

# **Selected Statutes Relating to Pupil Records**

**Legislative Council Special Study Committee  
on School Safety**

**October 7, 2008**

## **S. 118.125 Pupil Records**

### **118.125(1)**

(1) Definitions. In this section:

(a) "Behavioral records" means those pupil records that include psychological tests, personality evaluations, records of conversations, any written statement relating specifically to an individual pupil's behavior, tests relating specifically to achievement or measurement of ability, the pupil's physical health records other than his or her immunization records or any lead screening records required under s. 254.162, law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 48.396 (1) or 938.396 (1) (b) 2. or (c) 3., and any other pupil records that are not progress records.

(b) "Directory data" means those pupil records which include the pupil's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, photographs, degrees and awards received and the name of the school most recently previously attended by the pupil.

(be) "Law enforcement agency" has the meaning given in s. 165.83 (1) (b).

(bL) "Law enforcement unit" means any individual, office, department, division, or other component of a school district that is authorized or designated by the school board to do any of the following:

1. Enforce any law or ordinance, or refer to the appropriate authorities a matter for enforcement of any law or ordinance, against any person other than the school district.
2. Maintain the physical security and safety of a public school.

(bs) "Law enforcement unit records" means records maintained by a law enforcement unit that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement.

(c) "Progress records" means those pupil records which include the pupil's grades, a statement of the courses the pupil has taken, the pupil's attendance record, the pupil's immunization records, any lead screening records required under s. 254.162 and records of the pupil's school extracurricular activities.

(cm) "Pupil physical health records" means those pupil records that include basic health information about a pupil, including the pupil's immunization records, an emergency medical card, a log of first aid and medicine administered to the pupil, an athletic permit card, a record concerning the pupil's ability to participate in an education program, any lead screening records required under s. 254.162, the results of any routine screening test, such as for hearing, vision or scoliosis, and any follow-up to such test, and any other basic health information, as determined by the state superintendent.

(d) "Pupil records" means all records relating to individual pupils maintained by a school but does not include any of the following:

1. Notes or records maintained for personal use by a teacher or other person who is required by the state superintendent under s. 115.28 (7) to hold a certificate, license, or permit if such records and notes are not available to others.
2. Records necessary for, and available only to persons involved in, the psychological treatment of a pupil.
3. Law enforcement unit records.

(e) "Record" means any material on which written, drawn, printed, spoken, visual, or electromagnetic information is recorded or preserved, regardless of physical form or characteristics.

**118.125(2)**

(2) CONFIDENTIALITY. All pupil records maintained by a public school shall be confidential, except as provided in pars. (a) to (p) and sub. (2m). The school board shall adopt regulations to maintain the confidentiality of such records.

(a) A pupil, or the parent or guardian of a minor pupil, shall, upon request, be shown and provided with a copy of the pupil's progress records.

(b) An adult pupil or the parent or guardian of a minor pupil shall, upon request, be shown, in the presence of a person qualified to explain and interpret the records, the pupil's behavioral records. Such pupil or parent or guardian shall, upon request, be provided with a copy of the behavioral records.

**118.125(2)(c)**

(c) 1. The judge of any court of this state or of the United States shall, upon request, be provided by the school district clerk or his or her designee with a copy of all progress records of a pupil who is the subject of any proceeding in such court.

2. Names of dropouts shall be provided to a court in response to an order under s. 118.163 (2m) (b).

**118.125(2)(cg)**

(cg) The school district clerk or his or her designee shall provide a law enforcement agency with a copy of a pupil's attendance record if the law enforcement agency certifies in writing that the pupil is under investigation for truancy or for allegedly committing a criminal or delinquent act and that the law enforcement agency will not further disclose the pupil's attendance record except as permitted under s. 938.396 (1) (a). A school district clerk or designee who discloses a copy of a pupil's attendance record to a law enforcement agency for purposes of a truancy investigation shall notify the pupil's parent or guardian of that disclosure as soon as practicable after that disclosure.

**118.125(2)(ch)**

(ch) The school district clerk or his or her designee shall provide a fire investigator under s. 165.55 (15) with a copy of a pupil's attendance record if the fire investigator certifies in writing that the pupil is under investigation under s. 165.55, that the pupil's attendance record is necessary for the fire investigator to pursue his or her investigation and that the fire investigator will use and further disclose the pupil's attendance record only for the purpose of pursuing that investigation.

