

PUBLIC ACCESS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS- PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO DISTRICT RECORDS “RIGHT TO KNOW”

This procedural policy applies to all requests to inspect or obtain copies of “District records”, which term shall have the same meaning as “governmental records” as that term is defined in the state’s Right to Know law, RSA 91-A:1-a. Without limiting that meaning, District records shall include board or board committee minutes, and any other documents, writings, letters, memoranda, e-mails, images, digital communications, or other information of any kind kept or maintained by the District in any physical form (written, visual, electronic, digital, etc.). The Superintendent is authorized to issue and enforce additional procedures as the Superintendent deems appropriate.

1. **Board and Staff Member Responsibilities.** All requests for access to or copies of District records should be made through the SAU Office. Any board member or staff member who receives a request from a member of the public to see, receive or otherwise inspect any District record(s) (“Right to Know request”) should immediately communicate that request to the SAU office for processing under Board policy EH and these procedure.
2. **Written Requests Encouraged.** To help ensure common understanding between the requester and the staff responsible for responding to a request, persons making requests for records are strongly encouraged to submit their requests in writing and include a specific description of the desired record(s). A written request can greatly assist in minimizing confusion or misunderstanding exactly what is being requested.

However, although written requests are preferred, a request will not be denied simply because it is not in writing. If the person making the request is unwilling or unable to put the request in writing, the staff member receiving the request shall reduce the request to writing and shall provide the person with a copy.

3. **Clarification, Refinement & Modification of Requests.** Carefully tailored requests can often be fulfilled more promptly and help avoid resources being expended retrieving and preparing material which exceeds what the requester is actually seeking. The Superintendent, designee or staff responsible for responding to a request may contact the person making the request if the request is unclear or will be time-consuming or onerous to fulfill to determine if the person will clarify the request or agree to narrow the request. Staff responsible for responding to the request may suggest to the requestor reasonable modifications to the scope or language of the request, but the

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requester is not required to accept them. Any modification, clarification or narrowing of the request agreed upon by the requester shall be documented in writing and a copy of the re-formed request provided to the person making the request.

4. **Record Availability.** Records requested under the Right-to-Know law which are not exempt under RSA 91-A:5 (or otherwise) will be made available immediately when such records are so available for such release. If such records are not immediately available, if a determination needs to be made if such records exist, or if a determination needs to be made whether such records are exempt from public disclosure, the Superintendent or designee will, within five (5) business days of the request, respond to the requestor, in writing. The response shall acknowledge receipt of the request, provide a statement of the time reasonably necessary to determine whether the request shall be granted or denied, and include an itemized estimate of the cost of making the record available. Records will be reviewed in their entirety by either the Superintendent or his/her designee before they are released in order to ensure that no confidential or exempted information is disclosed. District legal counsel may be consulted as necessary.
5. **Exempt Information and Redaction.** Information exempt from disclosure by RSA 91-A:5 or other law will not be disclosed. The Superintendent may authorize District staff to consult with the District's legal counsel when questions regarding application of exemptions to certain records or information arise.

In some instances, records containing information exempt from disclosure may reasonably be redacted in order to make the remainder of the record accessible.

If a member of the public requests records that are determined to include information exempt from disclosure, the Superintendent/designee will respond to the requestor, in writing, including a statement of the specific exemption authorizing the withholding, and a brief explanation of how the exemption applies to the record(s) or information withheld.

Records will be reviewed in their entirety by either the Superintendent/designee before they are released in order to ensure that no confidential or exempted information is disclosed.

6. **Copy Fees.** The School District will charge a fee of .25\$ *per page* for copying/photocopies of records when the person requests a paper copy. This fee reflects the actual cost of producing the copy(ies). No cost or fee shall be charged for the

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inspection or delivery, without copying of records, whether in paper, electronic, or other form *except as described below for certain individual electronic communications.*

Electronic records may be provided via email or on a portable storage device (thumb drive), if the requestor so requests and if such records can practically be delivered electronically. To protect the integrity of the District's computer system, a thumb drive for this purpose must either be provided by the requestor in unopened manufacturer's packaging or purchased at cost from the District.

7. **Electronic Records.** Electronic records (including electronic communications as defined in Section 8) may be provided on a portable storage device (thumb drive), if the requestor so requests and if such records can practically be delivered electronically. To protect the integrity of the District's computer system, a thumb drive for this purpose must either be provided by the requestor in unopened manufacturer's packaging or purchased at cost from the District.

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