

# What is FERPA & How does it impact my project?

Evidence-based research is essential to each state as they make decisions, develop policies, and set priorities of focus for their education system. Collaborative research partnerships enable a state to more efficiently and systematically assess their progress with respect to the priorities and initiatives they have set forth. However, the dissemination of student level data that may include personally identifiable information (PII) is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

In the event that a research project requires individual student level data FERPA exceptions may be made under certain circumstances. In order to access these data researchers must utilize the data for, or on behalf of, an educational agency for the purpose of:

- Studies that either:
  - Develop, validate, or administer predictive tests;
  - Administer student aid programs; or
  - Improve instruction
- Auditing or evaluating for, or on behalf of an educational agency, for the purpose of Federal or State supported program.
  - Enforcing or complying with Federal legal requirements related to those programs.

For further explanation of the exceptions listed above please see the following information provided by the US Department of Education:

- [Privacy Technical Assistance Center \(PTAC\) Exceptions Document](#)
- [Overview of the Protection of Human Subjects in Research](#)