**118.125(2)(ck)**

(ck) The school district clerk or his or her designee shall make pupil records available for inspection or, upon request, disclose the contents of pupil records to authorized representatives of the department of corrections, the department of health services, the department of justice, or a district attorney for use in the prosecution of any proceeding or any evaluation conducted under ch. 980, if the pupil records involve or relate to an individual who is the subject of the proceeding or evaluation. The court in which the proceeding under ch. 980 is pending may issue any protective orders that it determines are appropriate concerning pupil records made available or disclosed under this paragraph. Any representative of the department of corrections, the department of health services, the department of justice, or a district attorney may disclose information obtained under this paragraph for any purpose consistent with any proceeding under ch. 980.

**118.125(2)(cm)**

(cm) If school attendance is a condition of a child's dispositional order under s. 48.355 (2) (b) 7. or 938.355 (2) (b) 7., the school board shall notify the county department that is responsible for supervising the child within 5 days after any violation of the condition by the child.

**118.125(2)(d)**

(d) Pupil records shall be made available to persons employed by the school district which the pupil attends who are required by the department under s. 115.28 (7) to hold a license and other school district officials who have been determined by the school board to have legitimate educational interests, including safety interests, in the pupil records. Law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 938.396 (1) (c) 3. shall be made available as provided in s. 118.127 (2). A school board member or an employee of a school district may not be held personally liable for any damages caused by the nondisclosure of any information specified in this paragraph unless the member or employee acted with actual malice in failing to disclose the information. A school district may not be held liable for any damages caused by the nondisclosure of any information specified in this paragraph unless the school district or its agent acted with gross negligence or with reckless, wanton, or intentional misconduct in failing to disclose the information.

**118.125(2)(e)**

(e) Upon the written permission of an adult pupil, or the parent or guardian of a minor pupil, the school shall make available to the person named in the permission the pupil's progress records or such portions of the pupil's behavioral records as determined by the person authorizing the release. Law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 48.396 (1) or 938.396 (1) (b) 2. or (c) 3. may not be made available under this paragraph unless specifically identified by the adult pupil or by the parent or guardian of a minor pupil in the written permission.

**118.125(2)(f)**

(f) Pupil records shall be provided to a court in response to subpoena by parties to an action for in camera inspection, to be used only for purposes of impeachment of any witness who has testified in the action. The court may turn said records or parts thereof over to parties in the action or their attorneys if said records would be relevant and material to a witness's credibility or competency.

**118.125(2)(g)**

(g) 1. The school board may provide any public officer with any information required to be maintained under chs. 115 to 121.

2. Upon request by the department, the school board shall provide the department with any information contained in a pupil record that relates to an audit or evaluation of a federal or state-supported program or that is required to determine compliance with requirements under chs. 115 to 121. The department shall keep confidential all pupil records provided to the department by a school board.

**118.125(2)(h)**

(h) Information from a pupil's immunization records shall be made available to the department of health services to carry out the purposes of s. 252.04.

**118.125(2)(hm)**

(hm) Information from any pupil lead screening records shall be made available to state and local health officials to carry out the purposes of ss. 254.11 to 254.178.

**118.125(2)(i)**

(i) Upon request, the school district clerk or his or her designee shall provide the names of pupils who have withdrawn from the public school prior to graduation under s. 118.15 (1) (c) to the technical college district board in which the public school is located or, for verification of eligibility for public assistance under ch. 49, to the department of health services, the department of children and families, or a county department under s. 46.215, 46.22, or 46.23.

**118.125(2)(j)**

(j) 1. Except as provided under subs. 2. and 3., directory data may be disclosed to any person, if the school has notified the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of the categories of information which it has designated as directory data with respect to each

pupil, has informed the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of that pupil that he or she has 14 days to inform the school that all or any part of the directory data may not be released without the prior consent of the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem and has allowed 14 days for the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of that pupil to inform the school that all or any part of the directory data may not be released without the prior consent of the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem.

