

SECTION: OPERATIONS

TITLE: PUBLIC RECORDS

ADOPTED: June 14, 2016

REVISED:

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

<p>1. Purpose 65 P.S. Sec. 67.101 et seq</p> <p>2. Definition 65 P.S. Sec. 67.102</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">801. PUBLIC RECORDS</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to ensure the District complies with the requirements of the Right-to-Know Act, which allows residents of the United States to inspect and obtain copies of public records.</p> <p>For purposes of this policy, the terms set forth below shall have the following meanings:</p> <p>Business day shall mean a calendar day in which the administrative office of the District is open for business and does not include any school day where the administrative offices are closed due to inclement weather, holidays or emergencies.</p> <p>Financial Record shall mean any account, voucher or contract dealing with the receipt or disbursement of funds or acquisition, use or disposal of services, supplies, materials, equipment or property; or the salary or other payments or expenses paid to an officer or employee of the School District, including the individual's name and title; and a financial audit report excluding the audit's underlying work papers.</p> <p>Public Record shall mean a record, including a financial record, of the District that is not exempt from disclosure under Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Act; is not exempt from being disclosed under any other federal or state law, regulation, judicial order or decree; and is not protected by a privilege.</p> <p>Record shall mean information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, that document a transaction or activity of the School District and that is created, received or retained pursuant to Applicable Law or in connection with a transaction, business or activity of the School District. The term record includes a document, paper, letter, map, book, tape, photograph, film or sound recording, information stored or maintained electronically and a data-processed or image-processed document.</p>
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<p>3. Authority SC 408, 518</p> <p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.502</p> <p>4. Guidelines 65 P.S. Sec. 67.502, 67.901, 67.1101 Pol. 216</p>	<p>Requester shall mean any person who is a resident of the United States and requests access to a record pursuant to the Right-To-Know Act.</p> <p>Response shall mean access to a record or written notice from the District granting, denying or partially granting and partially denying access to a record.</p> <p><u>Open Records Officer</u></p> <p>The Board appoints the Business Administrator to act as the District's Open Records Officer.</p> <p>The Open Records Officer shall be responsible for the following duties in order to implement the requirements of this policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive all written requests for access to records submitted to the District.2. Direct request to other appropriate persons within the District or in another agency for a response.3. Track the District's progress in responding to requests for access to records.4. Issue interim and final responses to submitted requests.5. Maintain a log of all record requests and the District's responses.6. Ensure appropriate School District staff are trained to perform assigned job functions relative to request for access to records. <p>After receiving a written request for access to a public record, the Open Records Officer shall take the following steps in order to track the ongoing status of and final disposition of the District's response:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the date on which the written request was received by the School District.2. Compute the day on which the five (5) business day period for the District's response will expire and make a notation of that date on the written request.3. Maintain an electronic or paper copy of the written request, including all documents submitted with the request, at least until the request has been fulfilled.
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<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.504, 67.505</p>	<p>4. If the written request is denied, in full or in part, maintain the written request for at least thirty (30) days or, if an appeal is filed to challenge the denial, until a final determination is issued regarding the appeal.</p> <p>The District shall post the following information on its official web site to implement this policy and comply with the Right-to-Know Act:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact information for the District’s Open Records Officer. 2. Contact information for the state Office of Open Records. 3. A copy of the District’s form which may be used to file a request. 4. A copy of this policy, its administrative regulations and the District’s request form. <p><u>Requests For Access To Public Records</u></p>
<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.504, 67.505, 67.703</p>	<p>Any requester seeking access to or duplication of a public record must submit a written request addressed to the Open Records Officer. All District employees are directed to immediately forward written requests for access to public records to the Open Records Officer, if they are inadvertently directed to them.</p> <p>A requester must complete the Right-to-Know Request form created by either the District or the state Office of Open Records when submitting a written request. Copies of the District’s form may be obtained on the District’s official web site. The written request must identify or describe the public record sought with sufficient specificity to allow the Open Records Officer to determine which record is being requested, and the name and address to which the District should send its response.</p> <p>The District may, in its sole discretion, honor verbal requests for public records in cases where access can be allowed immediately. However, a verbal request shall not be considered an official request requiring a District response under this policy.</p>
<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.701, 67.703</p>	<p>Any requester may submit a written request to the Open Records Officer using one (1) of the prescribed Right-to-Know Request forms in the following manner:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>In person</u>: At the District Administrative Offices, 48 Swan Way, Warminster, PA 18974, on any business day during the regular business hours.

