



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Public Records Division

Manza Arthur
Supervisor of Records

March 19, 2026
SPR26/0842

David Sawyer
Superintendent
Attleboro Public Schools
100 Rathbun Willard Drive
Attleboro, MA 02703

Dear Mr. Sawyer:

I have received the petition of Joseph Ford appealing the response of Attleboro Public Schools (School) to a request for public records. See G. L. c. 66, § 10A; see also 950 C.M.R. 32.08(1). On February 18, 2026, Mr. Ford requested:

. . . records concerning Attleboro Public Schools professional development (PD) activities for the last five (5) years, as well as any PD already scheduled to occur in the future. . . .

Records Requested (PD programs, trainings, workshops, courses, consultants, vendors)[.] Please produce records sufficient to identify, for each PD program/training:

- [1] Program name/title (and series name, if applicable)
- [2] Vendor/provider/consultant (company/organization name and individual presenter(s), if applicable)
- [3] Date(s), duration, and format (in-person/virtual/hybrid; number of sessions/hours)
- [4] Target audience (districtwide, school-specific, role-specific; number of attendees if tracked)
- [5] Location (if in-person)
- [6] Cost information, including:
 - [a] Total cost paid and/or cost per participant
 - [b] Contracts, purchase orders, invoices, receipts, and payment records
 - [c] Funding source if indicated (e.g., general fund, grant name, federal relief funds, etc.)
- [7] Content and objectives, including:

- [a] Agendas, course outlines, slide decks, handouts, training materials, and learning objectives
- [b] Any description of what was taught (scope/topics/competencies)
- [8] Implementation and follow-up records, if maintained:
 - [a] Attendance rosters/sign-in sheets (names may be redacted as needed)
 - [b] Certificates of completion
 - [c] Evaluations/feedback summaries, post-training surveys, and results reports
- [9] Future PD already set to occur, including:
 - [a] PD calendars, schedules, internal announcements, and registration links
 - [b] Signed/unsigned contracts, scopes of work, statements of work, planned agendas, and estimated costs

Search Locations / Custodians (to help you locate records)[.] This request includes records held by the central office and any school offices, including (as applicable): Human Resources, Teaching & Learning/Curriculum, Special Education, Student Services, building principals, and finance/procurement.

Preferred Format Please provide records electronically (PDF preferred; spreadsheets in native format such as .XLSX/.CSV). If any responsive records already exist in an itemized list or table, producing that list/table is acceptable in addition to underlying documents.

The School responded on March 10, 2026, providing a fee estimate. Unsatisfied with the School's response, and objecting to the fees, Mr. Ford petitioned this office, and this appeal, SPR26/0842, was opened as a result.

Fee Estimates - Municipalities

A municipality may assess a reasonable fee for the production of a public record except those records that are freely available for public inspection. G. L. c. 66, § 10(d). The fees must reflect the actual cost of complying with a particular request. Id. A maximum fee of five cents (\$.05) per page may be assessed for a black and white single or double-sided photocopy of a public record. G. L. c. 66, § 10(d)(i).

Municipalities may not assess a fee for the first 2 (two) hours of employee time to search for, compile, segregate, redact or reproduce the record or records requested unless the municipality has 20,000 people or less. G. L. c. 66, § 10(d)(iii). Where appropriate, municipalities may include as part of the fee an hourly rate equal to or less than the hourly rate attributed to the lowest paid employee who has the necessary skill required to search for, compile, segregate, redact or reproduce a record requested, but the fee shall not be more than \$25 per hour. Id. However, municipalities may charge more than \$25 per hour if such rate is approved by the Supervisor of Records under a petition under G. L. c. 66, § 10(d)(iv).

A fee shall not be assessed for time spent segregating or redacting records unless such segregation or redaction is required by law or approved by the Supervisor of Records under a petition under G. L. c. 66, § 10(d)(iv). See G. L. c. 66, § 10(d)(iii); 950 C.M.R. 32.06(4).

Current Appeal

In his appeal petition, Mr. Ford contends, “. . . this estimate is excessive and not consistent with the requirements of the Massachusetts Public Records Law and its implementing regulations.”

