



Dual Enrollment

College & Career Readiness

Guidance for Parents of High School Students Enrolled in Postsecondary Courses

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that governs access to and the confidentiality of student education records. When a high school student enrolls in a dual enrollment program, they are simultaneously part of two educational systems: a local education agency (LEA), such as a high school or school district, and a postsecondary institution, such as a community college or university.

FERPA distinguishes between records maintained by the K-12 institution and those maintained by the college. The rights afforded under FERPA depend on the nature of the institution maintaining the records. This means that a dual enrollment student's high school records remain accessible to parents under K-12 FERPA rules, while their college records are governed by postsecondary FERPA regulations, which assign privacy rights directly to the student, even if they are under the age of 18.

Transfer of Rights Under FERPA

Once a student either turns 18 or enrolls in a postsecondary institution, they become an "eligible student" under FERPA. For college-level coursework, this transfer occurs at the time of enrollment, regardless of the student's age or high school status. As a result, parents do not automatically have the right to access or receive information from the student's postsecondary education records unless specific conditions are met.

Implications for Parents

Under postsecondary FERPA protections, the following records may not be shared with parents without proper authorization:

- College course grades
- Academic standing or progress
- Course schedules
- Transcripts
- Disciplinary or conduct records maintained by the college
- Any other record generated by the students while enrolled in college

Resources for additional information:

- **Parent Guide to FERPA:** <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/parent-guide-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa>
- **Student Guide to FERPA:** <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/eligible-student-guide-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa>
- **Full FERPA regulations:** <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-99>

For district and community college contact information consult the College and Career Readiness department web site at <https://www.carmelunified.org/departments/college-career-readiness>

Distinguishing Between High School and College Records

Even when a college course is used to fulfill high school graduation requirements, FERPA treats records differently based on who maintains them:

Records held by the high school remain under the control of K-12 FERPA guidelines and may be shared with parents.

Records held by the college (e.g., assignments, grades, communications with professors) are considered postsecondary records and are subject to access restrictions unless the student authorizes disclosure.

Recommended Actions for Parents

- Discuss information-sharing expectations with your student before and during their participation in dual enrollment. Talk to your student early about how you will communicate about their college experience.
- Encourage your student to complete a FERPA release if you wish to receive updates on their postsecondary performance, by contacting the Office of Admissions and Records at the college.
- Contact college dual enrollment coordinator or District staff if you have questions about what is or is not allowed under FERPA and to further understand how records are maintained and shared.
- Refer to federal FERPA guidance to understand your rights and your student's rights.

Why FERPA Matters

FERPA recognizes the growing independence of students in postsecondary education. While this may represent a shift in access for parents, it is also an opportunity to support your student as they begin to take ownership of their educational journey within the bounds of federal privacy law.

FERPA is designed to respect and support your student's growing independence as they transition to college-level learning. By staying informed and having clear conversations, you can continue to support your students while honoring their legal rights.