

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Effective: November 2, 2021

I. General Provisions

- A. All records are the property of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).
- B. Board members and school system officials will be responsible for records in their custody.
- C. The HCPSS Records Management Office (RMO) will work with school system officials to create and maintain file plans for their office/department or school.
- D. The HCPSS will structure its records management program around the lifecycle of information which encompasses the creation, maintenance, use, storage and final disposition of a record.
- E. HCPSS offices, departments, and schools will identify and protect HCPSS vital records.
- F. HCPSS offices, departments and schools will notify the RMO of any upcoming office/department relocations, to start the planning process to transfer, relocate and disposition of records well ahead of time.
- G. Transitory records will:
 - 1. Be retained for only as long as they are actively used or referred to;
 - 2. Be destroyed once they are determined to be not in active use; and
 - 3. Not be maintained as the substitute for the official record.

II. Employing the Records and Information Disposition Schedules (RIDS)

- A. All HCPSS Board members and school system officials will comply with the RIDS as their systemwide tool to identify and manage records created and maintained by the HCPSS.
- B. All HCPSS Board members and school system officials will match records in their offices and departments with the RIDS, to:
 - 1. Determine which records are temporary or permanent;

2. Follow record retention requirements;
 3. Follow record cutoff guidance; and
 4. Review applicable state and federal citations.
- C. Most HCPSS records cannot and should not be kept permanently. The status of records in the HCPSS will be determined by the guidance provided by the RIDS. All records, regardless of medium, fall into one of two categories for disposition purposes:
1. Temporary records that have met their retention period will be:
 - a. Transferred to off-site storage for the remainder of their retention, or
 - b. Destroyed in accordance with established procedures and approvals in the RIDS (the time may vary from a few months to many years); and
 - c. Documented on the Certification of Destruction Form, which is submitted to the State Archivist for approval.
 2. Permanent records are sufficiently valuable for historical or other purposes and warrant continued preservation. When these records are no longer needed to support the HCPSS, departments, offices and schools will:
 - a. Store records permanently in the State Archives (according to the security classification, permanent records will be made available for scholars, historians, researchers and the public);
 - b. Clearly identify records with the information contained in the Records Transfer Inventory Worksheet and Records Condition Assessment Form. The forms will include:
 - i. Record Series Title;
 - ii. Record Description;
 - iii. Record Schedule Authorization Number;
 - iv. Date of Contents; and
 - v. Total Volume.
 3. If HCPSS records are destroyed by an outside records management provider, in accordance with the terms of the RIDS, the RMO will submit a copy of the vendor's Certificate of Records Destruction to the Maryland State Archives.
- D. All school system officials will contact the RMO if a record does not match a current record schedule in RIDS. If an HCPSS record is unscheduled:
1. School system officials will contact the RMO to develop a new schedule;

2. School system officials will follow procedures to schedule any new or unscheduled records by completing the following:
 - a. A records survey,
 - b. A records inventory; and
 - c. A records appraisal.
 3. School system officials will work with the RMO to complete the mandatory records forms to start the approval process.
- E. All HCPSS Board members and school system officials will follow the RIDS in all cases unless the record:
1. Is subject to a litigation hold;
 2. Is subject to an internal or external audit;
 3. Is subject to a MPIA;
 4. Has been subpoenaed; or
 5. Is required to be maintained longer due to a change in state or federal laws or regulations.

III. Managing Records Disposition

- A. To manage disposition, school system officials will:
1. Preserve records of continuing value such as those reflecting HCPSS activities of historical interest;
 2. Transfer inactive records to off-site storage for the remainder of their retention period; or
 3. Destroy records of temporary value as soon as they have met their retention period.
- B. To transfer records to any off-site storage facility, school system officials will:
1. Review and remove non-record material from files to be transferred;
 2. Pack the records in the approved record boxes obtained through the RMO;
 3. Complete a Box List Form for each records box to document files for efficient retrieval (if applicable);
 4. Complete the Request to Transfer Form;

5. Email a copy of their completed Request to Transfer Form to the RMO for review and approval; and,
 6. Contact the RMO to coordinate the records transfer to either the state or local storage facility.
- C. To transfer records, school system officials will contact the RMO to initiate and arrange for records transfers to any off-site storage facilities including the State Archives. Confidential records will be marked restricted.
- D. If an HCPSS Board of Education member or school system official has reason to believe that a particular record may be subject to potential or actual litigation, the Board member or school system official will not follow the RIDS. In such a case, the Board member or school system official will notify the RMO.
1. The RMO will consult with legal counsel who will determine whether any record is required to be maintained beyond the required retention period due to litigation. All such records will be maintained in their original form, regardless of any other provisions in law, policy, regulations or rules.
 2. Legal counsel will inform, in writing, all school system officials who have records subject to potential or actual litigation that there will be a litigation hold on the record.

IV. Managing the Protection of Records

- A. Confidential records are:
1. Protected against release or distribution by federal, state or controlling law/policy, and
 2. Maintained in a manner that requires:
 - a. Protection of confidentiality;
 - b. Compliance with federal, state or controlling law/policy and;
 - c. Compliance with HCPSS policies.
 3. Shredded to ensure the destruction of all confidential information, including personally identifiable information (PII), when no longer required to be maintained.
- B. Non-confidential records, (public records that do not contain any PII and/or have not been deemed confidential), will be recycled after retention has been met.
- C. School system officials who fail to maintain the confidentiality of confidential records are subject to disciplinary action.

