

SOUTHEASTERN GREENE SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: OPERATIONS

TITLE: PUBLIC RECORDS

ADOPTED:

REVISED:

	801. PUBLIC RECORDS
1. Purpose	<p>The Board recognizes the importance of public records as the record of the district's actions and the repository of information about this district. The public has the right under law to inspect and to procure copies of public records, with certain exceptions, subject to Board policy and administrative regulations promulgated by the Superintendent. The School Board shall make the District's public records available for access and duplication to a requester, in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulations promulgated by the Superintendent.</p> <p>The public records of this district shall mean any account, voucher or contract dealing with the receipt or disbursement of funds; acquisition, use or disposal of services, supplies, materials, equipment or other property; or any minutes, orders or decisions fixing the personal or property rights, privileges, immunities, duties or obligations of any person or group.</p>
2. Definition	<p>Definitions:</p> <p><u>Financial record</u> – 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 expensed paid to an officer or employee, including the individual's name and title; and a financial audit report, excluding the audit's underlying work papers.</p> <p><u>Public record</u> – a record, including a financial record, that is not protected by a defined privilege or is not exempt from being disclosed under one of the exemptions in Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law or under other federal or state law or regulation, or judicial degree or order.</p> <p><u>Record</u> – information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, that documents a District transaction or activity and is created, received, or retained pursuant to law or in connection with a District transaction, business or activity, including; ad 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>

	<p><u>Response</u> – the District’s notice informing a requester of a granting of access to a record or the District’s written notice to a requester granting, denying, or partially granting and partially denying access to a requested record.</p> <p><u>Requester</u> – a legal resident of the United States ,or an agency, who requested a record.</p> <p><u>Open Records Officer:</u></p> <p>The board hereby designates the District’s Business Manager as the District’s Open Records Officer. The Open Records Officer shall be responsible to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive written requests for access to records submitted to the District.2. Review and respond to written requests in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulations.3. Direct requests to other appropriate individuals in the District or in another agency.4. Track the District’s progress in responding to requests.5. Issue interim and final responses to submitted requests.6. Maintain a log of all record requests and their disposition.7. Ensure District staff are trained to perform assigned job functions relative to request for access to records. <p>Upon receiving a request for access to a record, the Open Records Officer shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the date of receipt on the written request.2. Compute and note on the written request that day on which the five-day period f or response will expire.3. Maintain an electronic or paper copy of the written request, including all documents submitted with request, until the request has been fulfilled.4. If the written request is denied, maintain the written request for thirty (30) days or, if an appeal is filed, until a final determination is issued or the appeal is deemed denied. <p><u>Guidelines:</u></p> <p>Requesters may access and procure copies of the public records of the District during the regular business hours of the Administration Offices.</p> <p>A requester’s right of access does not include the right to remove a record from the control or supervision of the Open Records Officer.</p> <p>The District shall not limit the number of records requested.</p> <p>When responding to a request for access, the District is not required to create a</p>
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record that does not exist nor compile, maintain, format or organize a record in a manner which the district does not currently use.

Information shall be made available to individuals with disabilities in an appropriate format, upon request and with sufficient advance notice.

The District shall post at the Administrative Office and on the District's web site, if the District maintains a web site, the following information:

1. Contact information for the Open Records Officer.
2. Contact information for the State's Office of Open Records or other applicable appeals officer.
3. The form to be used to file a request, with annotation that the State Office of Open Records form may also be used if the District decided to create its own form.
4. Board policy administrative regulations and procedures governing request for access to the district's public records.

Request for Access:

A written request for access to a public record shall be submitted on the SOUTHEASTERN GREENE RIGHT-TO-REQUEST FORM attached to this Policy, and shall be addressed to the Open Records Officer.

Written requests may be submitted to the District in person, by mail, to a designated facsimile machine, and to a designated e-mail address.

Each request must include the following information:

1. Identification or description of the requested record, in sufficient detail.
2. Medium in which the record is requested.
3. Name and address of the individual to receive the District's response.

The District shall not require an explanation of the reason for the request or the intended use of the requested record, unless otherwise required by law.

Fees:

Except for the duplication fee established by the State, the following reasonable fees are established by the Board relative to a request for public records. The District shall disseminate the within list of fees to requesters.

1. The District will charge the following fees:
 - (a) Printing copy of non-paper record - \$.050 per page
 - (b) Photocopying - \$.025 per page
 - (c) Electronic copy of record – Electronic copies will be provided by means of

