

Case 6: What can your family see in your college records?

Content note

This case is about private records. No student should share their own grades, forms, records or family finances, so keep the discussion on Rafa’s situation.

This case explains general rules. It is not legal advice for your situation.

Overview

Students read about Rafa, an 18-year-old in his first year of college whose family wants to help pay tuition and asks for his login. They read an access form, a college FERPA notice and summaries of federal guidance, then sort billing access from access to grades. They then write the question Rafa could send the records office and the smallest access that would help his family.

Before this case

- Students should already be able to:
- compare two options using the same criteria
 - explain a general rule and its exceptions
 - write a recommendation with reasons and limits

Objectives

- Students will be able to:
- present at least two authorization options accurately

Objectives, continued

- explain the trade-offs for Rafa and for his family
- describe the legal baseline and its exceptions correctly
- include a way to review or withdraw consent

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student
- Evidence A and B
- A memo template: situation, options, recommendation, how to revoke
- The Department of Education FAQ on parent access to an eligible student’s records

The task in this edition

Task: Write a decision memo for Rafa: what should he authorize, for whom, and how can he change it later?

Students make: Decision memo, 350—450 words

Pacing

Opener (page 105): 4 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read What happened aloud.

Key terms (pages 106 and 107): 5 min. Short on time: skip.

Pacing, continued

- Look at the evidence (pages 111 and 112):** 8 min. Short on time: 6 min. Students fill in the Evidence A boxes only.
- Key idea (pages 113 and 114):** 10 min. Short on time: 8 min. Skip the In the news section.
- Sort the evidence (page 115):** 8 min. Short on time: skip.
- Practice (page 116):** 5 min. Short on time: skip.
- Your task (pages 117 and 118):** 10 min. Short on time: 10 min.
- Your draft (pages 119 and 120):** 25 min. Short on time: 25 min.
- Check your work (pages 121 and 122):** 6 min. Short on time: 3 min. Collect memos and score them with the rubric yourself.
- Questions to discuss (pages 123 and 124):** 10 min. Short on time: 5 min. Use question 1 as an exit ticket.
- Talk about this case at home (page 125):** at home.
- Periods:** full chapter 91 minutes; one period 60 minutes.
- Standards**
- RI.11-12.1** Back up an analysis with the strongest evidence from the text, including where the text leaves things uncertain.
- W.11-12.2** Write an explanatory text that conveys complex ideas clearly and accurately.

Case 6 plan, continued

Standards, continued

W.11-12.5 Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing or rewriting, focusing on what matters most for the purpose and audience.

SL.11-12.1.c Keep a discussion moving with questions that probe reasoning and evidence, and make sure the full range of views is heard.

SL.11-12.1.d Respond to different views, pull together what each side says, resolve conflicts where possible and name what still needs research.

D2.Civ.12.9-12 Analyze how people use and challenge laws at different levels to address public issues. In this case: Students analyze how students use FERPA to control who sees their records.

D3.1.9-12 Gather information from sources with a wide range of views, using origin, authority, structure, context and corroboration to choose them. In this case: Students select the federal FAQ and the school’s own notice as authoritative sources.

Codes of ethics

- **AACRAO Ethics and Practice:** Standards of professional practice
- **AACRAO Ethics and Practice:** Principles of professional ethics

Codes of ethics, continued

- **Credo for Ethical Communication:** “We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings...” (one of nine unnumbered principles)

Heat map

- ■ □ **Opener (page 105):** Medium
- □ □ **Key terms (pages 106 and 107):** Low
- □ □ **Look at the evidence (pages 111 and 112):** Low
- □ □ **Key idea (pages 113 and 114):** Low
- ■ □ **Sort the evidence (page 115):** Medium
- □ □ **Practice (page 116):** Low
- ■ □ **Your draft (pages 119 and 120):** Medium
- □ □ **Check your work (pages 121 and 122):** Low

Try it at your school

Find your school’s records notice.

