

Transparency Project

Post typical questions on your district website.

Advantages to posting district information on your website:

1. Transparency is not just a fancy word. Your district will be trusted once again.
2. Your Treasurer frees up a massive amount of time when they can just send public records requesters a link to the information they are requesting instead of a pile of documents.
3. People will go to the district website to see the information you want them to see.

Post the district Organizational Chart where it is easy to see so that everyone knows the formal and informal lines of communications.

A. Financial Transparency

1. How does your district report their financials to the State? Place these reports on your website with a discussion as to which one you use and why.

- a) Cash basis
- b) GAAP
- c) Should your district still do a CAFR?

<https://www.municipalbonds.com/education/understanding-the-comprehensive-annual-financial-reports-cafrs/>

2. Staff and faculty pay for the last three years. This is easily accomplished by the district EMIS reporter.

3. List of all forms of Insurance-premiums paid by district and by employee, HSA contributions by district and employee.

4. List of all Supplemental contracts and the pay for each for the last three years.

5. List for the last 3 years the % increases for Steps, Base and Merit raises.

6. Amount paid for memberships to “professional” and trade organizations.

7. Amount paid for each employee retirement, employee portion and the district portion. This must include the amounts picked up by the district.

8. Travel reimbursements and amounts for last three years.

9. Monthly credit card statements.

10. Cell phone bills for last three years.

11. Extra-curricular, including athletic and PTO, yearly audit reports.

12. List of all vendors.

13. Budget for continuing education and the classes taken to be reimbursed.

14. Financial Advisory Team minutes.

15. Post costs for all programs that are not required such as: all day kindergarten and universal preschool. These have shown to be a huge failure in the past - “Head Start” program where 9 billion was wasted and those participants did not gain academically past the second grade. See our website

for the research on this. <https://www.cato.org/commentary/head-start-tragic-waste-money>

16. Policy on how summer activities are funded and money tracked.
17. Policy on whether teachers get paid to attend after school events.
18. Policy for local mileage reimbursement and who gets it.

B. District details and demographics.

1. Enrollment for last 5 years.
2. Average class size, include class size for every class.
3. Types of materials and supplies for each grade level and those still needed.
4. List each field trip for each class. Where to and cost.
5. List all supplemental contracts with pay for each.
6. List which administrators get their retirements picked up by the district.
7. Number of sick days given with pay, and without pay as well as the number of personal days off with pay.

C. Curriculum

1. Minutes of all curriculum committees.
2. All titles of approved textbooks with link to read them.
3. List of all dates of textbook discussions and adoptions.
4. List and pictures of all classroom materials by grade.
5. List of all current holdings in your district libraries by building.
6. Pictures of every classroom walls.
7. Post district policy which requires all classroom materials used to be approved.
8. Open up all classrooms to audio recordings or real time access to audio in each classroom.

D. Business

1. Post Superintendent and Treasurer job descriptions.
2. Post President of the board job description.
3. Post every board member's job description – see our link.
4. Policy on transportation requirements and when it can be cut or removed from the public.
5. All board meeting policies, i.e. public participation, where announced, types of board meetings, who sets agenda and who can add to the agenda.
6. How much is the district allowed to charge for after school activities, district philosophy on these charges and when they can be increased – not to be used to extort more from the parents and community when a levy is needed.
7. Maximum and minimum class sizes and board philosophy for these numbers.
8. Retire- rehire policy and board philosophy for hiring retired persons. Why does the board believe this is a good practice when the rest of the private sector has their retirement reduced if they go back to work?

E. Board Committees

1. List of board committees – mention that all of these committees are by law open to the public and are required to be announced to the public at least 24 hours in advance. All of these committees must take and publish meeting minutes.

- a. Curriculum – how are members chosen and who can apply to be a member. When meetings are announced and where.
- b. Business Advisory Committee
- c. Financial Advisory Committee or Budget and Finance Committee
- d. Public Relations/Customer Service Committee
- e. Policy Committee
- f. Compensation and Evaluations Committee

2. List of Superintendent and Treasurer Committees – state how these members are selected and how a member of the community can apply to be on these committees.

What can be done if the district is not transparent with the community?

Board members are the conduit to the community. If your board does not want to be transparent with their community by posting this information on their website, board members must inform the community that this district thinks it is too much work to be completely transparent with them.

If the district claims that this project is simply too expensive or takes too much staff time, the board may need to seek places where the budget could be cut to allow for greater transparency to the community they serve. Perhaps the cell phones, or the retirement pick up can be removed or cut back to afford better transparency with the community.