

PUBLIC RECORDS

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to maintain the public records of this District and to make such records available to residents of Ohio for inspection and reproduction.

The Board will utilize the following procedures regarding the availability of public records. “Public records” are defined as any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record as defined in statute as having been created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means, created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction of the Board or its employees, which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the District. “Public records” do not include medical records, trial preparation records, confidential law enforcement investigatory records, records the release of which is prohibited by State or Federal law, and any other exceptions set forth in R.C. 149.43. Confidential law enforcement investigatory records, medical records, and trial preparation records are as defined in R.C. 149.43.

The public records of this District shall be available during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Upon request, a person may receive copies of public records, at cost, within a reasonable period of time. The District’s public records shall be promptly prepared and made available for inspection. A reasonable period of time may be necessary due to the volume of records requested, the proximity of the location where the records are stored, and/or for the District to review and redact non-public/confidential information contained in the record.

Each request for public records shall be evaluated for a response at the time of the public records request. Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must minimally identify the record(s) requested with sufficient clarity to allow the District to identify, retrieve, and review the record(s). The request for records need not be in writing. The requestor shall not be required to provide his/her identity or the intended use of the requested public record(s).

At the time of the request, the records custodian shall inform the person making the request of the estimated length of time required to gather the records. All requests for public records shall be satisfied or acknowledged by the District promptly following the receipt of the request. If the request for records was in writing, the acknowledgement by the District shall also be in writing.

If any request is deemed significantly beyond routine, such as seeking a voluminous number of copies and/or records, or requiring extensive research, the acknowledgement shall include the following:

- A. An estimated number of business days necessary to satisfy the request;
- B. An estimated cost if copies are requested;
- C. Any items within the request that may be exempt from disclosure.

The Superintendent is authorized to grant or refuse access to the records of this District in accordance with the law. Any denial, in whole or in part, of a public records request must include an explanation,

including legal authority. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. If there are redactions, each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority. If the request for records was in writing, the explanation shall also be in writing.

A person may purchase copies of the District's public records upon payment of a fee. A person who chooses to purchase a copy of a public record may request to have said record duplicated on paper, on the same medium on which the District keeps the record, or on any other medium in which the custodian of records determines that said record reasonably can be duplicated as an integral part of normal operations. A person who chooses to purchase a copy of a public record may also choose to have that record sent to him/her by United States mail or by other means of delivery or transmission, provided the person making the request pays in advance for said record, as well as costs for postage and supplies used in the mailing.

The number of records requested by a person that the District will transmit by U.S. mail shall be limited to ten (10) per month, unless the person certifies, in writing to the District, that the person does not intend to use or forward the requested records, or the information contained in them, for commercial purposes. "Commercial" shall be narrowly defined and does not include reporting or gathering news, reporting or gathering information to assist citizens oversight or understanding of the operation or activities of the District, or nonprofit educational research. (R.C. 149.43(B)(7))

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies.

Documents in electronic mail format are records as defined by the Ohio Revised Code when their content relates to the business of the District. E-mail shall be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and shall follow the same retention schedule.

Records in private e-mail accounts used to conduct public business are subject to disclosure, and all employees or representatives of the District shall retain e-mails that relate to public business and shall copy them to their business e-mail account(s) or to the records custodian.

The records custodian shall treat e-mail from private accounts that are used to conduct public business, thus subject to disclosure, as records of the District. These records shall be filed appropriately, retained in accordance with the established schedules, and made available for inspection and copying in accordance with the Public Records Act.

No public record may be removed from the office in which it is maintained except by a Board officer or employee in the course of the performance of his/her duties.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as preventing a Board member, in the performance of his/her official duties, from inspecting any record of this District, except student records and certain portions of personnel records.

A School District Records Commission shall be established consisting of the Board President, Treasurer, and Superintendent of Schools in accordance with law to judge the advisability of

destroying District records. Records retention schedules shall be updated regularly and posted prominently. The Commission shall meet at least once every twelve (12) months.

The Superintendent shall provide for the inspection, reproduction, and release of public records in accordance with this policy and with the Public Records Law. Administrative guidelines shall be developed to provide guidance to District employees in responding to public records requests. The Superintendent shall require the posting and distribution of this policy in accordance with statute.

PUBLIC RECORDS

The School District's public records are available for public inspection and/or copying in accordance with State law.

