



Joey Ford <joseph.k.ford@gmail.com>

Appeal of Excessive Fee Estimate – Public Records Request (Professional Development Records)

2 messages

Joey Ford <joseph.k.ford@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 10, 2026 at 8:37 AM

To: pre@sec.state.ma.us

Cc: "Sawyer, David" <dsawyer@attleboroschools.com>, APS Records Access Officer <apsrao@attleboroschools.com>

Subject: Appeal of Excessive Fee Estimate – Public Records Request (Professional Development Records)

Supervisor of Public Records
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth

I respectfully submit this appeal pursuant to G.L. c.66 §10A regarding a fee estimate issued in response to my public records request submitted to the Attleboro Public Schools on February 18, 2026.

On March 10, 2026, the district issued a fee estimate totaling **\$15,100**, asserting that fulfilling the request would require approximately **606 hours of staff time** based on an assumption of **30 minutes per professional development session** across 1,212 sessions.

I believe this estimate is excessive and not consistent with the requirements of the Massachusetts Public Records Law and its implementing regulations.

1. Lack of a sufficiently detailed cost breakdown

Under **950 CMR 32.07(2)**, a records access officer must provide a good-faith estimate that reasonably explains the basis for the calculation of fees.

The estimate provided relies on a single global assumption of **30 minutes per session**, but does not break down the estimate into:

- time required to search for records
- time required to review records
- time required to redact records
- time required to compile records

Additionally, the estimate does not identify **which employee classifications** would perform these tasks, which is required to confirm compliance with the requirement that the **lowest paid employee capable of performing the work** be used.

2. Assumption that records must be manually compiled

The estimate assumes that each of the 1,212 professional development sessions must be individually searched and manually assembled.

However, professional development records of this nature are commonly maintained within centralized systems such as:

- professional development tracking systems
- human resources databases
- district calendars or scheduling platforms
- purchasing or accounting systems

To the extent responsive information already exists in electronic databases or reports, the Public Records Law requires that records be provided **in the format in which they are maintained**, rather than recreated through manual compilation.

See **950 CMR 32.04(5)**.

3. Minimal redaction expected

Based on the categories of records requested (titles of trainings, vendors, costs, contracts, materials, and agendas), it appears that **very limited redaction would be required**, if any.

The estimate provided does not identify any specific exemption that would require substantial review or redaction time.

4. Failure to provide a reasonable estimate

Because the estimate relies on a blanket assumption of 30 minutes per record without explaining how that figure was derived, it appears inconsistent with the requirement that estimates be **reasonable and made in good faith**.

5. Timeliness of the response

The response was issued more than ten business days after the request was submitted. While the district ultimately provided an estimate, the response exceeded the statutory timeline for public records responses.

Requested Relief

I respectfully request that the Supervisor of Public Records:

1. Require the district to provide a **more detailed and itemized explanation** of the fee estimate, including the specific tasks and employee classifications involved.
2. Direct the district to determine whether responsive information already exists in **existing electronic databases or reports**, and if so, provide those records in their existing format.
3. Review whether the estimate of **30 minutes per session** is reasonable under the Public Records Law.
4. Order the district to revise the estimate if it is determined that the current estimate is excessive.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this appeal.

Sincerely,

Joey Ford
Attleboro, Massachusetts

2 attachments

 **PRR - JF - PD Info (1).pdf**
243K

 **Gmail - Professional Development Records (1).PDF**
88K

Joey Ford <joseph.k.ford@gmail.com>
To: APS Records Access Officer <apsrao@attleboroschools.com>
Cc: "Sawyer, David" <dsawyer@attleboroschools.com>, pre@sec.state.ma.us

Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 12:04 AM

Subject: Narrowed Scope – Public Records Request Regarding Professional Development Records

Dear Records Access Officer,

I would like to narrow the scope of the request in order to reduce the administrative burden on the district.

Your response indicated that **1,212 professional development sessions** were identified during the relevant time period. The ability to identify that number suggests that the district maintains a **tracking system, database, or structured dataset** that records professional development sessions.

If such a system exists, it seems likely that a **report or spreadsheet export** identifying the sessions could be generated without the need to manually review each session individually. I am seeking the **minimum amount of records**

necessary to identify requested fields.

Accordingly, I would like to narrow the request to the following:

Records sufficient to identify each professional development session conducted by the district between July 1, 2021 and the present, including any available structured data fields such as:

- session title
- session date
- presenter or vendor name
- school or department involved
- professional development hours
- cost associated with the session, if tracked

If this information is maintained in a professional development tracking system, spreadsheet, or database, I request the data **in the electronic format in which it is maintained**, such as a spreadsheet, CSV export, or similar report.

This narrowed request **does not seek session materials, slide decks, participant lists, evaluations, or attachments.**

The intent is simply to identify the professional development sessions that occurred so that any future requests can be limited to specific sessions where appropriate.

I hope this revision helps significantly reduce the time required to fulfill the request.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Joey Ford

[Quoted text hidden]