- Search your school or district website for its FERPA or “student records” notice
- Find out what counts as directory information and how families can opt out
- Write one question about who can see a record, and ask the front office or counselor
- If you’re heading to college, look up its parent-access and authorization forms early

Try it at your school, continued

Who to ask: School counselor, registrar or records office, front-office staff

Safety: Never post screenshots of grades, IDs or forms. Talk with a trusted adult about what to share and with whom.

Sources

- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “What is FERPA?,” No date listed
- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “What is an education record?,” No date listed
- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student’s education records?,” No date listed
- U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, “Student privacy questions,” No date listed
- American University, AU Central, “FERPA and parent-access guide,” No date listed

Case 6: What can your family see in your college records?

Rafa's parents help pay his college bill, and a family-access form asks whether they should also get information about his grades.

On your own Read What happened and underline what Rafa's dad asks for in the family chat. About 4 minutes.



Rafa and Caio sit on a sofa and look at Rafa's phone. Caio explains something with an open hand.

Your role: You're the one who reads each box on the form before Rafa signs. **New skill:** Read a form section by section before you sign.

What happened

Rafa, 18, has just started college, and his parents help pay his tuition bill. He commutes from the next block and helps at his family's shop after class. At the end of August, the college mailed Rafa a family-access form, but he has not opened the envelope yet.

On Sunday night, his parents ask about the form in the family group chat. His dad wants Rafa's login so the family can handle everything. Rafa is glad to share the bill, but he wants to read the rest of the form first.

Your question: What will this form let Rafa's parents see, and what should he ask before he signs?

Caio, an older friend who rents a room on the block, reads the form with Rafa, not for him. The form has separate sections for billing and for grades. Rafa wants to check the billing box. He wants to talk with his family before he decides about grades.

Pacing

Full chapter: 4 min.

Short on time: 3 min. Read What happened aloud.

Say this

"Rafa's dad asks for his login. What is his dad trying to help with?" — Hear two answers. Keep the talk about Rafa's family, not students' own.

Watch for

Misconception: Students assume paying tuition gives parents full access. **Listen for:** "They pay, so they get to see it." **Then:** Write "paying" and "seeing" as two columns. Ask which document connects them.

Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.
- Remind students that nobody shares their own records or family rules.

Heat check

Medium. Students may compare the case with their own family's rules about grades.

Cool-down: Say: "We're working with Rafa's family." Go straight to the form.

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example, then write your first guess in the box. About 5 minutes.

FERPA FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records.

En español: FERPA (Ley de Derechos Educativos y Privacidad de la Familia)

In this case: Rafa is 18 and in college, so under the general rule the FERPA rights to his records are his, not his parents’.

Education record An education record is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps.

En español: expediente educativo

In this case: Rafa’s grades and schedule are education records. Section 2 of his form asks whether his parents may receive information about his grades.

Consent Consent is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person.

En español: consentimiento

In this case: Rafa’s form asks for consent in two separate sections, one for billing and one for grades. He can say yes to one and no to the other.

Who is involved

Rafa

First-year commuter with a family-access form

“My parents help with the bill. The college mailed this form, and the family chat already wants to know if I signed it. I haven’t even opened it.”

Caio

Reads the form with Rafa, not for him

“I can sit with Rafa while he asks. Being the older friend doesn’t make this my decision.”

Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

 Short on time: skip this page.

Say this

“Which key term tells you whose rights these are?” — Wait for FERPA. Then ask when the rights transfer.

Watch for

Misconception: Students think FERPA protects only children. **Listen for:** “FERPA is for kids.” **Then:** Reread the key idea: the rights transfer to the student at 18 or on starting college.

Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term in their own words.
- Show a timeline: middle school, high school, 18 or college.
- **Cognates:** consent (consentimiento), privacy (privacidad), authorization (autorización), exception (excepción), information (información), academic (académico), federal (federal), education (educación).

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

Any first guess is fine. Students return to it on the My take page.

Your first guess

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think Rafa's parents are allowed to see?

My first guess is ___, because ___.

➤ My first guess is that the form decides it, because a college would not share grades without a signature.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 106. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 106.

Reading passage

Consent, one box at a time

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **FERPA:** FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records.
- **Education record:** An education record is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps.
- **Consent:** Consent is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person.
- **Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.

