

School Board

Access to District Public Records

Definition

The definition of *public records*, for purposes of this policy, is the definition contained in Section 2(c) of FOIA without amendment.

Full access to the District's *public records* is available to any person as provided in the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), this policy, and implementing procedures.

Freedom of Information Officer

The Superintendent shall appoint the District's Freedom of Information Officer who will be assigned and who will assume all the duties and powers of that office as provided in FOIA and this policy.

The Superintendent may delegate these duties and powers to one or more designees.

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall report any FOIA requests and the status of the District's response to the Board.

Requesting Records

A request for inspection and/or copies of public records must be made in writing and may be submitted by personal delivery, mail, telefax, or email directed to the District's Freedom of Information Officer.

Individuals making a request are not required to state a reason for the request other than to identify when the request is for a commercial purpose or when requesting a fee waiver.

All requests for inspection and copying shall immediately be forwarded to the District's Freedom of Information Officer or designee.

Responding to Requests

The Freedom of Information Officer shall approve all requests for public records unless:

1. requested material does not exist;
2. requested material is exempt from inspection and copying by the Freedom of Information Act; or
3. complying with the request would be unduly burdensome.

Within 5 business days after receipt of a request for access to a public record, the Freedom of Information Officer shall comply with or deny the request, unless the time for response is extended as specified in Section 3 of FOIA.

The Freedom of Information Officer may extend the time for a response for up to 5 business days from the original due date. If an extension is needed, the Freedom of Information Officer shall:

1. notify the person making the request of the reason for the extension, and
2. either inform the person of the date on which a response will be made or agree with the person in writing on a compliance period.

Notwithstanding the above, the Freedom of Information Officer shall respond to requests for commercial purposes and to recurrent requesters (as those terms are defined in Section 2 of FOIA) according to Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of FOIA.

When responding to a request for a record containing both exempt and non-exempt material, the Freedom of Information Officer shall redact exempt material from the record before complying with the request.

Copying Fees

Persons making a request for copies of public records must pay any applicable copying fee. The Freedom of Information Officer shall, as needed, recommend a copying fee schedule for the Board's approval.

Copying fees, except when fixed by statute, are reasonably calculated to reimburse the District's actual cost for reproducing and certifying public records and for the use, by any person, of its equipment to copy records. No copying fees shall be charged for the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies.

No copying fee shall be charged for electronic copies other than the actual cost of the recording medium.

Fees for Responding to a Request for a Commercial Purpose

In addition to copying fees, persons making a request for a commercial purpose, as defined in FOIA, must pay a fee of \$10 for each hour spent by personnel in searching for and retrieving the record. However, no fees shall be charged for the first 8 hours spent by personnel in searching for or retrieving a requested record. Whenever the District charges any fees to a requester making a commercial request, the Freedom of Information Officer shall provide the requester with an accounting of all fees, costs, and personnel hours in connection with the request for public records.

Access

The inspection and copying of a public record that is the subject of an approved access request is permitted at the District's administrative office during regular business hours, unless other arrangements are made by the Freedom of Information Officer.

Many public records are immediately available from the District's website including, but not limited to, a description of the District and the methods for requesting a public record.

Preserving Public Records

Public records, including e-mail messages, shall be preserved and cataloged if:

1. They are evidence of the District's organization, function, policies, procedures, or activities.
2. They contain informational data appropriate for preservation.
3. Their retention is required by State or federal law, or
4. They are subject to a retention request by the Board Attorney (e.g. a litigation hold), District auditor, or other individual authorized by the School Board or State or federal law to make such a request.

Unless its retention is required as described in items numbered 3 or 4 above, a public record, as defined by the Illinois Local Records Act, may be destroyed when authorized by the Local Records Commission.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 140/, Illinois Freedom of Information Act.
105 ILCS 5/10-16.
820 ILCS 130/5.

CROSS REF.: 2:140 (Communications To and From the Board), 5:150 (Personnel Records), 7:340 (Student Records)

Adopted: September 2001

Revised and Adopted: December 2006; February 2010; March 2013