<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.506</p> <p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.901</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. <u>By regular mail:</u> Sent to the attention of the Open Records Officer at the District Administrative Offices at 48 Swan Way, Warminster, PA 18974.3. <u>By facsimile:</u> Sent to the attention of the Open Records Officer at the following facsimile number 215-441-5105. A written request sent via facsimile will not be considered submitted until a complete and legible copy of the facsimile is received by the Open Records Officer.4. <u>By e-mail:</u> Sent to the attention of Open Records Officer at openro@centennialsd.org. An e-mail will not be considered submitted until a complete accessible copy of that e-mail is received by the Open Records Officer. <p>The District reserves the right to deny a requester access to a public record if the requester has made repeated requests for the same record, the record has already been provided to the requester and the repeated requests have placed an unreasonable burden on the District.</p> <p><u>School District Response To Written Request</u></p> <p>The Open Records Officer will respond to a written request within five (5) business days after its receipt. During that period, the Open Records Officer will make a good faith effort to locate the requested record, determine if it constitutes a public record, redact any confidential portions to allow for disclosure, and prepare an appropriate response.</p> <p>The District response may take any of the following forms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A decision that the requested record is a public record and allowing the requester to inspect and obtain a copy of the public record, in whole or in part. If the requested record is on the District's official web site the response should also explain how to access such information. Alternatively, the requested record may be provided with the response.2. A written denial explaining why the requested document is not a public record thus resulting in the denial of the request, in whole or in part.3. A written notice explaining the request is under review and a final determination can be expected within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the notice.
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A denial of a request shall be in writing and shall set forth the following information:

- 1. A description of the record requested.**
- 2. The specific reason for the denial, including a citation of supporting legal authority.**
- 3. The name, title, address, telephone number and signature of the Open Records Officer on whose authority the denial is issued.**
- 4. The date of the response.**
- 5. An explanation of the procedure to appeal the denial.**

A written notice explaining a request is under review shall set forth the reasons for the review and advise of the date when a final response can be expected, which date shall be within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the notice. The District may advise that the request is under review if any of the following applies:

- 1. The requested record requires redaction.**
- 2. The request requires the District to retrieve records that are stored in a remote location.**
- 3. The District cannot timely respond due to bona fide and specified staffing limitations.**
- 4. A legal review is necessary to determine if the record is a public record.**
- 5. The request does not comply with the District policies regarding access to records.**
- 6. The requester has failed to pay applicable fees.**
- 7. The extent or nature of the request precludes a response within the required time period.**

The Open Records Officer shall render a final determination regarding a written request within thirty (30) days from the date of written notice explaining a request is under review.

If the Open Records Officer does not provide the requester with a written response within the designated time periods, the written request may be deemed denied and the requester may file an appeal within fifteen (15) business days of the expiration of the designated time period, as provided by this policy.

The Open Records Officer may consult with the District's solicitor to address the District's response to a Right-to-Know Act request.

Redacting Records To Allow For Public Access

If a requester seeks access to a record determined to contain both public and confidential information, the District shall grant access to the public information contained in that record and redact the confidential information if it is possible to redact the confidential information. The District, in its sole discretion, may provide public information contained in a redacted record in a format of its choice, which will allow for timely disclosure of public information while simultaneously protecting against the release of confidential information which is not required to be disclosed under the Act. If the confidential information is an integral part of the record and cannot be separated, the District shall deny access to the record.

Personal information that is generally not subject to public disclosure shall be redacted from a record otherwise considered a public record.

The Open Records Officer shall consult the District's administrative regulations under this policy when deciding what information may be redacted from a public record.

If the District redacts information from any record, the redaction will be treated as a partial denial of the record request, and the Open Records Officer will provide the requester with a written response regarding the partial denial, as provided in this policy.

Denial Of Public Access To Certain Records

In certain instances, a record will be exempt from the public disclosure requirements of the Right-to-Know Act.

The Open Records Officer shall consult the District's administrative regulations under this policy when deciding whether or not a record constitutes a public record that must be available to the public.

If a record request is denied, the Open Records Officer will provide the requester with a written response regarding the denial, as provided in this policy.

