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## **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Summary**

**Public Body or Custodian: Alberta Education**

**Project Title: PROVINCIAL APPROACH TO STUDENT INFORMATION (PASI)**

**Date Submitted: March 18, 2010**

**Date Accepted: June 28, 2010**

**OIPC TRAX File: F5304**

### **Project Summary:**

There have been changes to the educational system in Alberta in recent years that have made the improved coordination of student information across the province increasingly important. One such change is the trend toward student (or guardian) selection of the student's school, as opposed to always attending the school assigned based on residence location. Another is the increasing mobility of the workforce, which results in more student transfers between school authorities. A third is the rapid growth of the Alberta population, which creates issues for the management of student information arising from the sheer increase in the volume of the information. A fourth is the 'opening up' of the education system to an 'anywhere anytime' model, which increases the number of students receiving educational services from multiple school authorities at the same time.

In response to this need, the Alberta Education project known as the *Provincial Approach to Student Information* (PASI) represents a province-wide approach to the management of information about the delivery of educational services to students in early childhood services (ECS) through Grade 12. It will improve the accuracy and availability of student information for local schools and school boards, as well as Alberta Education.

PASI's primary function is to ensure the accuracy and completeness of student information when a student initially registers with a school authority, transfers from one school authority to another, or receives services from more than one authority at the same time. In addition, PASI allows school authorities to report

student registration and related information to Alberta Education more efficiently and accurately than was possible before.

In order to do so, a new repository of student information, hosted by Alberta Education and called the "PASI Core", is required to support the synchronization and validation of student information on a provincial basis. The PASI privacy impact assessment addresses the privacy implications of the new repository and associated information exchange functions.

When information about a student is collected or updated, the local PASI client (which will most often be a school authority's student information system [SIS] or an Alberta Education application) will update the PASI repository. PASI will have a record of which PASI clients are authorized to have access to information about a given student and will update those clients as necessary. In some cases, the updates may be automatic, while in others they will occur in response to queries from.

client applications. In either case, validation routines will attempt to ensure that the student information is accurate and up-to-date.

PASI's legal authority is derived from Alberta Education's mission to support school authorities in the delivery of educational services to students across the province. Legal authority for the provision of such support is vested in the *Government Organization Act*, *School Act*, *Student Record Regulation*, *Private Schools Regulation* and others. Legislation governing the ministry's activities and that of the various types of school authorities provides the department with the authority to assist school authorities in the management of student information. It also addresses, in combination with the necessary provisions of the FOIP Act and *Personal Information Protection Act* (as applicable), the disclosure of student information by school authorities to Alberta Education and the ministry's collection of this information for the purpose related to the planning, funding and administration of the provincial education system.

PASI provides functions that provide for the update and synchronization of student information between the PASI repository at Alberta Education and student information systems (SISs) operated by school authorities. All communication is system-to-system; PASI has no direct user interface, which greatly reduces the risk of unauthorized access to PASI data.

Direct access by individual persons to PASI data is limited. Because PASI does not provide a direct user interface, the only persons with direct access to the PASI data repository will be PASI administrators and technical support personnel. All other users access PASI through PASI client applications, namely the SISs used by school authorities, certain Alberta Education applications, or PASIprep. (PASIprep is a temporary transitional application that is described in a separate addendum to the PASI PIA.)

PASI includes edit functions to verify and improve the quality of personal student information exchanged between school authorities. PASI edit functions are superior to the functions currently used by school authorities and Alberta Education when student information is exchanged.

PASI will provide information to school authorities other than the authority that undertook the original collection only in circumstances that are authorized by the *School Act* and *Student Record Regulation* for the transfer of information in the student record between school authorities.

Alberta Education will have responsibility for controlling access by Alberta Education personnel and applications. Access control for Alberta Education applications is provided by the department's network authentication and authorization protocols, for the most part. Individual applications may further authorize access to specific data, screens or reports. Alberta Education access control protocols are equivalent but not identical to the ones that will be required of PASI client applications.

The PASI Core is hosted within the Alberta Education shared application environment. Infrastructure level security for this environment is provided by a variety of mechanisms that offer multiple redundant levels of protection.