

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS - PLS. READ

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Are you informed about how schools use information from student records? The school's use of student information is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that applies to all public schools in the nation. This law guides how school districts maintain, release, and transfer student records.

Under FERPA, the school district releases certain information about individual students, without a parent signature. Such information-called "Directory Information" - includes a student's name, address, listed telephone numbers, and photograph. (A complete list of the kind of information that may be released is in the Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook.) This information may be released to entities such as school photographers, newspapers, parent-teacher associations, and through school publications such as theater playbills, yearbooks, and sports programs.

Additionally, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) includes a provision that requires high schools to release students' private information to military recruiters, or risk losing federal funding. Under NCLB, public high schools must give military recruiters students' information unless parents "opt out" in writing. Recruiters use this information, which includes names, addresses, and phone numbers to individually recruit students through phone calls and in-person visits.

Parents may "opt out" of either of these releases by sending the principal a note asking not to have their child's information released. The note should be dated, signed, and say clearly, "I do not want my child's Directory Information released to anyone," or "I do not want my child's Directory Information released to military recruiters." There is also a form for this purpose on page 34 of the *Student Right and Responsibilities Handbook*.

If you indicate you do not want your child's Directory Information released to anyone, then you should be aware your child's information will not be given to the parent teacher associations, colleges, or companies that provide graduation services. In this case, your child's information will not appear in the school directory.

The 2011-12 Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbooks will be mailed home this August. Students will review key points in the handbook and in their Student Planners during the second week of school. According to the handbook, parents have 15 days from receiving the information to provide the principal with the request to "opt out." **Thus, we ask that parents notify us on or before September 30, 2011, if they choose to opt out of directory information to all, or to opt out just to military recruiters.**

Parents may also opt out after the 15-day limit, but the district cannot be responsible for information that was released prior to a late request.

These "opt outs" do not affect the transfer of records from one school to another. When students move to a new school or district, we are required to send their records with them.

Complete information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is available in the Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook.