	Research and Accountability Responding to Public Information Act Requests	Procedure #	PIA 01
		Implemented	01/03/2018
		Reviewed/Updated	
Page #	1 of 2		
Procedure Owner	Director of Research and Accountability		

Standard Operating Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure clarifies the responsibilities of the Department of Research and Accountability (R&A) in fulfilling Maryland Public Information Act requests.

2. Scope

Maryland's Public Information Act grants the citizens broad rights of access to public records while protecting the school system's legitimate interests and the privacy rights of its students and employees. Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) is committed to transparency in its operations and providing existing records to the public in a timely manner.

Pursuant to Section 4-503 of the General Provisions Article of the Maryland Code, CCPS has designated its Supervisor of Community and Media Relations, as the CCPS representative to receive requests for records under the Maryland Public Information Act.

Occasionally, R&A staff will assist in the collection or creation of documents to fulfill a Public Information Act (PIA) request. The work will be completed according to these procedures.

3. Prerequisites

This procedure only applies to PIA requests that have been forwarded to the Department of Research and Accountability.


4. Responsibilities

While assignments may be distributed to appropriate staff members in the department, the Director of Research and Accountability maintains the primary responsibility for completing requests.

5. Procedure

A. Requests

- a. Requests will be forwarded to R&A from the Supervisor of Community Relations or his/her designee.
- b. The Director of R&A will determine the most appropriate staff member to respond to the request.
- c. The assigned staff member is responsible to determine how much time it will take to fulfill the request.

	Research and Accountability Responding to Public Information Act Requests	Procedure #	PIA 01
		Implemented	01/03/2018
		Reviewed/Updated	
Page #	2 of 2		
Procedure Owner	Director of Research and Accountability		

- d. If the search and preparation of the records is expected to exceed two (2) hours the staff member shall notify the director immediately.

B. Search and Preparation of Records

- a. PIA requests that relate to records that do not exist may be denied.
- b. If the record exists in a dynamic, electronic format that requires the development of a physical report, the record should be considered in existence and the amount of time necessary to develop and produce the record should be determined by the staff member.

C. Redaction, Suppression, or Denial

- a. Staff shall consult the Administrative Regulations 3 of 3 for Board Policy BHD: Open Communication “Denial of the Right to Inspect or Receive Information” to ensure compliance.
- b. Staff shall suppress data that may be considered Personally Identifiable Information as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Suppression shall occur according to Maryland State Department of Education guidelines and the recommendations for protecting student privacy published in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Brief 3 - Statistical Methods for Protecting Personally Identifiable Information.
- c. The minimum group size from reporting student data shall be ten (10).

D. Distribution of Records

- a. When completed the records should be forwarded to the Office of Community and Media relations for distribution to the requestor.
- b. Copies of reports created under the Maryland PIA shall be posted in an appropriate place on the Department of R&A website.

6. References

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; 20 U.S.C. § 1232G; 34 CFR PART 99);
 Board Policy BHD: Open Communication and the corresponding Administrative Regulations.

7. Definitions

Personally Identifiable Information – Personally identifiable information includes the student's name, address, telephone number, social security number, or other personally identifiable information. For the purposes of this procedure, personally identifiable information has a meaning consistent with its meaning under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).