



TEACHER FIELD GUIDE

Education law

Who gets to see your school records?

If your family helps pay for school, what are they allowed to see?

Grades, schedules and discipline records follow students for years, and the rules about who can see them change at 18 or when a student starts college. Knowing which record, which permission and which office to ask keeps family support from turning into giving away every login.

WHAT STUDENTS MAKE

Illustrated card, 4–6 sentences

THE CIVIC IDEA

Words that do the work.

FERPA Ley FERPA

A federal law giving parents, and later students, rights over education records at schools that receive U.S. Department of Education funds.

Rafa is 18 and in college, so under the general rule the FERPA rights are his, not his parents'.

Education record Expediente educativo

A record directly about a student that the school, or someone acting for it, keeps.

Rafa's grades and schedule count. His family's tuition payment portal is a separate access route.

Transfer of rights Transferencia de derechos

FERPA rights move from parents to the student at 18 or when the student enters college, whichever comes first.

A student who starts college at 17 would also hold the rights. Rafa's family helping pay doesn't move them back.

Consent Consentimiento

Written permission with a defined scope: which record, to whom, for what purpose.

The parent-access form lets family pay the bill. Seeing grades needs a separate authorization.

Exception Excepción

A situation where the law allows sharing without consent; schools must follow its specific conditions.

Caio reminds Rafa that "privacy law" isn't magic. Some exceptions exist, like sharing with parents who claim a student as a tax dependent.

**PAUTA**

§ At 18 or entering college, FERPA rights move to the student. Paying tuition doesn't move them back.



Sige, they can help with the bill. I just want to read what I'm signing before I hand over my grades too.

THE EVIDENCE

Handle the case file.

Every artifact comes with a question. The captions are the lesson.

FORM MAILED TO RAFA, AUGUST 28

**Parent and family access
authorization**

- 1 Which boxes cover billing, and which cover grades?

NOTICE POSTED ON THE REGISTRAR'S PAGE,
FALL TERM

College annual FERPA notice

- 2 Who does this notice say holds the rights now?

CHAT

SUNDAY, 8:47 P.M.

Rafa's family group chat

- 3 What is his family actually asking for help with?

**LUPA**

⦿ The guide says parent billing access does not include viewing grades. That's a separate form.

THE WORKSHOP

45 minutes, block by block.

5 MIN

Open the envelope (not literally)

TEACHER

Read the conversation where Rafa hasn't opened the envelope. Set the norm: no one shares real records.

STUDENTS

Write: what does Rafa want his family to help with?

CHECK

Answers name a specific task, not "everything."

10 MIN

Read the rule

TEACHER

Read the FERPA FAQ lines on rights and transfer aloud.

STUDENTS

Answer the case quiz: a student starts college at 17—who holds the rights?

CHECK

Students answer "the student" and cite why.

10 MIN

Separate the routes

TEACHER

Hand out the parent-access guide excerpt.

STUDENTS

Sort billing, grades and adviser conversations into "covered by this form" or "needs something else."

CHECK

Grades land in "needs separate authorization."

12 MIN

Draft the question

TEACHER

Model a records-office question: record, recipient, authority.

STUDENTS

Write Rafa's question and the smallest access that would actually help.

CHECK

Question names one record, one person and asks which permission applies.

5 MIN

Check the limits

TEACHER

Ask Caio's question: what if there's an exception?

STUDENTS

Add one line saying what they still need to confirm.

CHECK

Line admits an exception may apply without guessing which.

3 MIN

Exit

TEACHER

Ask for one difference between paying and permission.

STUDENTS

Write it in one sentence.

CHECK

Sentence separates billing access from academic records.

DIFFERENTIATED ROUTES

One case. Seven ways in.

Each route changes what students read, make and prove, not only how long it takes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grades 6–8: Make a “my records, my family” card explaining who holds FERPA rights for a middle-school student and what changes at 18.

SOURCES

The FERPA FAQ summary read aloud and the case quiz.

PRODUCT

Illustrated card, 4–6 sentences

RAISES THE RIGOR

Add one question you’d ask the school office about who can see your records.

Supports

- Frames: “Right now, __ can see my records. At 18 or in college, __.”
- Picture timeline: middle school → high school → 18/college
- Vocabulary cards: record, consent, rights

Success looks like

- ☐ States that parents hold the rights for students under 18 in K–12
- ☐ Explains the transfer at 18 or college
- ☐ Includes a question for the school office
- ☐ Contains no real student information

HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 9–10: Write Rafa a one-page guide separating paying the bill from seeing grades.

SOURCES

The university parent-access guide excerpt and the Department of Education FAQ.

PRODUCT

One-page guide, 200–250 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Include a line explaining that exceptions exist without inventing which one applies.

Supports

- Two-column organizer: billing access / academic access
- Model first paragraph
- Glossary

Success looks like

- ☐ Accurately states the transfer rule
- ☐ Separates billing from grades
- ☐ Names the records office as the next step
- ☐ Flags exceptions honestly

HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 11–12: Write a decision memo for Rafa: what should he authorize, for whom, and how can he change it later?

SOURCES

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

PRODUCT

Decision memo, 350–450 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

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

Supports

- Memo template: situation, options, recommendation, how to revoke
- Model of a least-access recommendation

Success looks like

- ☐ 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

HIGH SCHOOL

Honors: Argue whether FERPA's transfer at college should depend on who pays tuition.

SOURCES

Case sources plus the FAQ explanation of the dependent-student exception.

PRODUCT

Argument, 500–600 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Engage fairly with a parent's perspective and the existing exception.