The story: Family support and a sealed envelope

Rafa, 18, is in his first weeks of college. He commutes from the next block and works at his family's shop after class. His parents help with tuition, and they want to keep helping. At the end of August, the college mailed him a parent and family access form. He has not opened it.

On Sunday night, his parents bring it up in the family group chat. His mom asks whether the tuition form arrived so they can help with the bill. His dad proposes the simplest route from a parent's point of view: send the login, and the family will take care of everything. Rafa answers that he can share the bill part and wants to read the rest first. His reply is honest and a little uncomfortable. It says yes to one kind of help and asks for time on another.

Caio, 24, the oldest in the crew, rents a room on the block and offers to sit with Rafa while he reads the form. He is careful about the limits of that help. Being the older friend does not make this his decision. When the conversation turns to exceptions in the law, Caio pushes for precision. Which exception, and does it even fit Rafa? Just saying "privacy law" will not answer his dad.

Your role in this case is to read each box on the form before Rafa signs.

- Stop and think.** Rafa says yes to one kind of help and asks for time on another. Why might that be harder than saying yes to everything?

Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (749 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

Stop and think

1. **After “The story: Family support and a sealed envelope”:** Rafa says yes to one kind of help and asks for time on another. Why might that be harder than saying yes to everything?
2. **After “A form is a set of separate decisions”:** The notice lists rights and exceptions but not which exceptions this college uses. What should Rafa ask to fill that gap?
3. **After “The federal rule and its exceptions”:** Why does Caio insist on naming the exact exception instead of saying “privacy law”?

A form is a set of separate decisions

The new skill in this case builds on Case 5. There, you read a pay statement line by line and matched each line to a record. Here, you read a form section by section and decide each part on its own. Section 1 would let a named person view account statements and make payments. Section 2 would let that person receive information about grades, enrollment and academic standing. Section 3 says the authorization lasts until Rafa changes or withdraws it in writing. The first two sections each carry a separate yes-or-no box.

The college's annual notice adds the legal frame. Students have the right to inspect their education records, to request corrections and to consent to disclosures, except where the law allows disclosure without consent. The notice does not say which exceptions this college uses, and neither document says where Rafa sends a written change.

Two earlier terms sharpen the analysis. A **decision-maker** (Case 4) is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice, and on this form that person is Rafa. A trade-off (also Case 4) exists in each section separately. Sharing billing costs little and gives his parents what they asked for. Sharing grades may strengthen family trust, or it may shift a conversation Rafa would rather have in person first. **Consent** is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person. For college records, it is written and specifies which record, to whom and for what purpose. A shared login is the opposite of specific.

 **Stop and think.** The notice lists rights and exceptions but not which exceptions this college uses. What should Rafa ask to fill that gap?

The federal rule and its exceptions

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records. An **education record** is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps. Under the general rule, FERPA rights transfer from parents to the student at 18 or when the student enters college at any age, and the law calls that student an “eligible student” (U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, no date listed). Paying tuition does not, by itself, return those rights to a parent.

The exceptions are real and narrow. A college may disclose records to parents if the student is a dependent for federal tax purposes, and it may disclose in a health or safety emergency. The Department of Education stresses that these disclosures are permitted, not required (U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, no date listed). That is why the practical step is a question to the records office, not an argument from the law alone. American University's parent-access guide shows how one institution handles it, and it is one university's process, not a national rule (American University, June 30, 2025).

This page continues page 108. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 108.

The federal rule and its exceptions, continued

Records management is also a data security problem. A breach at PowerSchool exposed millions of student records (Education Week, January 9, 2025). The Markup has reported on how school software companies gain access to student data, and where FERPA's protections run out (The Markup, January 15, 2022). Registrars' own professional code asks them to "protect the legitimate privacy interests of all individuals" (AACRAO Ethics and Practice, 2010).

? **Stop and think.** Why does Caio insist on naming the exact exception instead of saying "privacy law"?

Sources

Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | No date listed

What is FERPA?

Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | No date listed

Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student's education records?

