



Palos Heights School District 128

12809 S. McVicker Ave • Palos Heights, IL 60463
Phone: (708) 597-9040 • Fax: (708) 597 9089 • www.palos128.org

Merryl B. Brownlow, Ed.D.
Superintendent

July 14, 2026

Mr. Binnington
Judiciocracy.com
FOIA@judiciocracy.com

Dear Mr. Binnington:

The District has recently discovered a Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") request from you dated January 30, 2026. This request was submitted to an employee who no longer works with the District. As a result, your request was not formally received by the District until recently. No follow-up correspondence was ever received from you, nor did anyone else in our organization receive a communication from you related to this request. Thus, our delay in responding. We apologize for the delay and wish to provide you with the requested records.

In your request, you asked for the following:

- "1) All bills from external attorneys or law firms for the year 2024, and through July 18, 2025 for 2025.
- 2) All engagement agreements with attorneys or law firms affiliated with any of the legal bills for the time period in item #1.
- 3) All other engagement agreements with attorneys or law firms executed in 2024 and in 2025 through July 18, 2025 not affiliated with any legal bills produced in item #1.
- 4) Documents showing any and all attorneys or legal professionals (attorneys, law firms, law clerks, paralegals and the like) who appeared on behalf of, represented, advised, or otherwise counseled the entity in 2024, and for 2025 through July 18, 2025."

The District conducted a search for records responsive to your request and found legal invoices responsive to parts 1 and 4 of your request and engagement letters responsive to parts 2 and 3 of your request. These are being provided to you along with this response letter. Please note, however, that portions of the legal invoices have been redacted pursuant to Section 7(1)(m) of FOIA. (5 ILCS 140/7(1)(m)).

Section 7(1)(m) exempts from disclosure certain communications between a public body and its attorney, as well as certain materials prepared or compiled for a public body by its attorney at the public body's request. 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(m). Specific to legal invoices, the Public Access Counselor for the Office of the Attorney General has stated that "detailed descriptions of the work performed may be subject to redaction under 7(1)(m), if disclosure could reveal privileged information." 2012 PAC 18204, Pg. 4. Similarly, Illinois courts have found that "[c]ertain types of billing records may contain explanations for legal fees and may indicate the type of work done or matters discussed between the attorney and client. As such, they could reveal the substance of confidential attorney-client discussions, and be subject to valid claims of attorney-client privilege or exemption under [FOIA]." *People ex rel. Ulrich v. Stukel*, 689 N.E.2d 319, 325 (1st Dist. 1997).

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Thus, while dates, names of attorneys conducting the work, numbers of hours billed, dollar amounts for each item, and general task descriptions may be released without redaction, portions of an entry providing details related to the substance and content of the general task may be redacted. Therefore, in the District's response, information within the legal invoices that included substance and details of the general legal tasks being performed was redacted. All non-confidential information within the entries, including the time spent, the attorney conducting the work, the date of the work, the cost of the work, and general task descriptions, remains unredacted, consistent with Section 7(1)(m).

We trust these records resolve any disputes or complaints you may have with the District.

You have a right to have the denial of your request reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). You can file your Request for Review with the PAC by writing to: Public Access Counselor's Office of the Attorney General, 500 South 2nd Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701, Fax: 217-782-1396, E-mail: Public.Access@ilag.gov. You also have the right to seek judicial review of your denial by filing a lawsuit in the State circuit court. 5 ILCS 140/11. If you choose to file a Request for Review with the PAC, you must do so within 60 calendar days of the date of this denial. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). Please note that you must include a copy of your original FOIA request and this denial letter when filing a Request for Review with the PAC.

Sincerely,

Laura Kriha
Palos Heights School District 128 FOIA Officer

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