To school administrators:

On behalf of leading consumer, privacy, and civil liberties organizations, we are calling on administrations to commit to not using facial recognition technology (for non-personal reasons, e.g. when used to unlock personal phones) in schools. This invasive and biased technology inherently violates the liberty and the rights of students and faculty and has no place in our educational institutions.

Facial recognition technology isn't safe. It's biased and is more likely to misidentify students of color, which can result in traumatic interactions with law enforcement, loss of class time, disciplinary action, and potentially a criminal record. The data collected is vulnerable to hackers, and we've seen that schools are ill-equipped to safeguard this data. In the wrong hands, these systems, and the data they generate could be used to target and harm students. Also, facial recognition is invasive, enabling anyone with access to the system to watch students' movements and analyze facial expressions, as well as monitor who they talk to, what they do outside of class, and every move they make.

This type of invasive technology poses a profound threat to academic freedom. Exposing students and educators to facial recognition profoundly limits their ability to study, research, and express freely without fear of official retaliation. Students should not have to trade their right to privacy for an education.

Already, school systems across the country are quietly spending millions conducting unethical experiments with facial recognition software, using it to scan, analyze, and collect sensitive biometric information on tens of thousands of students, parents, and faculty. Publicly they claim this is about security, but school administrators have already admitted to using this technology to target students for being late or minor rule breaking.

Before this dangerous technology spreads any further, we call on school administrators—at public and private grade schools, colleges, and universities—to pledge not to use facial recognition on students and faculty in buildings or on campuses, and we demand our elected officials pass legislation to protect our students and faculty across the country from the constant surveillance of facial recognition technology.

Signed,

Advocacy for Principled Action in Government
Access Now
ACLU
ACLU Massachusetts
Black Alliance for Just Immigration
Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood
Color of Change
Constitutional Alliance
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America

Cyber Privacy Project
Daily Kos
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress
Detroit Community Technology Project
Detroit Digital Justice Coalition
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
Fight for the Future
Free Press Action
FreedomWorks
Jewish Voices for Peace
Jobs with Justice
Liberty Coalition
Media Alliance
Mijente
Mpower Change
Muslim Justice League
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Immigration Law Center
NYCLU
Oakland Privacy
Open Media
Other98
Popular Resistance
Privacy Times
Restore the Fourth
Roots Action
Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.)
United We Dream
X Lab