

Parents **ALERT**

Childhood Is for Sale — and Your Child Is the Product

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Schools, apps, and AI systems are quietly monetizing children’s minds, emotions, and behavior.

TRUTH IN EDUCATION

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How To Stop School ‘Mindfulness’ Apps From Harvesting Your Child’s Health Data

By: Katie Allen, First published on The Federalist, January 13, 2026

Schools’ mindfulness meditation programs come with a hidden cost — the collection of children’s data, which could potentially be misused.

Mindfulness meditation programs have become an integrated part of K-12 public education, with companies marketing improved student achievement, discipline, and well-being. What parents don't realize is that these programs come with a hidden cost — the collection of their child's data.

The expansion of AI and student surveillance software in education has brought capabilities **such** as behavioral detection and monitoring of social media, student communications, and online activity. Generative AI data can be **merged** into a student's education **record** along with their grades, transcripts, health records, financial information, and student discipline files. These digital profiles follow a child throughout their entire public education career, viewed and used by governments and corporations in combination with AI algorithms to influence student behavior, interventions, and even future opportunities. With so much data quietly being collected and accumulated on children, parents have begun to sound the alarm.

Three Programs

One example of a K-12 mindfulness program is the **InnerExplorer** app, which consists of “daily mindfulness programs [which] integrate seamlessly into classrooms.” It is used in more than 120 school districts in all 50 states, impacting more than 2 million students and delivering more than 2 billion “mindful minutes” to classrooms. It also provides **lessons** for individual teachers and even families.

Another program used in K-12 schools is **MindUP**, which “provides a curriculum at the intersection of neuroscience, positive psychology, mindful awareness, and SEL.” This curriculum offers individual classroom visits and assessments from the program consultants, and even a family training session as part of its outreach to “the extended school community.” Progress in mindfulness skills is measured using “an official MindUP pre- and post-evaluation toolkit to assess student outcomes, student/teacher satisfaction, and measure student/teacher social competencies.”

Perhaps the most advanced of the programs is **MindLift**, which “combine[s] Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Self-Affirmation Theory, and AI technology” to provide personalized mental health interventions, noting that “[o]ur AI adapts to your unique needs and

circumstances” to provide “inclusive support.” In the K-12 setting, the **program** provides “a student-specific AI-powered mental health assessment and intervention platform.” This platform provides an AI-driven chatbot that is used to assess student mental health by “create[ing] a real-time, multimodal system that can assess mental health through the use of behavioral pattern tracking, audio tone analysis, facial expression recognition, and text sentiment interpretation.”

While these are only three of the many mindfulness programs currently used in K-12 education, all mindfulness programs share the same marketing strategy: they come equipped with expert recommendations and numerous studies, making them seem like the answer to the growing mental health crisis facing many students today.

Blurring the Line Between Student and Health Records

For the InnerExplorer program, data collected and shared may be as simple as how often a student or family member completes the mindfulness video exercises. For the MindUP program, however, the data collected and synced to the student’s profile would include answers to their mental health survey questions, creating a record that arguably blurs the line between student records and health records. And while MindUP program data may blur the line, the data provided by the AI-driven chatbots and collection devices of the MindLift program would certainly cross it.

While K-12 education programs cite adherence to privacy policies and federal laws, parents must understand that these laws have had major exceptions carved out for education technology companies. For example, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) has been substantially weakened by allowing student data to be shared with third-party “**school officials**,” to include education companies and vendors performing contracted educational functions. Through creative wording, these companies are able to technically comply with their privacy policies and federal laws, even as most parents are left unaware that their child’s data is being collected and sold as part of the education company’s **profit model**.

It is time for parents to opt their child out of these mindfulness meditation programs at school and begin to reclaim their child's data — and privacy.

Please visit <https://www.truthineducation.org/goldmind> to obtain an opt-out form covering a variety of sensitive subjects along with instructions how to file it with your child's school. Already have an opt-out and need help enforcing it? Contact us at info@truthineducation.org.