Real source | American University, AU Central | June 30, 2025

FERPA and parent-access guide

Real source | Education Week | January 9, 2025

What Schools Should Know About the PowerSchool Data Breach

Real source | The Markup | January 15, 2022

The Big Business of Tracking and Profiling Students

Real source | American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) | 2010

AACRAO Ethics and Practice**Notes**

This page continues page 108. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 108.

Look at the evidence

On your own Read the form and the notice, and fill in both boxes for each one. About 8 minutes.

Evidence A | College form

Parent and family access authorization, mailed to Rafa on August 28

Section 1, Billing and payments: allow the person named below to view account statements and make payments. Yes or No. Section 2, Academic records: allow the person named below to receive information about grades, enrollment and academic standing. Yes or No. Section 3: this authorization stays in effect until the student changes or withdraws it in writing.

Look closely: Which section covers billing, and which covers grades? Circle each yes-or-no box.

What it shows

➤ Two separate consents. Section 3 lets Rafa change or withdraw either one in writing.

What it leaves out

➤ The exceptions that allow sharing without consent, and whether any fit Rafa.

Evidence B | College notice

Annual FERPA notice on the registrar's page

Students have the right to inspect their education records, to request corrections and to consent to disclosures, except where the law allows disclosure without consent. Questions go to the Office of the Registrar.

Look closely: Which phrase tells you the law has exceptions? Underline it.

What it shows

➤ The rights sit with the student, and “except where the law allows” signals exceptions.

What it leaves out

➤ Which exceptions apply here, such as tax dependency, and who decides at the registrar.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min. Students fill in the Evidence A boxes only.

💬 Say this

“Put one finger on the billing section and one on the grades section. Could Rafa say yes to one and no to the other?” — Wait for “yes, they are separate.”

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students read the notice as a promise of total privacy. **Listen for:** “So nobody can ever see his grades.” **Then:** Point to “except where the law allows disclosure without consent.”

📖 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page with the section headings enlarged.
- Read the notice aloud and pause at “except.”
- **Cognates:** consent (consentimiento), privacy (privacidad), authorization (autorización), exception (excepción), information (información), academic (académico), federal (federal), education (educación).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask what Section 3 lets Rafa do later, and why that matters for the choice he makes today.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

What is still missing from the evidence?

☛ Which exceptions the college uses and whether any fit Rafa, including tax dependency; what help his family wants; and where a written change goes.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a vertical margin line on the left side, creating a narrow left margin. The paper has rounded corners on the right side. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused piece of stationery or notebook paper.

This page continues page 111. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 111.

Key idea: education records

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 10 minutes.

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law about who can see student education records. It gives parents, and later students, rights over those records. An **education record** is a record directly about a student that a school or college keeps. Grades, transcripts and schedules can be education records, on paper or stored digitally. Under the general rule, the rights transfer to the student at age 18 or when the student starts college, at any age. The law calls that student an “eligible student.”

Helping pay tuition does not, by itself, give those rights back to a parent. **Consent** is permission a person gives for something specific, such as sharing a record with a named person. For college records, consent is written and says which record, to whom and for what purpose. Rafa’s form asks about billing and about grades in separate sections. He can say yes to one section and no to the other. He can also change his choice later in writing.

FERPA also has exceptions, which are situations in which a college may share records without the student’s consent. A college may share records with parents if the student is a dependent for federal tax purposes. It may also share them in a health or safety emergency. The U.S. Department of Education says this sharing is allowed, not required, so Rafa should ask his records office what his college does.

Professional standards

Real source | American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

AACRAO Ethics and Practice: Standards of professional practice

“Protect the legitimate privacy interests of all individuals and maintain appropriate confidentiality of institutional and student education records”

In plain words: College registrars who belong to AACRAO agree to protect students’ privacy and keep education records confidential.

Question: Rafa’s form separates billing from grades. What would the registrar need before sharing his grades with his parents?

Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

 Short on time: 8 min. Skip the In the news section.

Say this

“The AACRAO code asks registrars to protect privacy. What would a registrar need before sharing Rafa’s grades?” — Wait for “his consent in Section 2.”

Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the AACRAO code as the law. **Listen for:** “The registrar would go to jail.” **Then:** Say: “The code binds AACRAO members. FERPA is the federal law on education records.”

