Subject Line of Email: Aeries Data Security Incident

June 24, 2020

Dear Saddleback Valley Unified School District Families,

This letter is to inform you of a data security incident that impacted Aeries®, the District's Student Information System (SIS) which stores and provides access to certain student and parent information for Saddleback Valley Unified School District. We are one of the hundreds of districts using Aeries® SIS that was affected by this incident. SVUSD has been a customer of Aeries® for over 10 years, and in that time has had no unauthorized access or data incidents with this software. We do not believe there is any reason to be alarmed or unduly concerned, but we wanted you to be informed about what happened.

Timeline with the information provided to us from Aeries:

On April 27, 2020, we were informed there may have been unauthorized access to the Aeries® SIS on November 4th, 2019. The [initial report](#) was focused on Aeries Hosted Databases, which we do not use. Our Student Information System is housed on-premise on our own servers.

On May 6, 2020, SVUSD learned that the Aeries incident may have also impacted on-premise databases. Following directions provided by Aeries, we immediately contacted Aeries and received confirmation that our data was also accessed.

This incident may have revealed **Parent and Student Login information, physical residence addresses, email addresses, and encrypted passwords**. However, no other data elements were impacted because of this incident. Social security numbers, credit card data, or other personal information *is not* kept in our Aeries database.

With access to encrypted passwords, unauthorized people may be able to deconstruct weak, common, or simple passwords and subsequently enable unauthorized access to parent and student Accounts and data stored in the Aeries® SIS.

We have been informed that local and federal law enforcement officials were notified of the incident, charges were filed and the people responsible were arrested. The investigation of their misconduct is continuing.

> While there is no evidence to suggest that your specific data was misused, out of an abundance of caution, we will reset the account passwords for all parents beginning **Wednesday, June 24, 2020**. *To reset your password, please follow the 'Forgot Password' link on the Aeries Parent/Student Portal.* Beginning **Thursday, June 25, 2020**, both parents and students will be able to view the new student password in the Family portal by navigating to Student Info > Student Data. **Students will begin using their new password Monday, July 6, 2020.**

Further, we are encouraging stricter password security guidelines as an added precaution against the possibility of future such incidents. All new passwords should employ the following guidelines:

- *Recommend Users to Change Passwords Every 6 months (minimum)*
- *Recommend Minimum Length: 8-16 Characters*
- *Recommend a Special Character*
- *Require Letters and Numbers*
- *Recommend Upper and Lower Case Letters*

We have no reason to believe that any data was accessed revealing sensitive information such as Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, financial account information, or other information directly impacting your credit rating. Saddleback Valley Unified School District *does not ask nor* keep this type of information associated with your Aeries account. Nevertheless, If you suspect your personal information has been misused, visit the Federal Trade Commission's site at IdentityTheft.gov to get recovery steps and to file an identity theft complaint. Your complaint will be added to the FTC's Consumer Sentinel Network, where it will be accessible to law enforcement for their investigations.

For links and more information go to https://click.svusd.org/SVUSD-Cyber-Security. Here you will also see what actions Aeries is taking to prevent this from happening to our school district and others in the future. If you have any questions, including how to reset your password, please email portalsupport@SVUSD.org or call the help desk line at (949) 855-4357 Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM and one of our SVUSD Technology Services staff will respond and help you in a timely manner.

Thank you,

Saddleback Valley Unified School District