- D. School system officials will treat records as confidential unless:
1. The record is created or maintained with the intention of sharing with the general public;
 2. The record was created or maintained with the intention of sharing it with a specific person, or persons who are not employed by the Board, in which case the record may be shared with the intended recipient(s);
 3. The record must be revealed by law, court order or subpoena, as determined by legal counsel;
 4. The records must be revealed through litigation or other legal complaint process, as determined by legal counsel; or
 5. The record must be revealed as part of an internal or external audit, as determined by the Superintendent/designee.
- E. Individuals whose employment status or role in the HCPSS has been changed will not remove any HCPSS records from the property and will:
1. Identify all HCPSS records in their custody;
 2. Identify personal papers and non-record copies for removal;
 3. Turn in file cabinet keys; and
 4. Certify that all HCPSS records have been identified and transferred to management, a designated Records Custodian or the RMO.

V. Creating and Maintaining HCPSS File Plans

- A. The RMO will work with school system officials to create file plans for their office/department or school.
- B. File plans specify how records are to be organized once they have been created or received, and are a “roadmap” to the records created and maintained and dispositioned by the HCPSS. The HCPSS file plan file structure will:
1. Describe the person and the office that maintains the records;
 2. Describe the Records Liaison Officer and/or Records Custodian;
 3. Describe the school system official who approved the File Plan before it was put into effect;
 4. Detail HCPSS File code;

5. Describe the title of each record, record description and record arrangement;
6. Detail the medium of each record (electronic, paper, digital media);
7. Describe any restrictions of access;
8. Detail the status of the vital records;
9. Describe record location (all information including address of the storage facility and room number where they are kept);
10. Detail the dates of the records (all dates of the records, when were they retired, closed, destroyed or transferred);
11. Detail disposition status (litigation hold, inactive, active);
12. Detail school system officials in charge of the file plan, and;
13. Detail the date the file plan was last revised.

VI. Managing Internal and External Records Requests

- A. HCPSS will proactively disclose records that are frequently used and are in the general welfare of the public which do not require a request under the MPIA or other formal procedures. This will be done through:
 1. The use of the school system's public website which can be searched by topic or keyword and will contain information such as school system policies and student handbooks, organizational structures and contact information, school calendars, academic and student services overviews, budget overviews, and topical news announcements;
 2. The use of the Board's public website which can be searched by meeting date or subject matter and will contain information such as official meeting minutes as well as reports to the Board to inform and support decisions made under its authority; and
 3. Online access to responses to requests made under the MPIA since FY2018 that are available for public inspection.
- B. School system officials will direct the public to the above records upon request in order to be proactive in the sharing of readily available information.
- C. School system officials will follow Board policy and state law to allow for efficient compliance and timely responses to any requests for records pursuant to the MPIA, any litigation hold notices, internal or external investigations, court orders, or other requests for HCPSS records.

- D. Public requests for the release of information not available under (A) will be handled by the Superintendent/designee in compliance with the MPIA.
- E. Public requests for release of records not available under (A) made to any school system official will be forwarded to the Office of the General Counsel for advice and direction.
- F. School system officials who receive a subpoena or court order will notify the RMO immediately. The RMO will consult with legal counsel for advice. Based on the advice, the school system official or legal counsel will be responsible for ensuring that a timely and legally sufficient response is given.

VII. HCPSS Records Management Training

- A. All school system officials are required to complete annual records management training.
- B. All new school system officials whose job responsibilities include working with HCPSS records, will be made aware of the general provisions of this policy and receive appropriate training related to the retention, management and disposition of HCPSS records.

VIII. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Active Record – A record that is currently being used in the ordinary course of school system business.
- B. Appraisal – The process of determining the value of records for further use, for whatever purpose, and the length of time that value will continue.
- C. File Code – The numbers or symbols used to abbreviate HCPSS department or office titles.
- D. File Plan – The comprehensive outline that includes the record series, file organization, active file locations, file transfer instructions, file retention and disposition instructions, and other specific instructions that provide guidance for effective management of records, including vital records.
- E. Inclusive Dates – The period of time in which a record series was created, maintained, stored and destroyed, if applicable.
- F. Non-Record – Informational materials that do not meet the definition of a record.
- G. Permanent Record – A record of enduring historical, or research value, that is retained permanently in an office or Archives after a period of active use.

- H. Record Cutoff – The time at which all new (active) records are placed in a new set of folders and the previous folders (inactive) are removed from the current files and transferred to a storage facility or archived.
- I. Records Inventory – A list of documentary materials created, received, and maintained by the HCPSS. This includes record series, inclusive dates, types of records, quantity, arrangement and description.
- J. Scheduled Record – Records whose final disposition has been approved by the Maryland State Archives.
- K. Temporary Record – A record of limited administrative value that is maintained in an office and/or records storage facility for a specified period of time before destruction.
- L. Transitory Record – A record that is required for a limited time to complete a routine action, is used in the preparation of final records, or is retained as information or convenience copies by offices or individuals who do not have primary responsibility for the records.
- M. Unscheduled Record – A record which is not found on the Records and Information Disposition Schedules (RIDS) and whose disposition has not been approved by the Maryland State Archivist.

IX. Monitoring

Policy 3050 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Office of the Deputy Superintendent.

X. History¹

ADOPTED: October 4, 2011
REVIEWED:
MODIFIED: November 3, 2011
 May 9, 2013
 November 2, 2021
REVISED: June 8, 2017
EFFECTIVE: November 2, 2021

¹ Key: *Adopted*-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; *Reviewed*-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; *Modified*-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; *Revised*-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; *Effective*-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.