

## Public Records Requests – from WSCC Financial Times

### Public Records

Public records are a very sensitive topic and it is extremely important that districts follow the rules established by RCW Chapter 42.56 – Public Records Act and do their due diligence in proper records management. Each district needs to have an established policy outlining in detail their public records process in accordance with the RCWs.

One of the most important rules that must be adhered to is to send a response letter to the requestor within FIVE business days of receiving the request.

### Processing and Responding to Public Records Requests

State and local government agencies are required by RCW 42.56.520 to respond to a public records request **within five business days** of receiving the request by either:

- Providing for inspection and/or copying of the records requested;
- Providing an internet address and link to the specific records requested on the agency's website (if the individual does not have internet access, then the agency must provide copies or allow the requester to view the records using an agency computer);
- Acknowledging receipt of the request and providing a reasonable estimate of the time necessary to respond; or
- Denying the request. If a request is denied, a written statement must accompany the denial setting out the specific reasons for the denial.

Additional time to respond to a request may be based upon the need to:

- Clarify the intent of the request;
- Locate and assemble the information requested;
- Notify third parties or agencies affected by the request; or
- Determine whether any of the information is exempt and whether a denial should be made as to all, or part, of the request.

The following link is a great resource for districts published by MRSC with lots of tips and tricks for following all the requirements of the public records act.

[MRCS.org Public Records](http://MRCS.org/PublicRecords)