The School’s March 10th Fee Estimate

In its March 10, 2026 response, the School assessed a fee estimate of \$15,100 for Mr. Ford’s February 18th request. The School provided the following information in support of its fee estimate:

First, please be advised that the Attleboro Public School District does not maintain any record which includes all of the data you are requesting, and the Public Records Law does not require the Attleboro Public School District to create any record(s) in response to a request. The various categories of data you requested are available but need to be provided through a combination of different categories of documents. While it is the Attleboro Public School District’s intent to comply with your request, given the number of documents that would need to be reviewed and copied, and the amount of staff time necessary to respond to the request, we are unable to waive the fees associated with this service.

. . .

Preliminary Scan and Volume Estimate[:]

For the duration of the five-year timeline requested, the District identified approximately a total of 1,212 sections of professional development requiring individualized review. Based on the District’s preliminary scan, these sessions include a mixture of sessions led by District staff, and outside consultants.

Nature of the Professional Development Request[:]

The records requested including, Title, Vendor/provider/consultant, date(s), duration, format, target audience, and location are generated from a search of the professional development system.

Cost Information[:]

For each section, the cost information including total cost paid and/or cost per participant, contracts, purchase orders, invoices, receipts, and payment records will need to be gathered from different departments. The District conservatively estimated an average search and review time of approximately 30 minutes per section, which equates to two (2) sections per hour.

Content and Objectives[:]

For each section, the agendas, course outlines, slide decks, handouts, training materials, and learning objectives will need to be gathered from all departments that lead the training. The District conservatively estimated an average search and review time of approximately 30 minutes per section, which equates to two (2) sections per hour.

Implementation and Follow up[:]

For each section, attendance rosters will be reviewed. Certificates of completion are not generated in the system and are not maintained. Evaluations/feedback summaries are not maintained in the system.

Future Professional Development[:]

Future professional development calendars, sessions, announcements, and registration links already scheduled will be provided along with any contracts, scope of work, agendas, and cost.

Total Time Calculation[:]

Applying this conservative review rate to approximately 1,212 sections of professional development, the District estimated approximately 606 hours of employee time would be required to complete the search, collection, review, and redaction process.

Application of Statutory Fee Rules[:]

Consistent with M.G.L. c. 66, § 10 and 950 CMR 32.07(2)(m), the District excluded the first two hours of employee time. The remaining 604 hours were calculated at \$25.00 per hour, which is equal to or less than the hourly rate of the lowest-paid District employee with the requisite skill to perform the search, collection, review, and redaction of the requested records.

Total Fee Estimate: $(606-2=604)$ hours x \$25.00 per hour = \$15,100[.]

The estimate was calculated in good faith, reflects a conservative assessment of the time required, and does not capture the full amount of time that may ultimately be necessary to complete the full search, collection, review, and redaction of 1212 professional development sections. The estimate was intentionally calculated conservatively and in the interest of facilitating public access to records.

Modified Request

Subsequent to the opening of this appeal, on March 11, 2026, in an email to the School and this office, Mr. Ford narrowed the scope of his request and provided the following clarification:

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:

- [1] session title
- [2] session date
- [3] presenter or vendor name
- [4] school or department involved
- [5] professional development hours
- [6] 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.

Conclusion

Given the modifications to Mr. Ford's original request, I find it unnecessary to address the issues raised in his appeal at this time.

This office encourages Mr. Ford and the School to continue to communicate directly in order to facilitate providing records more efficiently and affordably. See G. L. c. 66, § 10(b)(vii) (a municipality shall suggest a reasonable modification of the scope of the request or offer to assist the requestor to modify the scope of the request if doing so would enable the municipality to produce the records sought more efficiently and affordably).

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Accordingly, the School is ordered to provide Mr. Ford with a response to his modified March 11th request in a manner consistent with the Public Records Law and its Regulations within ten business days. It is preferable to send an electronic copy of the response to this office at pre@sec.state.ma.us. If issues remain unresolved, Mr. Ford may appeal the substantive nature of the School's response to his modified request within ninety days. See 950 C.M.R. 32.08(1).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manza Arthur". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Manza Arthur
Supervisor of Records

cc: Joseph Ford