Electronic Access To Public Records

The District shall make public records available through publicly accessible electronic means when they exist in that medium. When electronic access is sought for a public record, the District will apprise a requester when a requested record is available through publicly accessible electronic means and advise where the public record may be reviewed and downloaded. If the public record is only maintained electronically and is not publicly available, the District will make a paper copy available for inspection upon request subject to payment of the applicable fee.

The District will permit electronic access to a public record if it is routinely available only by electronic means, or if the requester requests electronic access and the record exists in electronic form. A public record will not be considered routinely available only by electronic means if the District maintains a readily available paper copy of that record for requester review.

If a requester makes a written request to access a public record in electronic form, and the public record exists in that medium, the District will provide access to the record in one (1) of the following manners as decided by the District:

1. Provide a computer disk containing the record in electronic form.
2. Respond with an e-mail containing an attachment or electronic link to the record.
3. Provide a paper copy of an electronically-stored public record, if confidential information must be redacted from that record to permit access to the public information.

Inspection Of Public Records

After determining that the record requested is a public record, the District will allow inspection and duplication. The District will provide access in the medium requested if the record exists in that medium. The District need not create documents, but will provide access to public records in the formats in which

they exist. The District shall not charge a fee if a requester only seeks to inspect a public record, except where conversion from electronic to paper form is required.

The inspection of a public record by a requester shall take place at the District administrative offices during regular business hours; unless an alternative location is designated in advance by the District.

Except for copies made and delivered to a requester pursuant to this policy, no public record shall be removed from the control or supervision of the District. In order to preserve the integrity of its public records and school facilities, the District will take reasonable steps to ensure that a requester does not alter, deface or otherwise damage public records or school facilities. Such reasonable steps may include, but are not limited to: the prohibition of eating and drinking when inspecting public records; employee monitoring of a requester while inspecting public records; and the immediate termination of the inspection of public records if the District reasonably believes the requester's conduct would result in damage to its public records or school facilities.

A requester is required to comply with all District rules and procedures applicable to the public when present at school facilities. The District may ask a requester to immediately leave its school facilities if the requester engages in conduct which materially disrupts the operations of school facilities, accesses or attempts access to unauthorized areas of the school facilities or records, or threatens, harasses or intimidates District staff or students.

Duplication And Fees

A public record will be duplicated for the requester, if duplication is requested.

The District may, in its sole discretion, mail or otherwise deliver duplicate copies of public records to a requester.

The Board establishes the following fees in relation to requests for public records:

1. Where duplicates of public records are forwarded to the requester by mail, the requester shall be responsible for the actual cost of postage and mailing.
2. The requester shall be responsible for duplication costs at the rate of twenty-five (\$0.25) per page for all duplicated materials.

65 P.S.
Sec. 67.1307

<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.1307</p>	<p>3. The requester shall be responsible to pay any additional fees for reproduction, duplication and certification of public records at the rate established by the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records as set forth at http://openrecords.state.pa.us.</p> <p>Prior to granting access, the District may require prepayment of estimated fees when the fees required to fulfill the request are expected to exceed \$100.</p>
<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.1307</p>	<p>The District, in its sole discretion, may decide to waive fees associated with the reproduction or delivery of public records if it deems it is in the public interest to do so.</p>
<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.706, 67.903, 67.1101</p>	<p><u>Filing Of Appeals</u></p> <p>If a requester wishes to challenge the written denial or deemed denial of a written request for a public record, the requester must file an appeal with the state Office of Open Records within fifteen (15) business days from the date of the written denial or deemed denial. The appeal shall be in writing and state the grounds upon which the requester asserts that the requested record is a public record and shall address any grounds stated by the District for delaying or denying the request.</p>
<p>65 P.S. Sec. 67.504, 67.505</p>	<p><u>Posting Of Policy</u></p> <p>A copy of this policy and its administrative regulations shall be conspicuously posted in the District administrative offices in an area accessible to the public and on the District’s official web site.</p>
	<p>References:</p> <p>School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 408, 518</p> <p>Right-to-Know Law – 65 P.S. Sec. 67.101 et seq.</p> <p>Americans With Disabilities Act – 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq.</p> <p>Accessibility to Communications, Title 28, Code of Federal Regulations – 28 CFR Sec. 35.160, 35.164</p> <p>Board Policy – 800</p>