



School Administrative Unit 21

October 28, 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are very excited to partner with **Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR)** in order to promote the positive social-emotional development of our students. There is increasing evidence that helping students feel good about themselves, their school and their relationships improve their learning.

We will administer PEAR's **Holistic Student Assessment (HSA)** to students in Grades K-8. As part of this effort, your child will be asked to complete a brief survey about him or herself.

HSA data will remain confidential and only designated school staff with permission to view your child's private records will be able to access the results. You will receive a copy of your child's **HSA Student Portrait**.

This information will help staff tailor teaching and support to your child's unique strengths and needs. You will receive a copy of your child's HSA Student Portrait.

If you have any questions about this effort or would like to see a copy of this survey, please contact Dr. Mary Toomey or LAS Guidance Counselor, Hannah Cashin.

Please take a moment to review and fill out this form. Please return this form by **November 10, 2022**.

I give permission for my child to complete the Holistic Student Assessment _____

I DO NOT give permission for my child to complete the Holistic Student Assessment _____

Child's Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Relationship to Child _____

Home _____ Cell _____

Work _____



Parent/Guardian Data Security & Privacy FAQ

Can I see a copy of the survey my child is being asked to take?

Yes! PEAR provides copies of our assessments to the schools and programs we work with. Please contact your school/program administrator to view the assessment.

What is PEAR's background in educational research?

PEAR is a Benefit Corporation spin off from McLean Hospital that was founded in 1999 by Dr. Gil G. Noam, a developmental psychologist and Director of McLean's Institute for the Study of Resilience in Youth (ISRY). Our team is comprised of experienced psychiatrists, social workers, instructional specialists, school and classroom teachers, former school and out-of-school time (OST) administrators.

How does PEAR protect the privacy of students?

PEAR is deeply committed to ensuring student data security and privacy in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations and district policies of the schools and programs we work with. PEAR works closely with a team of cybersecurity experts who reviewed our policies and procedures and helped us to adopt a set of policies aligned to [NIST CSF](#). This team monitors our procedures and provides ongoing advice and best practice recommendations for our data team. Every PEAR staff member is trained in our security policies and industry best practices. Additionally, staff who process and analyze student data complete a research ethics training. Only students with parental consent will be given access to the survey by your school/program.

PEAR can also work with your school or program at their request to conduct a no-roster, personally identifiable information (PII)-free survey collection. Only personnel authorized by your school or program will have access to your student's data.

Can you address concerns that my student's data will be sold and used for purposes we have not consented to?

PEAR will never sell or release a student's personally identifiable information (PII) for any commercial purpose, nor does PEAR release any identified data. PII, as defined by Education Law § 2-d and FERPA, includes direct identifiers such as a student's name or identification number, parent's name, or address; and indirect identifiers such as a student's date of birth, which when linked to or combined with other information can be used to distinguish or trace a student's identity.

PEAR's business model is not based on the monetization of student data (nor will it ever be). Our benefit corporation status lets us prioritize our mission over profits. We provide data as a service to schools and programs to better understand the social-emotional needs of their students and to help support program quality and improvement. Our focus is on the coaching, professional development, curricula, and evaluation services work that the data we collect helps inform. Any profits the company makes goes back into PEAR's research and development work.



What is PEAR's policy on sharing data?

We will never share student data with any group that doesn't have explicit authorized permission from the school/program (with parental consent).

What happens if the company is sold?

Any data that would be part of a hypothetical future sale of PEAR would be aggregated and deidentified. PEAR can also arrange with a school or program to delete student data at the end of the collection period, at the end of the contracted work, or at any time period set by the school.

Could any of the questions on the assessment be used in a punitive way or to incriminate my child?

No, PEAR's approach to our work is strengths-based. The survey questions are designed to help educators better understand the needs of the students in the moment. PEAR has a policy of not sharing individual responses to questions with anyone outside of authorized PEAR staff members, so student privacy is strictly maintained. Additionally, the survey administration instructions emphasize to students that they can stop at any time if they no longer want to answer the questions.

What happens if there is a breach? How will you contact parents?

In the case of any data breach, PEAR will directly notify the school or program that was impacted by the breach with information to share with parents.

Institute at McLean Hospital and Harvard Medical School and spun off into a Benefit Corporation in 2020. PEAR creates and fosters evidence-based innovations in social-emotional development (SED) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in educational settings. PEAR provides trainings and assessment tools that inform educators about program quality, youth social-emotional development, and academic engagement. PEAR's work bridges research and practice so that all young people can learn, dream, and thrive.

What is the Holistic Student Assessment (HSA)?

The HSA survey is a data-driven tool to promote social-emotional development in young people in school and afterschool settings. Students are asked to share their attitudes, behaviors, and feelings. Their responses help us identify their “resiliencies” – or the strengths that help them navigate life. What we learn about your child's strengths and resiliencies can help their teachers and staff determine the best ways to engage them in learning.

Why Use the HSA this year?

Dealing with effects of the pandemic have impacted how students show up socially and emotionally at their schools and programs. That is why it is critically important for those working with students this year to get a sense of how they are doing in order to best meet their social-emotional and mental health needs. HSA data can give schools and programs insight into student strengths that they can build from and help them understand the areas where students are struggling during this critical time.

What are you going to do with the information you receive from this survey?

HSA data will remain confidential and only those with permission to view your child's private records will be able to access the results. What your child's school or program learns from the HSA will help us to identify the best programs and teaching strategies for them; to support them in tackling challenges and expressing their strengths; and to pull in additional resources for all students as needed.

Taking the HSA

The HSA takes about 20 minutes for students to complete. It is online and is offered in multiple languages. Students take survey independently and teachers and staff will support your child with the technical aspects and can read survey questions aloud if needed.