



Public Records Requests - General FAQs

I want to obtain my child's/my student records; should I submit a public records request?

No. The Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act (FERPA) outlines a separate process for parents and students to obtain student educational records. To obtain your own student records you must be at least eighteen. You can obtain student records in several ways –

- 1) Directly through the school by contacting the school's administration;
- 2) Through Special Education Records via email at spedrecords@seattleschools.org where a student is a Special Education student;
- 3) Through the General Counsel's Office by contacting employee Robin Wyman via email at rwyman@seattleschools.org; or
- 4) Online at the District's [Student Archives site](#) for students that have been out of the District for more than two years.

How will the District provide records to me?

The District provides records electronically unless requested in a different format by the requestor. Where small enough, the District provides records via email. When records exceed the size allowed by email, we will place the records on a CD or flash drive for pick up or mailing.

Are there costs associated with receiving public records?

In most instances, yes. Please see Superintendent Procedure 4040SP online [here](#) for costs associated with obtaining District records.

How much detail should I provide when making a records request?

The law requires requestors to make requests for "identifiable" records. To the extent possible, we recommend providing as much detail as possible when making a records request to ensure that we find what you are seeking. Date ranges, keywords if requesting an email search, document names, and any other descriptive terms are all helpful in ensuring we find responsive items.

For example: A requestor is interested in documentation regarding a playground incident that occurred at their neighborhood school and that involved a specific staff member. Their request for all records from/to Employee A using the search term "playground incident" for the time period 1/1/18 to 8/31/18 will result in fewer, but more responsive items that can be provided more quickly to the requestor than if they were to ask for all emails District-wide using the search term "playground incident."

If you have questions regarding how/what to provide, we are happy to help! You can reach us for further clarification or help at publicrecords@seattleschools.org.

Are public records requests confidential?

No. Public records requests are, themselves, public records. Unless otherwise protected by the law, a requestor's identity and information they have provided to the District (including emails, phone numbers, and home mailing addresses) are disclosable.



Will my request be fulfilled within 5 days?

Most requests will not be fulfilled within five business days. Under the law, the District must acknowledge a request for records within 5 business days in one of the following ways –

- 1) by providing the records;
- 2) by providing a reasonable estimate of when the records, or an installment of records, will be available;
- 3) by asking for clarification and, where possible, providing an estimate of when the records will be available; or
- 4) by denying the request.

On average, requests received by the District take longer than five business days to fulfill. As such, most requestors will receive an acknowledgment and an anticipated timeline for providing records in our initial five-day response to their request.

Why is it taking so long to fulfill my request?

We appreciate that requestors would like to receive their documents as quickly as possible and do everything to provide records in a prompt manner. That said, there are a variety of factors that affect how quickly we can provide records. The most common factors are –

Number of open requests: Over the past several years, the District has averaged approximately 80 open requests at any given time. As such, the turnaround time for new requests is generally several weeks to several months out from the date of receipt.

Complexity of the request: Records requests, particularly those involving emails from/to staff members that work with students, can be quite complex. The Public Records Office must review each document individually to ensure protected information is properly redacted or exempted from release. Due to this review, it takes a significant amount of time to review complex requests.

Courtesy provided to staff: The Public Records Office provides courtesy notice to staff, including the name of the requestor, when that staff member's records have specifically been requested. The Public Records Office then gives staff several days to ask questions or raise concerns prior to the release of their records.

How do I appeal a denial, redaction(s), or exemption(s) concerning my request to the District?

To appeal the denial of your request, the search or production of your request, or items withheld in your request, you may submit an appeal in writing to the District. You can do so via email by emailing our office at publicrecords@seattleschools.org. You may also submit an appeal via regular mail at the following address –

*Public Records Office
Office of the General Counsel
MS 32-151
P.O. Box 34165
Seattle, WA 98124-1165*



Within your appeal, please include a copy of the redacted document (if applicable), the District correspondence denying your request (if applicable), and a brief statement identifying the reason for your appeal.