details and resources. We are committed to working alongside NCDPI and PowerSchool to ensure that all required notifications are conducted appropriately. We will keep you updated as new information becomes available. All updates and any resource links will be available on our website at www.bladen.k12.nc.us/students-families/powerschool-data-breach-updates.

Protecting the privacy and security of student and staff data is a top priority for Bladen County Schools. We take this matter very seriously and will continue to advocate for the safety and security of our community's information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact William Bell, Director of Digital Learning and CyberSecurity Programs at (910) 862-4136.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support of Bladen County Schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jason Atkinson
Superintendent
Bladen County Schools