

**EDUCATION RECORDS -
ACCESS, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND AMENDMENT**

The Regional School District No. 14 Board of Education (“District”) recognizes its responsibility to abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) as well as other state and federal laws pertaining to access, confidentiality and amendment of students’ education records and other personally identifiable information that is collected, used and maintained by the school district. These administrative regulations are intended to implement Board Policy # 5145.15 and clarify the legal obligations of the District with regard to education records.

I. DEFINITIONS

Please refer to the Board policy on Education Records for the list of definitions relevant to this administrative regulation.

II. ACCESS

A. Parents have the right to inspect and review their child’s education records.

1. Access rights of non-custodial parent

The District gives full rights of access to either parent, unless it has been provided with evidence that there is a court order or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody that specifically revokes these rights.

2. Parents’ access rights when student is age 18 or older

When a student reaches the age of majority (18), the rights accorded to, and consent required of parents transfer from the parents to the student. The parents of such a student may continue to have access to education records or personally identifiable information without the prior written consent of their child if the child is their legal dependent (as defined by the U. S. tax code, section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) or if the disclosure is in connection with health or safety emergency.

3. Surrogate parent

A surrogate parent (person appointed by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §10-94g to advocate for a student with a disability in the educational decision-making process) of any child shall have the same right of access as the natural parents or guardian to all records concerning the child.

B. Procedure to inspect, review and request copies of education records:

1. Written request

A parent or eligible student may request to inspect, review or obtain copies of a student's education records. All requests shall be made in writing and submitted to the principal of the student’s school [OR REPLACE WITH PREFERRED TITLE/LOCATION]]. For students who receive special education, a copy of the request should also be submitted to the [Director of Special Services]. The school shall also respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records.

2. Time for District to respond to request

The District shall comply with a request for access to records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than 45 days after it has received the request. If the student who is the subject of the request receives special education, the District shall comply with a request of a parent or eligible student within ten (10) school days, or within three (3) school days if the request is in order to prepare for a meeting regarding an individualized education program or any due process proceeding.

3. Fee for copy of education records

a. Standard fee for copies:

The fee for copies of education records is five (5) cents per page [OR OTHER REASONABLE AMOUNT].

b. Waiver of fee:

If the imposition of the fee effectively prevents a parent from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records, the fee shall be waived.

c. No fee for search:

The District will not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve the education records of a student.

d. One free copy for students receiving special education:

If the student who is the subject of the request receives special education, the parents have the right to one free copy of those records. A request for the free copy shall be made in writing.

4. Situations where access to records and information may be limited:

a. Records relate to more than one student:

If the education records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parents may only have access to the specific information about their child.

b. Privileged communications between student and professional employee:

Administrators, teachers and nurses are not required to disclose information concerning a student's alcohol or drug problem if the information was revealed during a communication made privately and in confidence by the student to the professional employee.

c. Access to copyrighted instruments:

Any test instrument or portion of a test instrument for which the test manufacturer asserts a proprietary or copyright interest shall not be copied. The parent may review and inspect such information at the location where the records are kept if the records have been retained (state law allows test protocols to be discarded at the discretion of the school administration). The District shall respond to reasonable requests from the parent for explanations and interpretations of the copyrighted material.

d. Confidential HIV-related information:

If the education records include confidential HIV-related information (whether a person has been counseled regarding HIV infection, has been the subject of an HIV-related test, or has HIV infection, HIV-related illness or AIDS, or information which identifies or reasonably could identify a person as having one or more of such conditions), such information may not be released without a written authorization specifically allowing for the disclosure of confidential HIV-related information.

III. CONFIDENTIALITY

A. Written consent required to disclose information

1. Requirements for the written consent

Before the District discloses personally identifiable information from a student's educational records to persons other than the parent or eligible student, the parent or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent. The written consent shall specify the records that may be disclosed; state the purpose of the disclosure; and identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made.

2. Sufficiency of identification

The District uses reasonable methods to authenticate the identity of parents, students, school officials, and any other parties to whom personally identifiable information from education records is disclosed. "Signed and dated written consent" may include a record and signature in electronic form that identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic consent; and indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent.

3. Copy of records disclosed

If a parent or eligible student so requests, the District shall provide him or her with a copy of the records disclosed subject to payment of appropriate fees.