	<p>computer disk. For transfer of an electronic file to a computer disk, the charge is \$3.00 for the disk plus \$25.00 per hour for staff time required.</p> <p>(d) Redaction – If redaction is required before the record can be accessed, the District will charge \$25.00 per hour</p> <p>(e) Mailing copy of record</p> <p>(f) Staff time for processing requests requiring more than fifteen (15) minutes of staff time: ½ hour rate after the first fifteen (15) minutes - \$25.00 (pro rated).</p> <p>(g) Costs of shipping and handling – postage plus market rate for supplies.</p> <p>No fee may be imposed for review of a record to determine whether the record is subject to access under law. Any exemption to the imposition of fee as stated in Section 1307 of the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law shall be applicable.</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 \$100.00.</p> <p>The Superintendent may waive duplication fees when the requester duplicates the record or the Superintendent deems it is in the public interest to do so.</p> <p><u>Response to Request:</u></p> <p>District employees shall be directed to immediately forward request for access to public records to the Open Records Officer.</p> <p>Upon receipt of a written request for access to a record, the Open Records Officer shall determine if the requested record is a public record and if the District has possession, custody or control of that record.</p> <p>The Open Records Officer shall respond as promptly as possible under the existing circumstances, and the initial response time shall not exceed five (5) business days from the date the written request is received by the Open Records Officer.</p> <p>The initial response shall grant access to the requested record; deny access to the requested record; partially grant and partially deny access to the requested record; notify the requester of the need for an extension of time to fully respond; or request more detail from the requester to clearly identify the requested material.</p> <p>If the District fails to respond to a request within five (5) business days of receipt, the request for access shall be deemed denied.</p> <p><u>Extension of Time:</u></p> <p>If the Open Records Officer determines that an extension of time is required to respond to a request, in accordance with the factors stated in law, written notice shall</p>
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	<p>be sent within five (5) business days of receipt of request. The notice shall indicate that the request for access is being reviewed, the reason that the review requires an extension, a reasonable date when the response is expected, and an estimate of applicable fees owed when the record becomes available.</p> <p>Up to a thirty (30) day extension for one (1) of the listed reasons does not require the consent of the requester. If the response is not given by the specified date, it shall be deemed denied on the day following that date.</p> <p>A requester may consent in writing to an extension that exceeds thirty (30) days, in which case the request shall be deemed denied on the day following the date specified in the notice if the Open Records Officer has not provided a response by that date.</p> <p><u>Granting of Request:</u></p> <p>If the Open Records Officer determines that the request will be granted, the response shall inform the requester that access is granted and either include information on the regular business hours of the Administration Office, provide electronic access, or state where the requester may go to inspect the records or information electronically at a publicly assessable site.</p> <p>The response shall include a copy of the fee schedule set forth in this Policy or then in effect, a statement that prepayment of fees is required in a specified amount if access to the records will cost in excess of \$100, and the medium in which the records will be provided.</p> <p>A public record shall be provided to the requester in the medium requested if it exists in that form; otherwise, it shall be provided in its existing medium. However, the District is not required to permit use of its computers.</p> <p>The Open Records Officer may respond to a records request by notifying the requester that the record is available through publicly accessible electronic means or that the District shall provide access to inspect the record electronically. If the requester, within thirty (30) days following receipt of the District's notice, submits a written request to have the record converted to paper, the District shall provide access in printed form within five (5) days of receipt of the request for conversion to paper.</p> <p>A public record that the District does not possess but is possessed by a third party with whom the District has contracted to perform a governmental function and which directly relates to that governmental function shall be considered a public record of the District. When the District contracts with such a third party, the District shall require the contractor to agree in writing to comply with requests for such records and to provide the District with the request record in a timely manner to</p>
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	<p>allow the district to comply with law.</p> <p>If the Open Records officer determines that a public record contains information both subject to and not subject to access, the Open Records Officer shall grant access to the information subject to access and deny access to the information not subject to access. The Open Records Officer shall not deny access to a record if information is able to be redacted.</p> <p>If the Open Records Officer responds to a requester that a copy of the requested record is available for delivery at the Administration Office and the requester does not retrieve the record within sixty (60) days of the District's response, the District shall dispose of the copy and retain any fees paid to date.</p> <p><u>Notification to Third Parties:</u></p> <p>When the District produces a record that is not a public record in response to a request, the Open Records Officer shall notify any third party that provided the record to the District, the person that is the subject of the record, and the requester.</p> <p>The Open Records Officer shall notify a third party of a record request if the requested record contains a trade secret or confidential proprietary information, in accordance with law and administrative regulations.</p> <p><u>Denial of Request:</u></p> <p>If the Open Records Officer denies a request for access to a record, whether in whole or in part, a written response shall be sent within five (5) business days of receipt of the request. The response denying the request shall include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Description of the record requested.2. Specific reasons for denial, including a citation of supporting legal authority.3. Name, title, business, address, business telephone number, and signature of the Open Records Officer on whose authority the denial is issued.4. Date of the response.5. Procedure for the requester to appeal a denial of access. <p>The Open Records Officer may deny a request for access to a record if the requester has made repeated requests for that same record and the repeated requests have placed an unreasonable burden on the district.</p> <p>The Open Records Office may deny a request for access to a record when timely access is not possible due to a disaster, or when access may cause physical damage or irreparable harm to the record. To the extent possible, a record's contents shall be made accessible even when the record is physically unavailable.</p>
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Information that is not subject to access and is redacted from a public record shall be deemed a denial.

Filing of Appeals:

Pursuant to the terms of Chapter 11 of the Open Records Act, if a written request for access to a record is denied or deemed denied, the requester may file an appeal with the State's Office of Open Records within fifteen (15) business days of the mailing date of the Open Record Officer's response 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.

Posting of Policy:

A copy of this policy shall be conspicuously posted in the District's Administrative Offices in an area accessible to the public and on the District's official website.

SOUTHEASTERN GREENE RIGHT-TO-KNOW REQUEST FORM

Date Requested:_____

Request submitted by: E-Mail_____ U.S. Mail_____ Fax_____ In-Person_____

Name of Requester (Optional):_____

Street Address (Optional):_____

City/State/County (Required):_____

Telephone Number (Optional):_____

Records Requested:

*Provide as much specific detail as possible so the agency can identify the information.

Do you want copies? Yes_____ or No_____

Do you want to inspect the records? Yes_____ No_____

Right-to-Know Officer:_____

Date received by the Agency:_____

***Public bodies may fill anonymous verbal or written requests. If the requester wishes to pursue the relief and remedies provided for in this Act, the request must be in writing. (Section 702).

****Written requests need not include an explanation why information is sought or the intended use of the information unless otherwise required by law. (Section 703).