2. If a school has notified the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem that a pupil's name and address has been designated as directory data, has informed the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of the pupil that he or she has 14 days to inform the school that the pupil's name and address may not be released without the prior consent of the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem, has allowed 14 days for the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of the pupil to inform the school that the pupil's name and address may not be released without the prior consent of the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem and the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem has not so informed the school, the school district clerk or his or her designee, upon request, shall provide a technical college district board with the name and address of each such pupil who is expected to graduate from high school in the current school year.

3. If a school has notified the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of the information that it has designated as directory data with respect to any pupil, has informed the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of the pupil that he or she has 14 days to inform the school that such information may not be released without the prior consent of the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem, has allowed 14 days for the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem of the pupil to inform the school that such information may not be released without the prior consent of the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem and the parent, legal guardian or guardian ad litem has not so informed the school, the school district clerk or his or her designee, upon request, shall provide any representative of a law enforcement agency, district attorney, city attorney or corporation counsel, county department under s. 46.215, 46.22 or 46.23 or a court of record or municipal court with such information relating to any such pupil enrolled in the school district for the purpose of enforcing that pupil's school attendance, investigating alleged criminal or delinquent activity by the pupil or responding to a health or safety emergency.

**118.125(2)(k)**

(k) A school board may disclose personally identifiable information from the pupil records of an adult pupil to the parents or guardian of the adult pupil, without the written consent of the adult pupil, if the adult pupil is a dependent of his or her parents or guardian under 26 USC 152, unless the adult pupil has informed the school, in writing, that the information may not be disclosed.

**118.125(2)(L)**

(L) A school board shall disclose the pupil records of a pupil in compliance with a court order under s. 48.236 (4) (a), 48.345 (12) (b), 938.34 (7d) (b), 938.396 (1) (d), or 938.78 (2) (b) 2. after making a reasonable effort to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian.

**118.125(2)(m)**

(m) A parent who has been denied periods of physical placement with a child under s. 767.41 (4) does not have the rights of a parent or guardian under pars. (a) to (j) with respect to that child's pupil records.

**118.125(2)(n)**

(n) For the purpose of providing services to a pupil before adjudication, a school board may disclose pupil records to a law enforcement agency, district attorney, city attorney, corporation counsel, agency, as defined in s. 938.78 (1), intake worker under s. 48.067 or 938.067, court of record, municipal court, private school, or another school board if disclosure is pursuant to an interagency agreement and the person to whom the records are disclosed certifies in writing that the records will not be disclosed to any other person except as permitted under this subsection.

**118.125(2)(p)**

(p) A school board may disclose pupil records to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of any individual.

**118.125(2m)**

(2m) CONFIDENTIALITY OF PUPIL PHYSICAL HEALTH RECORDS. (a) Except as provided in par. (b), any pupil record that relates to a pupil's physical health and that is not a pupil physical health record shall be treated as a patient health care record under ss. 146.81 to 146.84.

(b) Any pupil record that concerns the results of a test for the presence of HIV, antigen or nonantigenic products of HIV or an antibody to HIV shall be treated as provided under s. 252.15. In this subsection, "HIV" has the meaning given in s. 252.01 (1m).

**118.125(3)**

(3) MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS. Each school board shall adopt rules in writing specifying the content of pupil records and the time during which pupil records shall be maintained. No behavioral records may be maintained for more than one year after the pupil ceases to be enrolled in the school, unless the pupil specifies in writing that his or her behavioral records may be maintained for a longer period. A pupil's progress records shall be maintained for at least 5 years after the pupil ceases to be enrolled in the school. A school board may maintain the records on microfilm, on an optical disk, or in electronic format if authorized under s. 19.21 (4) (c), or in such other form as the school board deems appropriate. A school board shall maintain law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 48.396 (1) or 938.396 (1) (b) 2. or (c) 3. separately from a pupil's other pupil records. Rules adopted under this subsection shall be published by the school board as a class 1 notice under ch. 985.

**118.125(4)**

(4) TRANSFER OF RECORDS. Within 5 working days, a school district shall transfer to another school or school district all pupil records relating to a specific pupil if the

transferring school district has received written notice from the pupil if he or she is an adult or his or her parent or guardian if the pupil is a minor that the pupil intends to enroll in the other school or school district or written notice from the other school or school district that the pupil has enrolled or from a court that the pupil has been placed in a juvenile correctional facility, as defined in s. 938.02 (10p), or a secured residential care center for children and youth, as defined in s. 938.02 (15g). In this subsection, "school" and "school district" include any juvenile correctional facility, secured residential care center for children and youth, adult correctional institution, mental health institute, or center for the developmentally disabled, that provides an educational program for its residents instead of or in addition to that which is provided by public and private schools.

