I. **PURPOSE:** To provide procedures related to public information act requests.

II. **BACKGROUND:** The basic mandate of the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) is to enable people to have access to government records, without unnecessary costs or delay.

III. **PROCEDURES:**

A. All persons are entitled to have access to the school system’s public records, unless the requested records fall into one of the exceptions provided in the MPIA.

B. Requests for information must be submitted in writing via email, fax or letter to the Office of the General Counsel.

C. Pursuant to State law, the school system will:

   1) Advise the requestor within 10 business days if the records do not exist or if PGCPS does not have them;

   2) Advise the requestor within 10 business days if additional time is needed to respond to the request and the reason for the delay;

   3) Promptly ask the requestor for clarification or to narrow the request; or

   4) Explain to the requestor the cost implications if the search will take longer than two (2) hours.

D. In most instances, responses to requests for information will be provided within 30 days of receipt, unless an exemption applies or the requestor agrees to an extension beyond 30 days.

E. The inspection of any requested documents must be performed in the presence of a school system employee designated by the General Counsel. The requested person may not remove any documents.

F. A school system employee must copy the requested documents. The party requesting the information must pay the school system $.15 per page, unless the documents are transmitted electronically. In addition, the school system reserves the right to assess a fee for the cost of research, when the research exceeds two (2) hours. The hourly fee for research will be calculated based on
the staff person and/or attorney's actual time attributable to the search, review and preparation of the record. Payment must be made in advance.

G. Access to information will not be provided at a time or in a manner that disrupts the normal operation of the school system.

H. The school system will retain copies of all information requests and the system’s response to those requests on file for a three (3) year period.

IV. **RELATED PROCEDURES; LEGAL REFERENCE:** Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA), Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, Section 4-101 et seq.

V. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** These procedures originate with the Office of General Counsel and will be updated as needed.

VI. **CANCELLATION AND SUPERSEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 1120, dated November 7, 2014.

VII. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 23, 2015

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