

Public Access to District Records

The following procedures will be used to carry out the district's policy regarding public access to district records:

Public Records Custodian

At each facility where district records are kept, the superintendent's designee will serve as public records custodian and be responsible for the maintenance of district records in accordance with district policy. The custodian will permit access to, and copying of, district records by the public with authorization from the superintendent who is the public records coordinator. The public records coordinator will be listed in the district directory and student/parent handbook.

Display of Descriptions, Policies and Procedures

The public records coordinator will compile, prominently display and make available the following for inspection and copying by the public at the district's central office or electronically:

- A. Descriptions of the district's organizational structure;
- B. Descriptions or statements of the general course and method by which the district operates;
- C. Descriptions of how, where and from which employees the public can obtain information and copies of public records this policy and procedure;
- D. Descriptions or statements of all formal and informal district procedures; and
- E. All statements of general policy.

The public records coordinator will update the displayed materials identified above whenever an item is amended, revised or repealed.

Index of Certain Records

The coordinator is responsible for the preparation, maintenance and making available for inspection and copying current indexes of the following records:

- A. Statements and interpretations of district policies;
- B. Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that may affect a member of the public;
- C. Planning policies and goals and interim and final planning decisions; and
- D. Factual staff reports, factual consultant's reports and studies, scientific reports and studies, and any other factual information derived from tests, studies, reports or surveys, whether conducted by district staff or others.
- E. **Board minutes**

The indexes described above will be kept at the district's central office.

If the coordinator determines that the indexing of one or more of the categories of records described above, or one or more of the subcategories within such categories, would be unduly burdensome or interfere with district operations, he/she will request that the board adopt a formal resolution exempting such categories or subcategories from the indexing required by this section. The resolution will specify the reasons and the extent to which indexing would unduly burden or interfere with district operations.

Requests for Inspection and Copying

Upon written request, the district will make available to any person for inspection and copying any disclosable record or records not exempted by district policy.

Written requests for inspection and/or copying of records may include:

- A. Name, address, and signature of the party requesting disclosure and the date of the request;
- B. Specification of the records or types of records requested; and
- C. A statement of the intended use of requested documents if lists of individuals are included. The district will not deny a request solely due to refusal to furnish a reason for the request.

Written requests for inspection and/or copying of records will be submitted to the coordinator at the district's central office or to the public record's custodian at the place where the requested records are kept. If a request is significant/broad, the district may make the records installment available on a partial or installment basis.

Written requests should be submitted and records made available for inspection and copying during the customary business hours of the district's central office and/or the facility where the requested records are kept.

With respect to those records which the coordinator has designated in writing as "open to inspection," the public record's custodian at the facility where the record is kept will have authority to grant a request for inspection and copying. With respect to all other records, a request for inspection and copying will be granted only after review and approval of the request by the coordinator.

A response to each written request for inspection and copying of district records will be provided within five business days. The district may respond by providing the requested record denying the request, or acknowledging receipt of the request and providing a reasonable estimate of the time the district will require to respond. Any denial of a request will contain an explanation of the statutory basis of the denial. If a record contains disclosable information, the district will disclose the record with the nondisclosable portion deleted and provide a written explanation of the statutory basis for the deletion.

If a requested record contains personally identifiable information about a person, prior to release the person and appropriate bargaining unit, if any, will be notified of the request and the district's intended response.

If the public record's coordinator concludes that disclosure of a requested record that is not exempt from disclosure is not in the public interest and would substantially and irreparably damage any person or vital governmental function, the coordinator will seek a court injunction to prevent disclosure.

Staff will provide full assistance to members of the public making inquiries or requests related to district records. Staff will locate and produce for inspection requested records which are not exempt from disclosure and which have been sufficiently identified in a request for inspection. Staff may respond to a request by providing the requester with an Internet address and link on the district's website where the requested information can be found. However, if the requester indicates that he/she cannot access the records through the internet, the district will provide the records another way.

Staff may request a clarification of any request that is unclear and need not respond if the request is not clarified. **No fee shall be charged if the requester examines records onsite.** On request, the district will make copies of public records for a per-page fee of fifteen cents and the actual cost of postage and an envelope, if any. Determining the actual cost of copying is excessively burdensome; therefore, the district is using the:

- statutorily determined fifteen cents per page charge.
- **The actual cost of copies for non-standard copies/items; and**
- **Cost of fees actually charged by any third-party vendor used to make copies; and**
- **Postage and shipping costs, including the cost of any containers used in shipping.**

The District has no duty to scan paper copies of records into electronic format. If the District chooses to honor such request, it may charge for staff time spent making the electronic copies and other costs actually incurred in reproducing the records.

The district may require a deposit not to exceed 10 percent of the estimated cost of providing copies of a request and may charge per installment. **The District would dedicate some time each week to fill public records requests and provide the records in batches.** The district may stop filling a request if an installment is not claimed **within 15 days of the notice of availability or if the requester refuses to pay for copying, postage, and container costs. As such, the District would consider the request abandoned. The District would notify the requester in writing of the District's intent not to complete the remainder of the request.**

A staff member may condition access to a public record containing a list of individuals on the requester's promise that the record will not be used for a commercial purpose, but may not require the requester to enter into a hold harmless agreement to that effect.

The coordinator and student record's custodian will have authority to impose reasonable conditions on the manner of inspection of records so as to minimize the risks of damage or disorganization of the records and to prevent excessive interference with other essential operations of the district.

Ephrata School District Adopted 6.18.12