Supports

- Claim/counterclaim chart
- Stakeholder list: student, parent, college

Success looks like

- ☐ Clear, qualified position
- ☐ Accurately represents current law
- ☐ Engages the parent perspective fairly
- ☐ Proposes a concrete alternative or defends the status quo

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AP Lang: Rhetorically analyze the university parent-access guide: how does it manage two audiences at once?

SOURCES

The parent-access guide excerpt.

PRODUCT

Rhetorical analysis, about 450 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Explain how the guide's neutral tone and structure keep both audiences on board without taking sides.

Supports

- Audience map: parents / students
- Analysis stems on tone and structure

Success looks like

- ☐ Thesis identifies the dual-audience purpose
- ☐ Analyzes structure and diction with quotations
- ☐ Explains effect on each audience
- ☐ Commentary goes beyond summary

MIDDLE YEARS

IB MYP: Investigate “Who owns information about me?” and create an infographic for students turning 18.

SOURCES

Case sources; global context: Identities and relationships.

PRODUCT

Infographic plus 150-word process journal

RAISES THE RIGOR

Compare FERPA’s approach with how one app or social platform handles your data, noting that different rules apply.

Supports

- Inquiry statement frame
- Infographic layout template
- Source-evaluation checklist

Success looks like

- ☐ Accurate FERPA content
- ☐ Clear visual organization
- ☐ Evaluates sources
- ☐ Reflects on identity and independence

DIPLOMA

IB DP: Write a TOK-style reflection on privacy and dependence: can you keep information private from people who support you?

SOURCES

Rafa and Caio's conversation as perspectives; the FERPA FAQ.

PRODUCT

Reflection, 700–900 words

RAISES THE RIGOR

Examine how law, family culture and personal values produce different answers.

Supports

- Knowledge question list
- Perspective chart: Rafa, his family, Caio, the college

Success looks like

- ☐ Poses a precise knowledge question
- ☐ Analyzes several perspectives, including cultural ones, respectfully
- ☐ Uses the law accurately as one lens
- ☐ Reaches a personal, reasoned conclusion

Access for every learner

- Provide a one-sentence summary of each source above the original text
- Read the FAQ aloud and show a timeline visual
- Spanish vocabulary: expediente, consentimiento, divulgación, derechos
- Students with IEPs may use a fill-in guide instead of writing from scratch
- Never ask students to describe their own family arrangements

Extension

- 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

**DUDA**

② What is the smallest access that gives Rafa the help he actually wants?

ANNOTATED STUDENT WORK

What a draft shows us.

Explain to Rafa whether his family can see his grades because they help pay tuition.

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 ² it's mostly for kids. ³ Once you're 18 it doesn't really matter anymore. If you want to keep your grades private you should ⁴ just not give them your password. Honestly just ⁵ 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.

¹ **EVIDENCE** Paying the bill and seeing grades are separate permissions in the guide.

² **GAP** Backwards: at 18 or in college, the rights transfer to the student.

³ **GAP** That's exactly when the rights become Rafa's.

⁴ **AUDIENCE** Practical, but the real route is the school's authorization form.

⁵ **STRENGTH** Good instinct: talking with family matters. Rafa decides what to authorize.

REVISED

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.

ASSESSMENT

One-page rubric.

Mark the evidence you see. Leave room for a comment and a next step.

CRITERION	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.

Evidence I saw

Next step

STANDARDS

What this case teaches, by the book.

CCSS 6–8

4

- RI.6.1** Students cite the form to show what parent access covers and what it leaves out.
- RI.7.4** Students define “education record,” “consent” and “disclosure” as the form uses them.
- W.6.2** Students write a short guide explaining one FERPA right to a younger reader.
- SL.6.1** Students discuss what family support looks like without sharing their own records.

CCSS 9–10

3

- RI.9-10.1** Students cite the Department of Education FAQ precisely when explaining the transfer of rights.
- RI.9-10.5** Students analyze how the university guide’s structure separates billing from academic access.
- W.9-10.2** Students write an explanatory guide that separates paying from permission.

CCSS 11–12

3

- RI.11-12.1** Students cite where the general rule ends and exceptions begin.
- RI.11-12.7** Students integrate the federal FAQ, the university guide and Rafa’s situation.
- W.11-12.2** Students explain a layered rule clearly for a first-year college audience.

C3 Framework

3

- D2.Civ.3.6–8** Students examine the purpose of a federal privacy law and how it affects families.
- D2.Civ.12.9-12** Students analyze how students use FERPA to control who sees their records.
- D3.1.9-12** Students select the federal FAQ and the school’s own notice as authoritative sources.

AP English Language

3

Rhetorical Situation (RHS) Students write for a first-year student deciding what to sign.

Claims and Evidence (CLE) Students separate the claim “parents can see everything” from what the form authorizes.

Reasoning and Organization (REO) Students sequence a guide from general rule to exceptions to next step.

IB MYP

3

Individuals and Societies A: Knowing and understanding

Individuals and Societies C: Communicating Students present the rule an organization guide for peers.

Language and Literature B: Organizing Students structure information from general to specific.

IB DP

2

Global Politics — key concepts: rights and liberty

Students compare how privacy rights shift at adulthood and who holds them.

Theory of Knowledge — Knowledge and politics (optional theme)

Students ask who decides what information about a person may be known, and by whom.

TAKE IT OFF THE PAGE

Find your school's records notice.

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

WHO TO ASK

School counselor, registrar or records office, front-office staff

STAY SAFE

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

**NEXO**

∞ Your school's notice is where the federal rule meets your actual office and forms.