

## Pearson security breach could impact a number of school districts in the Rochester area

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An online educational platform used by several local school districts was recently hacked, the latest in a growing trend of online security breaches at school districts.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported last week a breach into Aimsweb, a popular offering of the online learning behemoth Pearson Education. As many as 13,000 school and university accounts were potentially intruded upon.

A number of local school district websites contain references to Aimsweb, though not all verified that they currently use it, or were affected by the hack. They include Brighton, Brockport, East Irondequoit, Fairport, East Rochester, Greece, Pittsford, Rochester, Spencerport, Webster and West Irondequoit.

West Irondequoit released a statement Friday that it was affected, and Brockport Superintendent Lesli Myers confirmed Sunday that her district was, too.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Pearson learned of the hack from the Federal Bureau of Investigations in March, while the actual attack took place in November 2018.

According to Pearson, there is no evidence that the misbegotten data

has been misused.

The information accessed — names, birth dates and email addresses — is not particularly sensitive, but the hacking itself is more concerning and emblematic of a larger trend.

There have been a series of online security breaches in local school districts in the last several years in Holley, Honeoye Falls-Lima and Gates Chili.

Last month the Syracuse City School District's website was partially locked out in a ransomware attack.

"Every year cybersecurity threats and expenses are increasing exponentially," Annmarie Lehner, until recently the chief information officer at the Rochester City School District, said last week.

"I lose a lot of sleep over that."

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