Support

- Read the quotation aloud. Point out the label: a real source, quoted word for word.

Stretch

- Use the second AACRAO row. Ask what a clear, complete answer to each of Rafa’s three questions would include.

Heat check

 Low.

Professional standards, continued**Your answer**

The registrar would need ____, unless ____.

➤ The registrar would need Rafa's consent in Section 2, unless a FERPA exception applies, such as tax dependency. Even then, sharing is allowed, not required.

In the news

Real source | U.S. Department of Education (YouTube) | November 7, 2013

Student Privacy 101: FERPA for Parents and Students

The Education Department's own short explainer of FERPA rights and when they move from parents to students.

Real source | U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office | No date listed

Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student's education records?

Answers the case question directly, including the exception for students claimed as tax dependents.

Notes

This page continues page 113. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 113.

Sort the evidence

On your own Fill in the diagram to show who decides each question, which rule applies and who can ask. About 8 minutes.

Who actually decides each question: Rafa, the rule or the college? Mark where paying the bill and seeing grades split into two separate decisions.

Who may see Rafa's grades?

Who decides

Rafa, the eligible student, through written consent

Under which rule

FERPA: rights transfer to the student at 18 or on entering college

Who lives with it

Rafa's family, who help pay tuition

Your way in

➤ The registrar or records office explains which form and which exceptions apply

Who may see and pay the tuition bill?

Who decides

Rafa, the eligible student, through written consent

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Rafa's family, who help pay tuition

Your way in

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

➤ His parents' reasons are missing. The chat shows they want to help with the bill, but not why they asked for his login. I would ask what they need to see.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

“For each question on the diagram, who decides: Rafa, the rule or the college?” — Model the grades question together.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students name the parents as the deciders. **Listen for:** “His parents decide because they pay.” **Then:** Point to the diagram: his family can ask, and Rafa decides through written consent.

📄 Support

- Let students label each box Rafa, rule or college before they write sentences.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** The missing-perspective question can turn to students' own families.

Cool-down: Keep answers about the characters. No student describes their own family arrangements.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose who holds Rafa's rights and explain why, then fix the two marked lines. About 5 minutes.

Rafa is 18 and in college, and his parents help pay his tuition. Under the general FERPA rule, who holds the rights to his education records?

☒ A Rafa does.

☐ B His parents do, because they help pay the bill.

☐ C His parents do, until Rafa signs a form that says otherwise.

Why I chose it

→ A. Under the general rule the rights are Rafa's. B confuses paying with permission, and C reverses the rule: the form is how he shares, not how he gains rights.

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

Rafa, ① your parents are paying so they can probably see everything, that's how it works at most schools. My parents could always see my grades on the portal in high school. FERPA is a privacy law but it's mostly for kids. ② Once you're 18 it doesn't really matter anymore. If you want to keep your grades private you should just not give them your password. Honestly just ask your parents what they want to see. They're helping you a lot so it's probably fair for them to know how you're doing.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

→ Paying tuition doesn't give access to grades. That needs consent in a separate section.

Rewrite phrase 2

→ At 18 or on starting college, FERPA rights transfer to you, though some exceptions apply.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

"Rafa is 18 and in college. Who holds the rights to his records?" — Vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students pick the paying-parents option. **Listen for:** "They're paying, so it's theirs." **Then:** Ask what the form would be for if his parents already held the rights.

📄 Support

- Read the options aloud before students choose.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

→ Answer key

A revised version: Rafa, under the general FERPA rule, the rights to your education records are yours now, because you're 18 and in college. Paying tuition doesn't automatically give your family access to your grades. At schools like the one in the guide, parent access for paying the bill is separate from permission to see academic records. You can decide what to share. Talk with your family about what help you actually want, then ask the records office which form covers that, what it allows and how to change it later. There are exceptions, so ask them which ones your college uses.

Grades 11–12

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 10 minutes.

Write a decision memo for Rafa: what should he authorize, for whom, and how can he change it later?

Use: All case sources, including the FAQ library entry on exceptions.

