

PROTECTION AND PRIVACY OF PUPIL RECORDS

(For more information, see School Board Policy #515)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31): School officials with legitimate educational interest; other schools to which a student is transferring; specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student; organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school; accrediting organizations; to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena; appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Austin Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202.

Directory Information

"Directory information" means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to: the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (i.e., full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended. It also includes the name, address, and telephone number of the student's parent(s).

However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. The request should be sent to the Superintendent's Office at 401 Third Avenue NW, Austin, MN 55912 and would be applicable for the current school year only.

Disclosure of Data to Military Recruitment Officers

The School District will release the names, addresses, and home telephone numbers of secondary students to military recruiting officers within sixty (60) days after the date of the request unless a parent or eligible student has refused in writing to release directory information. Data released to military recruiting officers under this provision: 1) may be used only for the purpose of providing information to students about military service, state and federal veterans' education benefits, and other career and educational opportunities provided by the military; and 2) cannot be further disseminated to any other person except personnel of the recruiting services of the armed forces.

A parent or eligible student has the right to refuse the release of the name, address, or home telephone number to military recruiting officers. To refuse the release of the above information to military recruiting officers, a parent or eligible student must provide a written request to the Superintendent's Office at 401 Third Avenue NW, Austin, MN 55912. This request will be in effect for the current school year only.

Please contact the Superintendent's Office at 507-460-1900 with any questions. You have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Austin Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202.

The complete policy can be found on the school district website under school board/district policies or by contacting the Superintendent's Office at 507-460-1900.