

December 7, 2020

TO: Tony T. Howard, III

Executive Director of Education Policy and Procedures, Chicago Public Schools
42 W. Madison St.
Chicago, IL 60602

CC: Janice Jackson

CEO Chicago Public Schools
42 W. Madison St.
Chicago, IL 60602

Chicago Board of Education Members:

Miquel Del Valle

Sendhil Revuluri

Luisiana Melendez

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Elizabeth Todd-Breland

Dwayne Truss

We the undersigned respectfully request that beginning with the 2021/2022 school year, the **Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet** be included with the fall registration materials for all CPS public school students and distributed in the same manner that each school provides families with other forms distributed at the start of the school year. Also that the form be made available in multiple languages. And lastly that the Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet should be posted by the start of school on the district's own Back To School Packets page, along with the December 1st deadline for submission. (NOTE: As of December 2 the form was still not available on the Back to School page).

Included with this cover letter: the Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet from the current school year; background and timeline related to this issue.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Frank

Veterans for Peace – Chicago Chapter
(773) 206-4945

Organization	Name
Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education	Jianan Shi
Illinois Families for Public Schools	Cassie Creswell
Chicago Teachers Union	Jesse Starkey
Logan Square Neighborhood Association	Juliet De Jesus Alejandro
Cook County College Teachers Union	Tony Johnston
Parents 4 Teachers	Erica Clark
Caucus of Rank and File Educators	Jackson Potter
Northside Action 4 Justice	Marc Kaplan
Pilsen Alliance	Moises Moreno
SEIU Local #73	Science Meles
Veterans for Peace – Chicago Chapter	Natasha Erskine

Timeline and Background:

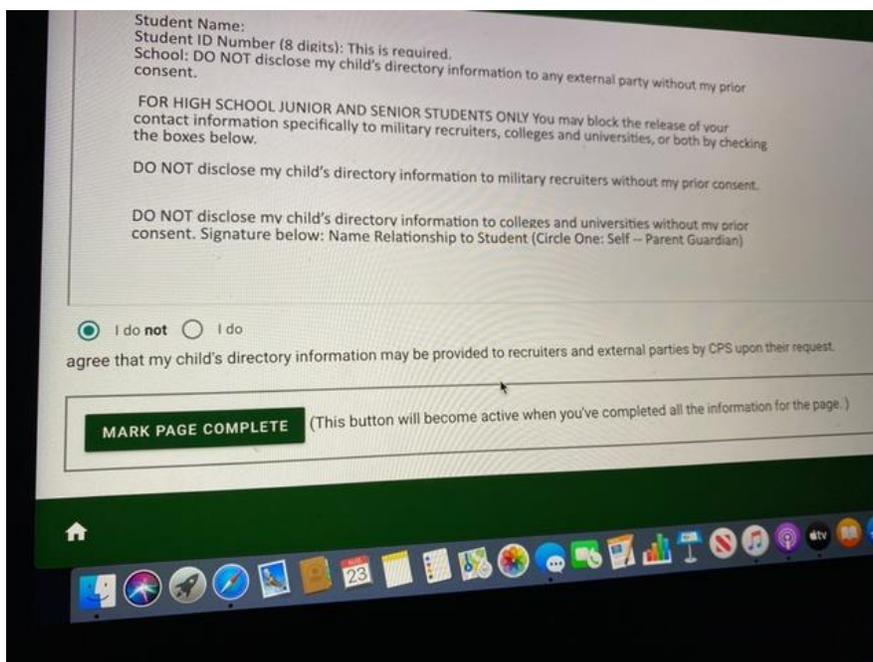
The **Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet** (or opt-out form) is produced by the CPS Department of Educational Process and Procedures every year. The form is sent via District-wide email communications. It is distributed via the weekly protocol that goes to school administration. The deadline for receiving completed forms is December 1. Completed forms are collected at the school level and the information is entered into an online database.

When I inquired last year about the distribution of the opt-out form after finding out many parents were unaware of its existence, I was told by Ms Jefferson who is Deputy Chief of Staff for Janice Jackson – “CPS does send the form each year through our Network Support weekly bulletin and also posts it on internal systems for principals and teachers. The expectation is that High Schools print the form and distribute it to juniors and seniors at the beginning of the year.”

However, when I inquired about including the opt-out form as part of the regular registration material, this is the response I received from Ms Jefferson: “The form only applies to juniors and seniors and we don't have a special back-to-school folder exclusively for them. We think the best way to ensure that juniors and seniors actually receive the form is to send the email at the beginning of each school year.”

I contacted Ms Jefferson in July of this year with the same request and she said “We decided not to include in our registration materials but to push out to juniors and seniors this year again. We will also specifically reach out to junior and senior counselors. “

What I have discovered since then is that, in fact, some schools do include the opt-out form with the fall registration materials. The screen print below is from Lane Tech High School. What you will also notice, unfortunately, is that the opt-out form is wrong. It only gives two options: either block all information or release it to both college and military recruiters. They corrected the error but it's unclear how many incorrect opt out forms were completed before it was brought to Lane's attention.