You'll make: Decision memo, 350–450 words

Time: 60 minutes

- 1 Reread Evidence A and B. Note what each section of the form controls.
- 2 List at least two authorization options in the planner.
- 3 Write one trade-off for Rafa and one for his family for each option.
- 4 Recommend one option and explain why the smallest access that still helps is a reasonable default.
- 5 Explain how Rafa can review or withdraw his consent.
- 6 Draft the three memo sections in the Your draft boxes.
- 7 Finish the memo on lined paper, 350 to 450 words in all.

Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Option 1 and its trade-off

➤ Billing only (Section 1). His family can pay and view statements but sees no grades unless Rafa shares his results.

Option 2 and its trade-off

➤ Billing and grades (Sections 1 and 2). His family also sees grades and standing, so Rafa no longer decides what to share himself.

Case 6 | Your task | Grades 11–12 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 10 min.

💬 Say this

“What is the smallest access that gives Rafa’s family the help they asked for?” — Point to the family chat in What happened: they asked about the bill.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Memos list one option and call it a decision. **Listen for:** “He should just say no.” **Then:** Ask for a second option and one trade-off for each.

📎 Support

- Memo template: situation, options, recommendation, how to revoke
- Model of a least-access recommendation
- Memo headings: Situation, Options, Recommendation, How to change it.

🔗 Stretch

- Weigh family trust against privacy, and explain why the smallest useful access is a reasonable default.

📋 Standards

Common Core: RI.11–12.1; W.11–12.2; W.11–12.5; SL.11–12.1.c; SL.11–12.1.d.

C3 Framework: D2.Civ.12.9–12; D3.1.9–12.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

Your task, continued

How Rafa can change his choice

✎ Section 3: the authorization lasts until he changes or withdraws it in writing.

Notes



This page continues page 117.

✎ Answer key

A strong response:

- Presents at least two authorization options
- Explains trade-offs for Rafa and his family
- Accurately describes the legal baseline and exceptions
- Includes how to review or withdraw consent

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 25 minutes.

Situation and options

Op To: Rafa. Re: the family-access form. Your parents help pay your tuition and want to help with the bill. Under the general FERPA rule, the rights to your education records are yours, because you are 18 and in college. The form offers two separate consents. Option 1 is billing only. Option 2 adds grades, enrollment and academic standing.

Recommendation and trade-offs

Op I recommend Option 1 for now. It gives your family the help they asked for: paying the bill. The trade-off is that your parents may feel left out of your grades. You can reduce that by talking with them and sharing results yourself. Starting small is a reasonable default, because Section 3 lets you change your choice later in writing. Option 2 remains open if you decide it would help.

Exceptions and how to change your choice

Op The law has exceptions. A college may share records with parents if you are a dependent for federal tax purposes, or in a health or safety emergency. That sharing is allowed, not required, so ask the records

Pacing

Full chapter: 25 min.

 Short on time: 25 min.

Say this

“Your reader is Rafa. Does your memo leave the decision with him?” — Students underline the sentence that recommends.

Watch for

Misconception: Memos judge what his family deserves.

Listen for: “His parents don’t deserve to see it.” **Then:** Keep the memo about options and trade-offs, not judgments of his family.

Heat check

Medium. Family trust and privacy can feel personal to students.

Cool-down: Say: “We’re advising a student.” Return to the sections of the form.

Op Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Sets up two real options from the evidence.
2. Names a cost for the family, not only for Rafa.
3. Builds in the way to review or withdraw consent.
4. Describes the exceptions accurately.

Your draft, continued

Exceptions and how to change your choice, continued

🔗 office what your college does.

Notes

This page continues page 119. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 119.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions, mark your level in each rubric row and write one change you made. About 6 minutes.

