Date: Monday, April 13, 2020
BOARD INFORMATION: __x____

MEETING PREPARATION: _____

FROM: Elizabeth Hoover, Ph.D., Chief Technology Officer

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and
                  Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Use of the Zoom Platform in ACPS

ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:
Goal 1: Academic Excellence/Educational Equity
Goal 6: Effective and Efficient Operations

SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:
Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:
Safe Schools for Students and Faculty

SUMMARY

The use of technology in the division, including the selection of tools, is guided by the 2018-2023 ACPS Technology Plan. With the unprecedented and sudden transition from supporting a traditional school day to a "learning from home" environment, ACPS needed to quickly adopt a video/teleconferencing tool to support school and division operations, as well as teacher to student communication and instruction. Zoom for Education was selected for several reasons including

- integration with ACPS' single sign-on application and secure student portal, Clever
- compliance with federal laws and guidelines
- ease of use for a large group of people with varying technical abilities.

BACKGROUND

Zoom is a United States-based company operating out of San Jose, CA. Zoom provides telephonic and video conference solutions that can be utilized on many platforms using stand-alone software, using a browser, or on mobile devices using a mobile application. Zoom offers a variety of licenses, including education licenses.

Zoom Use in ACPS

With the rapid increased reliance on Zoom as a communications and educational platform due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Zoom has become a critical platform for Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). ACPS staff has hosted 4,892 Zoom meetings/webinars since March 16th.

As Zoom has rapidly become the most commonly-used online communications platform and therefore has gained increased scrutiny by the public, the media, and security researchers, there are a number of negative stories related to the privacy and security of the Zoom platform that are being monitored and addressed by ACPS to ensure the safety and security of our staff and students. To date, Technology Services has been made aware of four incidents of inappropriate and uninvited guests. Whereas this is a low number, it has exposed significant risks to be addressed.

Mitigating Known Risks

ACPS understands incorporating any online tools, especially video-teleconferencing tools (VTC) carries risks that need to be mitigated around 1) student and data privacy, 2) security of the application and 3) appropriate use. Given the fact that Zoom incorporates audio and video of staff and students, there are risks that must be managed related to such information being distributed or shared without authorization. ACPS continues to monitor and address these areas as related to Zoom.

1) Student and Data Privacy

ACPS takes its role in protecting the privacy, security, and well-being of all of our staff and students very seriously. As such, privacy and confidentiality of all users of the Zoom platform is of utmost concern. As ACPS is located within the Commonwealth of Virginia, we benchmark our understanding of personal information against Virginia Code § 18.2-186.6. ACPS follows guidance from the Department of Education (DOE) on maintaining student and data privacy. With the emergence of COVID-19, the DOE has issued guidance addressing [FERPA and Virtual Learning Related Resources](#) to assist schools with their compliance in this area.

To protect student and data privacy:

- ACPS only provides Zoom education accounts for staff use
- Zoom accounts are integrated with Clever, our secure student portal
- [Zoom educational licenses are FERPA compliant](#)
- Zoom outlines its K-12 Schools & Districts Privacy Policy [here](#)
- [Employee Use of **Social Media** - **Policy** GAC](#)
- [Student Use of **Social Media** - **Policy** IIBEB](#)

2) Security of an Application

Education licenses provide division administrators the ability to control permissions and privileges for staff accounts, and disable features that are unnecessary or inappropriate. Zoom continues to increase and enhance security features within the application to prevent inappropriate and uninvited guests. As a result, ACPS is enforcing new security features and setting requirements for use with students.

Administrations of security features at a division-level include:

- Waiting room required (Host clicks to admit or deny each user to the meeting)
- Require a password when scheduling new meetings
- Require a password for instant meetings
- Require a password for Personal Meeting ID (PMI)
- Require password for participants joining by phone
- Zoom can encrypt all presentation content at the application layer using the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256-bit algorithm.

The above features were included in best practices recommended by the FBI and have been well publicized by Zoom and other organizations. The FBI's full **recommendation can be found here**.

3) Appropriate Use
Providing appropriate training and support for staff to ensure best practices are used when setting up and hosting meetings. Training is integral to the successful use of Zoom, as well as any other online tools, as many vendors race to provide solutions that are compliant in the instructional space. Although staff have received directions and support from their Technology Integration Specialists when Zoom licenses became available, additional training is necessary to ensure staff are using all available security features. This training was provided during the professional learning day on April 13th to specifically address safe and effective practices in Zoom. These practices include implementing the security features listed above. It also includes reference to policies regarding acceptable use and the use of social media. Following the training, staff was requested to complete a form to verify completion and understanding of the contents.

Through these actions, ACPS is addressing identified risks and mitigating against future ones that are inherently part of the use of online educational tools.

Continued Monitoring
ACPS is committed to protecting student data and privacy, using secure applications and supporting appropriate use of online tools. ACPS is drafting a Risk Management Plan (RMP) as a framework for continued monitoring and documentation of Zoom-related risks. The ACPS Zoom FAQ webpage will continue to be updated with new questions.

Sources:
FBI Warns of Teleconferencing and Online Classroom Hijacking During COVID-19 Pandemic
FERPA and Virtual Learning
Laws enabling Parents to protect their Children's Privacy : FERPA, PPRA and COPPA
Tips for Schools: Balancing Privacy and Educational Continuity in the Coronavirus Era
Zoom Security White Paper
Zooming to Conclusions

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