DESIGNATION OF OFFICERS

The Treasurer shall be the District Records Officer (DRO).

Definitions

“Public records” includes any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record, created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction of the District which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the District.

“Public record” does not mean any of the following: medical records; trial preparation records; information pertaining to individual students and other confidential materials; personally identifiable information; student directory information when parents have affirmatively withdrawn consent for release in writing; records the release of which is prohibited by State or Federal law.

“Electronic record” includes any record having been created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.

“Redaction” means obscuring or deleting any information that is exempt from the duty to permit public inspection or copying from an item that otherwise meets the definition of a “public record.”

Location and Time

Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. The District shall organize and maintain public records in a manner such that they are promptly made available for inspection or copying. “Prompt” and “reasonable” take into account the volume of records requested, the proximity of the location where the records are stored, and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested. No record shall be removed from such location. A member of the staff must be present throughout the inspection and copying of such record.

While requests to inspect and/or obtain copies of records are best made in person, telephone and written requests are permitted.

While the District is responsible for promptly preparing and making available public records, State law does not require the District to provide additional information that may be related to a record but is not part of a record. In addition, the District is not required to create a new record to respond to a public request for information if no public record is available that is responsive to the request, or to respond to requests for information when the information requested is not contained in a public record.

While personnel files contain public records, some specific information and/or records contained in such files may be confidential and not subject to disclosure.

Procedures

The following procedures shall be followed in connection with requests to inspect and secure copies of the School District's public records:

Requests to inspect and/or obtain copies of public records shall be submitted to the DRO. A public records request must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the District to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the DRO shall contact the requester for clarification.

Individuals requesting to inspect and/or obtain copies of public records do not have to put records requests in writing and do not have to provide his/her identity or the intended use of the requested public record(s).

The District may ask that the requester's identity and reason the information is sought be in writing. The District, however, must first inform the requester that such disclosure is not mandatory, unless the request is for student directory information. The District must also inform the requester that providing such information in writing enhances the District's ability to identify, locate, and/or deliver the records sought. The District may ask that records requests be put in writing, but must also notify the requester that it is not mandatory to do so.

Each request shall be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records. Routine requests for records should be satisfied immediately if feasible to do so. Routine requests include, but are not limited to, meeting minutes (both draft and final form), budgets, salary information, forms and applications, personnel roster, etc. If fewer than twenty (20) pages of copy are requested or if the records are readily available in an electronic format that can be e-mailed or downloaded easily, these should be made as quickly as equipment allows.

All requests for public records must either be satisfied (as above) or be acknowledged in writing by the DRO promptly following the District's receipt of the request. If the request for records was in writing, the acknowledgement shall also be in writing.

If a request is deemed significantly beyond “routine” (such as seeking a large volume/number of copies or requiring extensive research), the acknowledgement must include the following:

- A. An estimated number of business days necessary to satisfy the request;
- B. An estimated cost if copies are requested;
- C. Any items within the request that may be exempt from disclosure and the reason for such exemption, including legal authority.

With respect to public records which are determined to be available, the DRO will direct the requester to the place where the requested records may be inspected and will arrange for the preparation and certification of copies upon tender of any required fee.

Any denial of public records requested must include an explanation, including legal authority. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. If there are redactions, each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority.

With respect to records which are determined not to be available, the DRO will notify the requester of same, noting the reason for unavailability on the request form if one is submitted, and return one (1) copy of the form to the requestor. The DRO shall also notify the requester of the estimated time necessary to process and fulfill the request, make arrangements with the requester for delivery of the requested records, and arrange a method of communication between the requester and the School District in the event that further information is needed by the District to fulfill the request.

Fees

Upon request, copies of public records will be provided at the actual cost of making copies:

- A. The charge for paper copies is 5 cents per page;
- B. The charge for downloaded computer files to a compact disc is \$1.00 per disc;
- C. There is no charge for documents e-mailed.

A person who chooses to purchase a copy of a public record may also choose to have that record sent to him/her by United States mail or by other means of delivery or transmission, provided the person making the request pays in advance for said record, as well as costs for postage and supplies used in the mailing.

Electronic Mail

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The records custodian shall treat e-mail from private accounts that are used to conduct public business, thus subject to disclosure, as records of the District. These records shall be filed appropriately, retained in accordance with the established schedules, and made available for inspection and copying in accordance with the Public Records Act.