Does your memo present at least two authorization options?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it explain trade-offs for Rafa and for his family?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it describe the legal baseline and its exceptions accurately?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does it explain how to review or withdraw consent?	☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ No source cited.	☐ Refers to “privacy law” generally.	☐ Cites the transfer rule and the separate-access guide.	☐ Cites both and notes that exceptions exist.
Reasoning	☐ States the rule backwards.	☐ Gets the transfer right but merges billing and grades.	☐ Separates paying from permission correctly.	☐ Explains why least access is a reasonable choice.
Audience & purpose	☐ Tells Rafa what to do.	☐ Gives advice without a next step.	☐ Leaves the decision with Rafa and names the records office.	☐ Respects Rafa’s family relationship while protecting his choice.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Fixes one fact.	☐ Fixes the rule and adds a next step.	☐ Explains why each correction matters for Rafa’s decision.

Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

 Short on time: 3 min. Collect memos and score them with the rubric yourself.

Say this

“Mark your level honestly. Then make one change and say why.” — Ask for one corrected rule or one added question for the records office.

Watch for

Misconception: Students leave an absolute claim in place. **Listen for:** “Parents can never see grades.” **Then:** Point to the Evidence row. Ask them to add that exceptions exist.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: The memo is scored for at least two accurate options, a correct legal baseline with exceptions noted, a reasoned least-access recommendation and a clear revocation step.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** Cites the transfer rule and the separate-access guide.
- **Reasoning:** Separates paying from permission correctly.
- **Audience & purpose:** Leaves the decision with Rafa and names the records office.
- **Revision:** Fixes the rule and adds a next step.

[illegible]

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete the sentence frames below. About 10 minutes.

- 1 What is the smallest amount of access that would give Rafa the help he wants from his family?

➤ Section 1 alone. His family asked to help with the bill, and billing access covers that. Grades can wait until they talk.

- 2 Why might Rafa want to talk with his family before he checks the box for grades?

➤ The form separates billing from grades, but his family may not know that. Talking first lets him explain the difference before he decides.

- 3 Someone says, “Parents can never see college records.” How would you revise that claim after reading this case?

➤ Parents generally need an eligible student’s consent. The law allows, but does not require, sharing with parents of a tax dependent or in a health or safety emergency.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ My claim: the smallest access that still helps is billing only, with grades left for a family talk.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

➤ The best evidence is Section 3, because it lets Rafa change his choice later in writing.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Use question 1 as an exit ticket.

💬 Say this

“Answer with a detail from the form or the notice, not from your own family.” — Post the question numbers and hear one answer per question.

➤ Stretch

- Ask what Rafa could share with his family in a conversation, without signing any form.
- Going further: Compare FERPA’s general rule with American University’s parent-access process. Which parts come from the federal law, and which come from one university’s forms?
- Going further: What might a student and a family member who pays the bill each misunderstand about access? Write wording that makes the separate permissions clear without promising total secrecy.
- Going further: Draw two permission guides for a sample student: a flowchart and a short conversation. Test both with a reader who does not know this case.
- Going further: Search your school or district website for its FERPA or “student records” notice. Then write one question about who can see a record, and ask the front office or a counselor. If you are heading to college, look up its parent-access and authorization forms early.
- Find your own school’s FERPA notice and summarize what it says about directory information and opting out
- Compare FERPA with your state’s student-privacy law, if it has one

My take, continued

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

Someone who disagrees might say a paying family has a fair claim to see results.

The limit of the evidence is ____.

- The limit of the evidence is that we don't know which exceptions Rafa's college uses.

I would change my mind if ____.

☒ I would change my mind if his family claims him as a tax dependent and the college shares on that basis.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 123.

Heat check

Question 2: Medium. Students may describe their own family's rules about grades or money.

Cool-down: Say: “We’re talking about Rafa’s family, not ours.” Return to what the chat shows his family asked for.

Talk about this case at home

Case 6: What can your family see in your college records?

In this case, Rafa's parents help pay his college bill, and a form asks if they should also see his grades. Your student read the form and a federal privacy rule, then explained how paying the bill differs from seeing grades.

Questions to talk about

- 1 Under the general rule, when do students start to control who sees their school records?
- 2 Why might a college form keep paying a bill separate from seeing grades?
- 3 Who at a college could answer a question about records?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.

Case 6 | Talk about this case at home | Grades 11–12 educator edition

🕒 Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

💬 Say this

“Bring this page home, or read it with someone you trust.” — Nobody needs to share their own records or family arrangements.