**118.125(5)**

(5) USE FOR SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION.

(a) Except as provided in par. (b), nothing in this section prohibits a school district from using a pupil's records in connection with the suspension or expulsion of the pupil or the use of such records by a multidisciplinary team under ch. 115.

(b) Law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 48.396 (1) or 938.396 (1) (b) 2. or (c) 3. and records of the court assigned to exercise jurisdiction under chs. 48 and 938 or of a municipal court obtained under s. 938.396 (2g) (m) may not be used by a school district as the sole basis for expelling or suspending a pupil or as the sole basis for taking any other disciplinary action, including action under the school district's athletic code, against a pupil.

**118.125(6)**

(6) APPLICATION TO EXISTING RECORDS. Any records existing on June 9, 1974 need not be revised for the purpose of deleting information from pupil records to comply with this section.

**118.125(7)**

(7) DISCLOSURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT RECORDS. A school board shall treat law enforcement unit records of juveniles in the same manner as a law enforcement agency is required to treat law enforcement officers' records of juveniles under s. 938.396 (1) (a).

## **S. 118.128 Information Related To Pupil Harm To Others**

### **118.128**

If a school district determines, based on evidence that a pupil engaged in behavior that seriously physically harmed another individual within the previous 12 months or that a pupil has engaged in a pattern of behavior causing serious physical harm to another individual, that there is reasonable cause to believe that the pupil may engage in behavior at school or while under the supervision of a school authority that is physically harmful to another individual, the school district may provide information concerning the pupil's physically harmful behavior to the pupil's teachers and to any other school district official who has a legitimate educational or safety interest in the information. The information provided under this section shall be limited to information reasonably necessary to meet the educational needs of the pupil and the safety needs of other pupils and school personnel. A teacher or other school district official may not disclose information provided to him or her under this section to any other person.

## **S. 118.125(1) Definition of Directory Data**

### **118.125(1)**

(1) Definitions. In this section:

(b) "Directory data" means those pupil records which include the pupil's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, photographs, degrees and awards received and the name of the school most recently previously attended by the pupil.

## **S. 118.127 Law Enforcement Agency Information**

### **118.127(1)**

(1) Upon receipt of information from a law enforcement agency under s. 48.396 (1) or 938.396 (1) (b) 2. or (c) 3., the school district administrator or private school administrator who receives the information shall notify any pupil named in the information, and the parent or guardian of any minor pupil named in the information, of the information.

## **Statutes Referring to School Officials' Authority to Obtain Records**

### **118.125(2)(d)**

(d) Pupil records shall be made available to persons employed by the school district which the pupil attends who are required by the department under s. 115.28 (7) to hold a license and other school district officials who have been determined by the school board to have legitimate educational interests, including safety interests, in the pupil records. Law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 938.396 (1) (c) 3. shall be made available as provided in s. 118.127 (2). A school board member or an employee of a school district may not be held personally liable for any damages caused by the nondisclosure of any information specified in this paragraph unless the member or employee acted with actual malice in failing to disclose the information. A school district may not be held liable for any damages caused by the nondisclosure of any information specified in this paragraph unless the school district or its agent acted with gross negligence or with reckless, wanton, or intentional misconduct in failing to disclose the information.

### **118.127(2)**

(2) A school district or private school may disclose information from law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 938.396 (1) (c) 3. only to persons employed by the school district who are required by the department under s. 115.28 (7) to hold a license, to persons employed by the private school as teachers, and to other school district or private school officials who have been determined by the school board or governing body of the private school to have legitimate educational interests, including safety interests, in that information. In addition, if that information relates to a pupil of the school district or private school, the school district or private school may also disclose that information to those employees of the school district or private school who have been designated by the school board or governing body of the private school to receive that information for the purpose of providing treatment programs for pupils enrolled in the school district or private school. A school district may not use law enforcement officers' records obtained under s. 938.396 (1) (c) 3. as the sole basis for expelling or suspending a pupil or as the sole basis for taking any other disciplinary action, including action under the school district's athletic code, against a pupil.