B. Exceptions to the requirement for written consent of parent or eligible student

FERPA and its federal regulations give the District discretion to disclose personally identifiable information from education records without the prior written consent of a parent or eligible student in a number of situations. Among these exceptions are the following:

1. Parents of eligible students

The disclosure is to the parents of an eligible student who is a dependent as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

2. School officials who have a legitimate educational interest:

The disclosure is to other school officials, including teachers who have legitimate educational interests.

a. Criteria for determining who constitutes a "school official"

School officials are broadly defined as persons who are employed by the District in an administrative, counseling, supervisory, academic, student support services, research

position, or a support person to these positions. Contractors, consultants, volunteers or other parties to whom the District has outsourced its functions may also be considered as “school officials” provided that such persons or entities perform a function for which the District would otherwise use employees, are under the direct control of the District with respect to the use and maintenance of education records and are subject to the same requirements regarding redisclosure as any other recipient of such information.

b. Examples of school officials

Using the criteria in section (a), the term “school official” includes, but is not limited to the following: employees of the school district such as the superintendent, administrators, supervisors, teachers, school nurses, medical advisors, psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, paraprofessionals, support or clerical staff, security personnel; members of the Board of Education; attorneys who represent the District, accountants, auditors, bus contractors, medical or educational consultants or therapists; or a person serving on a Board of Education committee, or as a hearing officer in discipline cases.

c. What constitutes a “legitimate educational interest”

A legitimate educational interest exists where access to information in a student’s education records is necessary for a school official to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

3. Directory Information:

The disclosure is information deemed to be “directory information” by the District and the parent or eligible student has not refused disclosure of such directory information. The term “directory information” refers to information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

a. Definition of “directory information:”

The District considers the following categories to fall within the definition of directory information: the student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent school previously attended.

b. “Directory information” does NOT include either of the following: a student’s social security number; a student identification number that, by itself, may be used to gain access to education records.

c. Annual notice of right to refuse disclosure of directory information:

On an annual basis, the school district shall provide parents and eligible students with notice of the right to refuse to let the District designate any or all of the above types of information about the student as directory information. The annual notice shall give the parent or eligible student two weeks to notify the District in writing that he or she does

not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information.

4. Recruiters- Military and Colleges

The disclosure of name, address, and telephone listing to recruiters if the parent or eligible student has not requested that prior written consent is obtained.

a. Access to certain information:

Upon a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, the school district will provide access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings.

b. Annual notice of right to refuse recruiter access to information:

A secondary school student or the parent of the student may request that the student's name, address, and telephone listing not be released to recruiters without prior written consent. On an annual basis, the school district shall provide parents and eligible students with notice of the right to file such a request.

5. Student's new school:

The District will forward education records to other agencies or institutions that have requested the records and in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. This includes the transfer of disciplinary records with respect to a suspension or expulsion.

6. Health or safety emergency

The school district may disclose personally identifiable information to appropriate parties (including the parents of an eligible student) if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. In making the decision to disclose information under this exception, the district must look at the totality of the circumstances. Disclosure is permitted where there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of students, staff or other individuals. The disclosure should be limited to parties who need the information to address the emergency situation. The amount of information disclosed shall be narrowly tailored to the specific need and limited to the duration of the emergency. Disclosures for health and safety emergencies must be recorded in the student's education records (see "Recordkeeping").

7. Financial Aid

The disclosure is in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility, amount or conditions for the aid or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.

8. Judicial order or subpoena:

The disclosure is necessary to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. Unless the law requires otherwise, the school district must make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance so that the parent or eligible student may seek protective action.

9. Organizations conducting studies

The disclosure is to organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of the school district to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction as long as specific conditions are met as provided by law. This exception shall only apply when the District has entered into a written agreement with the organization as required by FERPA.

10. Certain federal and state officials:

The disclosure is to authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States; the Attorney General of the United States; the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; or state and local educational authorities.

11. Criminal justice involvement or dangerousness:

The disclosure is to state and local officials related to the juvenile justice system's ability to effectively serve the student whose records are released or about information received from state or local officials. This includes the following:

a. Physical assaults upon school employees by students

School Principals shall report physical assaults made by a student upon a school employee to the local police when such assaults occur on school property or while the employee was in performance of school duties and the employee files a written report with the Principal.

b. Students on probation

For students who are on probation, the school district may release information to the courts as long as officials and authorities to whom the records are disclosed certify in writing to the school district that the information will not be disclosed to any other party, except as provided under State law, without the prior written consent of the parent of the student.

c. Arrested students

When the Superintendent of Schools receives notice of a student's arrest from law enforcement authorities, the Superintendent may disclose such information to the Principal of the school that the student attends. The Superintendent shall maintain the written report of the arrest in a secure location. The Principal may disclose such information only to special services staff or a consultant (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker) for the purpose of assessing the risk of danger posed by such child and determining appropriate placement, educational plan or disciplinary action.

d. Potentially dangerous students

When the Superintendent of Schools receives notice from the Department of Children and Families regarding a student's potential dangerousness, the Superintendent shall notify the Principal of the school that the student attends. The Principal may disclose such information only to special services staff or a consultant (such as a psychiatrist,

psychologist or social worker) for the purpose of assessing the risk of danger posed by such child and determining appropriate placement, educational plan or disciplinary action.

e. Registered sex offenders

The disclosure concerns sex offenders and other individuals required to register under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. 14071, and the information was provided to the school district under 42 U.S.C. 14071 and applicable Federal guidelines.

IV. Amendment

The District recognizes its responsibility to permit parents and eligible students to seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A. Request for amendment of education records:

1. A parent or eligible student must submit a request for amendment of education records in writing to the school principal. The request should clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the privacy rights of the student.
2. The school will respond within a reasonable amount of time after receiving the request. If school officials decide not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, they will notify the parent or eligible student of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

B. Hearing requirements:

1. The District shall hold the hearing within a reasonable time after it has received the request for the hearing from the parent or eligible student.
2. The District shall give the parent or eligible student notice of the date, time, and place, reasonably in advance of the hearing.
3. The hearing may be conducted by any individual, including an official of the District, who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
4. The District shall give the parent or eligible student a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues raised in the request for amendment. The parent or eligible student may, at their own expense, be assisted or represented by one or more individuals of his or her own choice, including an attorney.
5. The District shall make its decision in writing within a reasonable period of time after the hearing.
6. The decision must be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and must include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

a. If the decision is in favor of the parent or eligible student, the education record shall be amended.

b. If the decision is that the information in the education record is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, the District shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of the District, or both. When such a statement is placed in the education records of a student the District shall: maintain the statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained; and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

V. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

A. Safeguarding confidentiality

The District shall use reasonable methods to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages.

1. Warning recipients of records about redisclosure of information

The District will inform parties receiving a disclosure of education records that they may use the information only for the purposes for which the disclosure was made and that they are obligated to not disclose the information to any other party without the prior consent of the parent or eligible student. This warning regarding further disclosure of education records need not be given to the parent or eligible student or party receiving directory information.

2. School officials' access to education records

The District shall use reasonable methods to ensure that school officials obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests. *[NOTE: FERPA requires "An educational agency or institution that does not use physical or technological access controls must ensure that its administrative policy for controlling access to education records is effective and that it remains in compliance with the legitimate educational interest requirement"]*

3. Additional requirements for safeguarding the records of students receiving special education

a. The [Director of Special Services] is the person responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information.

b. District personnel who collect or use personally identifiable information will receive instruction regarding confidentiality of student records and information.

c. The Superintendent of Schools [or OTHER TITLE] shall maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the positions of those employees within the agency who may have access to personally identifiable information.

d. Upon request, the District shall provide parents with a list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used by the agency.

B. Recordkeeping Requirements

1. List of requests and disclosures of education records

The school district shall maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records of each student.

a. This record shall be kept with the education records of the student.

b. There is no requirement to record requests made by or disclosures given to the following parties: the parent or eligible student; school officials with a legitimate educational interest; a party with written consent from the parent or eligible student; a party seeking directory information; and *some* types of subpoenas or court orders.

c. This list may be inspected by the parent or eligible student, school personnel who are responsible for the custody of the records or have a legitimate educational interest and federal, state or local authorities responsible for auditing the recordkeeping procedures.

2. Information that must be documented in this record

a. For each request or disclosure this record must include the names of the parties requesting or receiving information from education records, the date access was given and the purpose the parties had in requesting or obtaining the information.

b. In cases where personally identifiable information regarding a student has been disclosed due to a health or safety emergency, the record of the disclosure must include the articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals that formed the basis for the disclosure and the names of the parties to whom the District disclosed the information.

c. If the District discloses personally identifiable information to a party and authorizes the party to redisclose information on behalf of the District pursuant to 34 C.F.R. 99.33(b), the District shall record the names of the additional parties to which the receiving party may disclose the information and the legitimate interests under 34 C.F.R. 99.31 which the additional parties have in obtaining the information.