

RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS 2020 PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST GUIDELINES

Rhode Island charter schools are subject to the Access to Public Records Request Act, R.I.G.L. § 38-2-1 *et seq.* Accordingly, the Rhode Island League of Charter Schools has drafted the following “Access to Public Records Request Policy and Procedures” to provide guidance to Rhode Island’s charter schools. All modifications of the below policy should be reviewed by legal counsel and in accordance with R.I.G.L. § 38-2-1 *et seq.*

ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST POLICY AND PROCEDURES

SCHOOL adheres to the Rhode Island Access to Public Records Act, R.I.G.L. § 38-2-1 *et seq.* SCHOOL has instituted the following policy and procedures for obtaining public records pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 38-2-1 *et seq.*, and asks that the public employ such procedures when seeking public records from SCHOOL. Please note that while R.I.G.L. § 38-2-1 *et seq.* does not require that a public records request be in writing or in a particular written form, a written request greatly assists SCHOOL in more efficiently identifying and providing the sought records. This policy shall be posted on SCHOOL’S website and be made otherwise readily available to the public.

Public Records Request Process:

1. Write a public records request specifying the public records sought.
2. Mail, email, or fax request to SCHOOL’s Public Records Officer as listed below.
3. SCHOOL will respond to your request within 10 business days or provide you written notice of the need for additional time in order to fulfill your request.
4. SCHOOL will fulfill your request, consistent with its obligations under R.I.G.L. § 38-2-1 *et seq.*, invoicing costs for retrieval of such records, excluding the first hour of work, and will charge \$0.15 per page for hard copies of public records provided.
5. SCHOOL MAY determine that the requested records are exempt from disclosure for a reason set forth in R.I.G.L. § 38-2-2(4)(A) – (AA).
6. If your request is denied, you may petition the superintendent of SCHOOL for a review of the determination made by the Public Records Officer. The **[superintendent OR head of school OR principal OR executive director]** shall make a final determination regarding the request within 10 business days after the submission of the review petition.
7. You may file a complaint with the Attorney General pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 38-2-8 if you feel that you have been improperly denied access to public records. The Attorney General will investigate your complaint, and if the Attorney General determines that the allegations in your complaint are meritorious, he or she may institute proceedings in the Superior Court, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 38-2-8. If the Attorney General ultimately decides not to institute proceedings in the Superior Court and you still feel you have been denied

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access to public records, you may file a lawsuit in Superior Court in accordance with the provisions of R.I.G.L. § 38-2-9.

SCHOOL Designated Public Records Officer:

FIRST, LAST
TITLE
SCHOOL NAME
STREET NAME
CITY, STATE, ZIP
PHONE NUMBER
FAX NUMBER
EMAIL ADDRESS

SCHOOL shall select a designated public records officer as needed and shall update this policy accordingly.

Public Records Request Guidelines:

A public records request should sufficiently detail the information you are seeking under the Access to Public Records Act. You are not, however, required to state why you are seeking the information or to provide any personal information about yourself.

If you know the specific date or date range of the document, include it in your request as the detail will help SCHOOL locate your documents and will result in you spending less on retrieval fees. Additionally, if you have a preferred manner of receiving the information such as fax, hard copy, or e-mail you should specify as such in your request. If it is not unduly burdensome, SCHOOL will fulfill your request in the media of your choice. Also be sure to include the necessary contact information for SCHOOL to respond.

As a best practice, it is advisable to make a copy of your letter and keep it in a safe place. A copy of your original signed letter will be helpful to supporting your claims in the instances that you need to file an appeal or reference your request.