

FERPA and the Parents' Voice

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Background

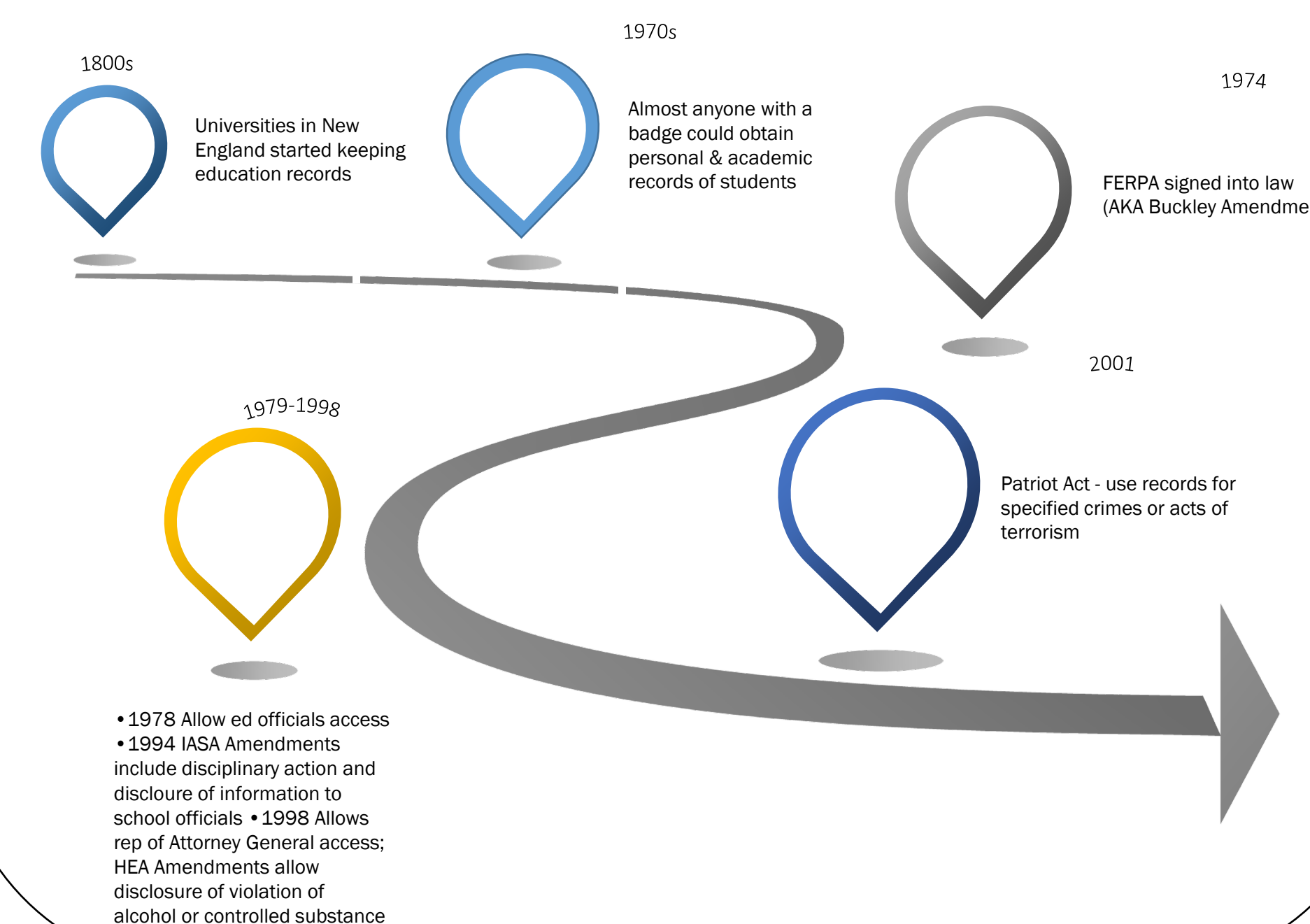
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law.

- Sometimes referred to as the Buckley Amendment attributed to the senator who introduced the legislation.
- Protects the privacy of students and their education records.
- Gives students rights independent of their parents.
- The law limits colleges' disclosure of student records.
- Establishes three rights for college students:
 1. The right to inspect their educational records.
 2. The right to request that corrections be made if information was recorded inaccurately.
 3. The right to restrict the access of others.
- The third right is often a source of frustration for parents as FERPA rights belong to the student.