The screenshot shows a web form with the following text:

Student Name:
Student ID Number (8 digits): This is required.
School: DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to any external party without my prior consent.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR AND SENIOR STUDENTS ONLY You may block the release of your contact information specifically to military recruiters, colleges and universities, or both by checking the boxes below.

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to military recruiters without my prior consent.

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to colleges and universities without my prior consent. Signature below: Name Relationship to Student (Circle One: Self – Parent Guardian)

I do not I do

agree that my child's directory information may be provided to recruiters and external parties by CPS upon their request.

MARK PAGE COMPLETE (This button will become active when you've completed all the information for the page.)

The screenshot also shows a Windows taskbar at the bottom with various application icons.

It should also be pointed out that the physical exam form is in every registration packet, even though you are only required to complete it for a few grades.

The form is not exclusively for public high school students. As stated in the first paragraph, the form is to be used to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Illinois School Student Records (ISSRA) and the Chicago Board of Education Policy 706.3. These apply to all students; regardless of grade level.

Another concern is the system for collecting the opt-out forms. I was told by Brendan Perry, Policy and Procedure Specialist, that completed forms are collected at the school level and the information is entered into an online database. When an outside agency requests the student contact information, a spreadsheet is generated from the online database. But it's unclear how this is coordinated with forms being distributed to juniors and seniors, posted on the CPS website and included at some schools in the online registration process.

It only makes sense to include the opt-out form with the fall registration materials thus avoiding confusion and potential errors. The current system seems haphazard and thus prone to error.



Directory and Recruiter Opt-Out Information Sheet

This Information Sheet for Students and Parents provides instructions on how you can use the “Directory and Recruiter Information Opt-Out Form” to prevent the release of your child’s student directory information. An Opt-Out Form is enclosed for your convenience.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Illinois School Student Records (ISSRA), and Chicago Board of Education Policy 706.3 Parent and Student Rights of Access to and Confidentiality of Student Records require that Chicago Public Schools (CPS) obtain your written consent before disclosing personally identifiable information from your child’s education records, with certain exceptions. **The Chicago Public Schools may disclose “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the District that you do not want the information shared by using the form attached.** This form is to be turned in at time of enrollment.

Who will have access to this information?

CPS may share directory information with third parties (such as city agencies or educational service providers) who have an educational interest in the information and request it. All requests from external parties related to research are reviewed by the CPS School Quality Measurement & Research or the CPS Office of College and Career Success to ensure the request is in the interest of students.

What is directory information?

Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. CPS has designated the following as directory information: student’s name; home address; home telephone number.

How do I complete the CPS Directory Information Opt-Out Program Process?

A parent/guardian or student age 18 or older **must complete this form and return it to the school clerk annually at time of enrollment/registration.** If you have more than one child attending CPS, you must submit a separate request for each child. The Opt-Out Form requires a student identification number. **Please make sure you record the 8-digit ID number on the form accurately.**

For parents/guardians of JUNIORS and SENIORS ONLY:

By law, if military recruiters request contact information (name, address, phone number) for 11th- or 12th-grade students, CPS is required to provide that information **unless you choose to block it.** Colleges and universities also may request student information. Using the Chicago Public Schools Opt-Out form, you may block the release of your contact information to military recruiters, or to colleges and universities, or to both.

Having your name placed on the Opt-Out list does not in any way limit your ability to request your school to send a transcript or any other material on your behalf to a college or university, a military recruiter, or others, upon request.

Questions or Concerns?

If you have questions about CPS policy related to the release of student information to third parties, recruiters, or universities please contact Brendan Perry at bperry8@cps.edu.



Directory and Recruiter Information Opt-Out Form

Dear Student, Parent or Guardian:

You have the right to inspect and copy your student's records, challenge the contents of such records, and limit your consent to the designated records or designated portions of information within the records.

If you DO NOT want directory information disclosed, complete this form and return it to the school clerk at time of enrollment/registration. If you do not submit a completed Opt-Out Form, your child's directory information may be provided to recruiters and external parties by CPS upon their request. **If you submit this form but do not check at least one box, your child's directory information may be provided to recruiters and external parties upon their request. If you have more than one child attending CPS, you must submit a separate request for each child.**

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student ID Number (8 digits):

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 This is required.

School: _____

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to any external party without my prior consent.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR AND SENIOR STUDENTS ONLY

You may block the release of your contact information specifically to military recruiters, colleges and universities, or both by checking the boxes below.

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to military recruiters without my prior consent.

DO NOT disclose my child's directory information to colleges and universities without my prior consent.

Must have an original signature; an electronic signature is not acceptable.

Signature below:

Name

Relationship to Student (*Circle One: Self -- Parent Guardian*)