



Printed from <http://ivn.us>



California school district institutes

Sep 1, 2010

By Chris Hinyub



The Contra Costa County School District has become the first in the state to implement an electronic tracking system for its students. Preschoolers in Richmond are now required to wear what resembles a basketball jersey that is implanted with a radio frequency transmitter.

The radio frequency tags will send signals to strategically placed sensors throughout the school allowing teachers and administrators to know exactly where each student is with the help of a virtual map of the premises. This technology, according to proponents, is meant to alert teachers when students leave campus.

School officials are touting the devices as harmless and labor-saving. Parents will now digitally sign in and sign out their children, saving teachers from that mundane and laborious task of keeping visual track of children and putting pencil to paper to take attendance. “Now, when we feed the children lunch we just have to push a button and it’s done,” said teacher Simone Beauford. “We don’t have to check the papers, check the papers, check the papers...”

Sung Kim, speaking for the county’s employment and human services department said the \$50,000 system (funded by a federal grant) could potentially save 3,000 labor hours. “Within a year we could completely pay off this system from the savings we have with the staffing,” said Kim. “We are the first child care center that is implementing with this technology, but it is already proven technology.”

Opponents want to know how this technology has proven itself to be anything but unwanted.

Kim’s inaccurate words raise the specter of a failed 2005 experiment with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) of students in a Northern California school district. Parents and civil liberties groups were outraged to learn that students were obligated to wear ID badges around their necks which were embedded with RFID chips.

In a letter to the Brittan School District, the *American Civil Liberties Union* of Northern California, the *Electronic Frontier Foundation* and the Washington-based *Electronic Privacy Information Center* demanded that officials immediately end the use of RFIDs in student IDs. The devices reportedly transmitted private

information to a computer on campus whenever a student passed under one of many scanners.

The letter read in part:

“We are urging the school board to recognize the important civil liberties concerns and safety risks implicated in RFID technology. RFID badges jeopardize the safety and security of children by broadcasting identity and location information to anyone with a chip reader and subject students to demeaning tracking of their movements. We hope the school district reconsiders this serious issue.”

Cédric Laurant, attorney for EPIC had stern words to share with school board members about that program:

“Compelling children to be constantly tracked with RFID-enabled identity badges breaches their right to privacy and dignity as human beings. Forcing children to wear badges around their necks displaying such sensitive information as their name, picture, grade and school exposes them to potential discrimination since the name of their school may disclose their religious beliefs or social class.”

After filing a formal complaint with the school board, parents Michael and Dawn Cantrall said in a statement:

“Our 7th grader came home wearing the ID badge prominently displayed around her neck – if someone wants to harm her, the mandatory school ID card has just made that task easier.”

Brittan ended the program several weeks after this confrontation. It seems the Sutter-based company *InCom* was the only let-down party in that debacle when their shady deal with school superintendents fell through.

Now with Contra Costa County electronically tagging preschoolers, you can expect an onslaught of safety and privacy arguments to come on behalf of concerned parents. One can also look forward to more ardent citizen oversight of unethical partnerships between state agencies and technology firms.

“Monitoring children with RFID tags is a very bad idea. It treats children like livestock or shipment pallets, thereby breaching their right to dignity and privacy they have as human beings. Any small gain in administrative efficiency and security is not worth the money spent and the privacy and dignity lost,” says Laurant.

In 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed Senate Bill 29, a measure which would have banned the use of RFID microchips and similar technologies in schools. It was a year prior to this action that California became one of the first states to ban forced implantation of microchips under a person’s skin.

About the Author



Chris Hinyub

Christopher graduated from Palm Beach Atlantic University with a degree in history and political science, distinguishing himself as Outstanding Graduate of the Frederick M. Supper Honors

Program in 2007. An avid gardener, Chris advocates for local food economies. He focuses his writings on the need to decentralize America's corporately dominated system of politics. Christopher supports libertarian-minded candidates for public office.

[Read More by Chris Hinyub](#)



From Around the Web

Sponsored Content by Taboola

Warren Buffett Tells You How to Turn \$40 Into \$10 Million
The Motley Fool

5 Signs You'll Get Cancer
Reverse My Disease

Feeling Depressed? NEVER Eat These 5 Foods

LifeGooroo

After reading this, you'll never look at a banana in the same way again

World Observer

7 Effective Ways to Drop 10 Pounds Running

Womanitely

Top 20 World's Most Beautiful, Peaceful and Safest Countries

Amerikanki

Ranking of the 10 biggest banks in 2014

TopTipsNews

Sales Funnel or Sales Cycle? What's Right for Your Business?

Ricoh

The Most Amazing, Hilarious, Perfectly Timed Pictures Taken at the Right Moment

Amazingly Timed Photos

Apple iWatch Amazing!!!

ZadTech.com

Read More On:

60 Minutes

Buffet Rule

Campaign Spending

Pennsylvania

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales

Join the discussion Please be relevant and respectful.

The IVN Etiquette: No Partisan Attacks, No Self-

Promotion, Substantiate Claims, No Personal Attacks.

© 2014 FIVE, a 501(c)(3) Organization. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. v2.1.0

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Terms](#)