Issue

Parents often feel they are missing important information about their child attending college.

- Several exceptions to the requirement of prior consent before the release of a personally identifiable education record.
 1. May release certain directory information.
 2. May disclose disciplinary records to the victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or non-forceable sex offense.
 3. Can disclose information to officials at other institutions about disciplinary action.



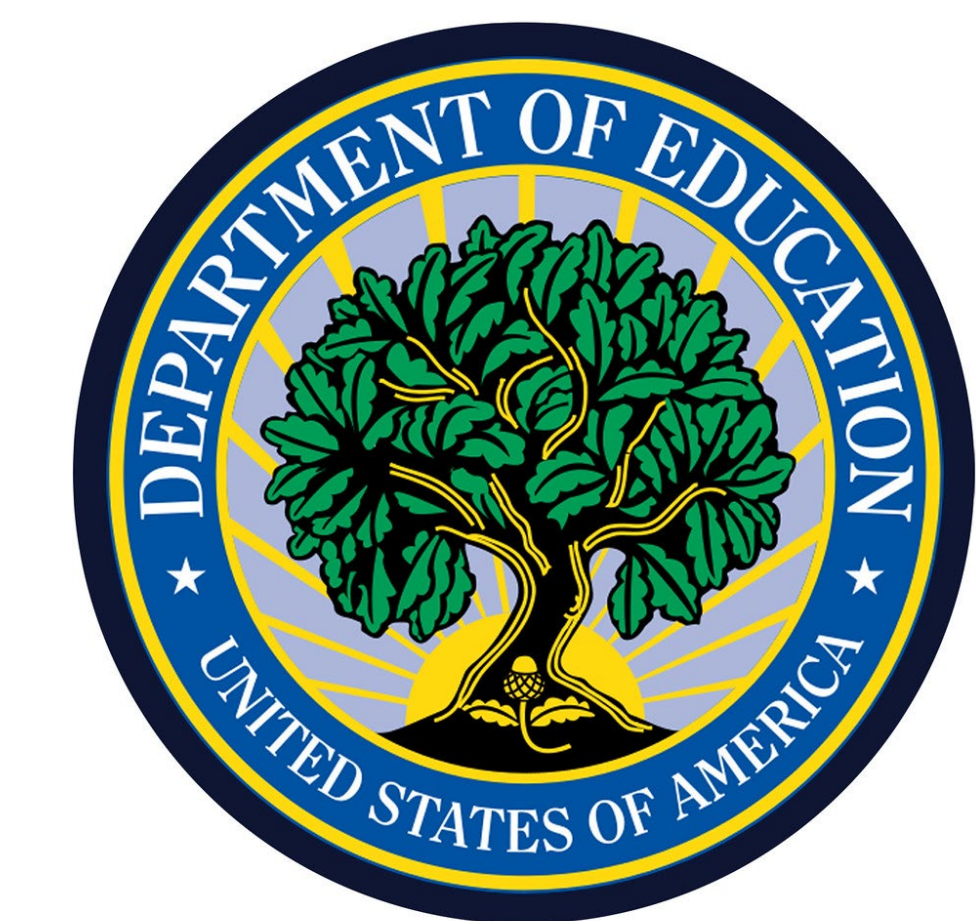
Proposal

Parents are critical in supporting and encouraging college.

- African American college students attending predominantly White institutions were protected from psychological distress due to parental attachment relationships.
- Familial connections encourage high school students as they reach the commencement of their college career.
- Studies examining the factors affecting the precollege preparation of first-generation, minority, and low-income students have determined that parent involvement is a contributing factor.
- Colleges should develop "family-friendly" policies for communication of education records.
- Colleges should develop parent groups.
- Parent forums could be organized to garner parent feedback.

Summary

- FERPA was established with good intentions to protect the privacy of students and parents.
- However, the rights of parents have been neglected.
- As children leave home to attend college and develop into adults, college students still need the love and support of their parents.
- Studies have determined that family involvement is essential for student academic success.
- Thus, institutions should provide resources to connect parents to the education process. It is beneficial to the student, the parent, and the institution.



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