



FIVE FAST FACTS

Ohio's Public Records Law

Ohio's Public Records Law grants access to government records to the public, including school district records meeting the definition of a public record under the law. School districts are required to make public records available for inspection within a reasonable time, adopt a public records policy and attend public records training.



1. Anyone may make a public records request.

Any individual, corporation or governmental agency may make a public records request to a school district. The request may be made to any district employee and be transmitted in any format, including written, verbally or via facsimile or email.

2. Public records must be made available for inspection within a reasonable time.

Upon request, a school district must promptly prepare public records and make them available for inspection at reasonable times during regular business hours. The records must be available regardless of format. However, if the records contain information that is exempt from the public records law, that information may be redacted. Any redaction must be plainly visible or the school must inform the requestor of any redaction.

3. School boards must adopt a public records policy.

Each board of education must adopt a public records policy for responding to public records requests. The policy must be distributed to the district records custodian and to each school building. The policy may not limit the number of records an office will make available to a single person; limit the number of records it will make available during a fixed period of time; or establish a set period of time before a district will respond to a public records request unless that period is less than eight hours. The policy or a poster describing it must be posted in a conspicuous location in the board of education's main office and in the main office of each building. The policy also must be included in the employee handbook or manual.

FAST FIVE FACTS — OHIO'S PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

RESOURCES

RC 109.43

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/109.43>

RC 149.011

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/149.011>

RC 149.43

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/149.43>

4. A fee may be charged for public records requests.

A school district may charge only the actual costs it incurs in making copies for public records requests. The district may require the requestor to pay the costs of the copies and mailing in advance. Districts are not required to provide copies of records to the requestor if he or she is unable or unwilling to pay the costs of copies.

5. A district employee may be designated to attend a public records training.

All public officials, whether elected or appointed, have an individual obligation to attend a public records training approved by the Ohio attorney general once per term of office. Alternatively, the board may act to designate an individual to attend the training on behalf of the public officials on the board at that time. The training must be three hours for each term of office for which the elected official was appointed or elected to the public office. Generally, school boards will designate a district employee to attend the training. Since board member terms are staggered, the board will need to designate a designee every two years to meet the requirement of attending once per term for each board member, if the board determines to send a designee to a public records training. If an individual is appointed to the board, that person must attend the training or the board must designate someone to attend once during the term of office.

If you have additional questions, contact OSBA's legal division at (614) 540-4000.



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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

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