NAVIGATING DATA REQUESTS AND PUBLIC MEETING ISSUES

By: John P. Edison
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Jimmy’s parents

- Did Jimmy’s parents make a proper data request?
- If yes, what is the timeline for responding to their request and may the school district require them to pay a charge?
- If yes, can the school district deny any portion of the request?
  - Narrative report?
  - Video?
  - E-mails and text messages?
- If the request was not proper, how should the Board member respond to Jimmy’s parents?

Anonymous supporters

- Is the anonymous e-mail sent to the Superintendent a proper data request?
- The Superintendent wants to know who is making the request and why the request is being made. Is this permissible?
- If the request is proper, may the school district impose a charge for responding to the request?
- How should the Superintendent respond to this request?
Sample response to anonymous supporters

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to your request to inspect all "directory information" concerning Jimmy Smith and all records related to the May 1, 2019 incident in the high school gym. You do not have the right to access records related to the gym incident because they contain private educational data and private personnel data. See Minn. Stat. 13.32 & 13.43. The public data on Mr. Smith that has been designated as "directory information" is available for your inspection at a mutually agreeable time in the school district’s main offices during normal business hours. Please contact my assistant, John Doe at (555) 555-555 to schedule a time for your inspection.

Sincerely,
Superintendent

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SPECIAL MEETING ISSUES

- Did the school district provide proper notice of the special meeting?
- If notice was proper, may the school board close the meeting to discuss the gym incident?
- If so, what procedure should the school board follow to close the meeting?
Crowd control

- Can the Superintendent direct Coach Mo not to attend the meeting?
- Does the school board have to allow for public comment during the special meeting? What if it was a regular meeting?
- Should the school board allow for public comment during the special meeting?
- If the school board does not allow public comment, how should it handle disruptive attendees?
- If the school board does allow for public comment, what types of limitations may be imposed?

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