

MEMO

To: School Clients/Social Work Clients

From: Brooke R. Whitted

Date: 02/24/10

Re: Public Act 96-0628, "Social Worker Confidentiality"

Enclosed please find a copy of the above captioned new law, effective January 1st of this year. This amends the School Student Records Act to provide that nothing may impair the confidentiality of information communicated in confidence to a school social worker, counselor, psychologist, or psychologist intern. This new law provides that no such public school employee may be subject to any adverse employment action or threat of same, or discriminated against in any way, because the employee is protecting communications that are privileged pursuant to, for example, the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act.

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Illinois School Student Records Act is amended by changing Section 5 as follows:

(105 ILCS 10/5) (from Ch. 122, par. 50-5)

Sec. 5. (a) A parent or any person specifically designated as a representative by a parent shall have the right to inspect and copy all school student permanent and temporary records of that parent's child. A student shall have the right to inspect and copy his or her school student permanent record. No person who is prohibited by an order of protection from inspecting or obtaining school records of a student pursuant to the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986, as now or hereafter amended, shall have any right of access to, or inspection of, the school records of that student. If a school's principal or person with like responsibilities or his designee has knowledge of such order of protection, the school shall prohibit access or inspection of the student's school records by such person.

(b) Whenever access to any person is granted pursuant to paragraph (a) of this Section, at the option of either the parent or the school a qualified professional, who may be a psychologist, counsellor or other advisor, and who may be an

employee of the school or employed by the parent, may be present to interpret the information contained in the student temporary record. If the school requires that a professional be present, the school shall secure and bear any cost of the presence of the professional. If the parent so requests, the school shall secure and bear any cost of the presence of a professional employed by the school.

(c) A parent's or student's request to inspect and copy records, or to allow a specifically designated representative to inspect and copy records, must be granted within a reasonable time, and in no case later than 15 school days after the date of receipt of such request by the official records custodian.

(d) The school may charge its reasonable costs for the copying of school student records, not to exceed the amounts fixed in schedules adopted by the State Board, to any person permitted to copy such records, except that no parent or student shall be denied a copy of school student records as permitted under this Section 5 for inability to bear the cost of such copying.

(e) Nothing contained in this Section 5 shall make available to a parent or student confidential letters and statements of recommendation furnished in connection with applications for employment to a post-secondary educational institution or the receipt of an honor or honorary recognition, provided such letters and statements are not used for purposes

other than those for which they were specifically intended, and

(1) were placed in a school student record prior to January 1, 1975; or

(2) the student has waived access thereto after being advised of his right to obtain upon request the names of all such persons making such confidential recommendations.

(f) Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to impair or limit the confidentiality of:

(1) Communications otherwise protected by law as privileged or confidential, including but not limited to, information communicated in confidence to a physician, psychologist or other psychotherapist, school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker, school counselor, or school psychologist intern who works under the direct supervision of a school social worker, school counselor, or school psychologist; or

(2) Information which is communicated by a student or parent in confidence to school personnel; or

(3) Information which is communicated by a student, parent, or guardian to a law enforcement professional working in the school, except as provided by court order.

(g) No school employee shall be subjected to adverse employment action, the threat of adverse employment action, or any manner of discrimination because the employee is acting or has acted to protect communications as privileged or

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confidential pursuant to applicable provisions of State or
federal law or rule or regulation.

(Source: P.A. 90-590, eff. 1-1-00.)