

Month, Day, Year
Name
Superintendent
School District
Street
City, Zip code

Dear Superintendent. XXX:

As you know, there is a trend toward greater transparency in government. Elected officials and administrators at the state and local levels are working to empower taxpayers to become fiscal watchdogs by making budget information available on the Internet. Believing that all levels of government should be open and freely accessible to public scrutiny and oversight, the Evergreen Freedom Foundation is requesting that your school district post its budget and warrants online. Such an open, detailed accounting of revenues and expenditures would provide parents, taxpayers, journalists and other interested parties with a one-stop-shop for school district budget information.

An online budget and check register is a simple, inexpensive step toward greater transparency and a means of opening up real dialogue between the community and the school district administration. By posting your district's warrants online, you will achieve a significant public relations victory with the community! The citizens of your community will appreciate the Board's commitment to making them part the educational process.

Currently, no Washington school district posts its warrants online. Compare that to Illinois, where at least 25 school districts have posted their check registers online. Washington school districts are behind the eight ball when it comes to spending transparency, but you can change that! Posting your district's budget and warrants online will show respect for those who pay the bill for educating Washington's kids.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, your district's budget and check register are already public. Posting your register online creates a much easier path to access. Any questions generated become an opportunity to solve misunderstandings or problems sooner rather than later.

To give you an idea of what we are looking for in terms of an online budget, please see the South Kitsap School District's budget on their Web site at:

<http://www.skitsap.wednet.edu/145510226144544883/blank/browse.asp?a=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&c=53820>.

The Houston Independent School District in Texas offers a good example of an online check register: <http://prodnet.houstonisd.org/Crose/>. Courtesy of Americans for Tax Reform's Center for Fiscal Accountability, a national overview of all school districts that have posted their check registers online can be found at:

<http://www.fiscalaccountability.org/userfiles/Chart%20five%20school%20district%20transparency1.pdf>.

We hope you agree that posting your school district's budget and warrants online is a worthwhile endeavor. We are excited to help any way we can.

If you have any questions and/or comments, please feel free to contact me by phone at (360) 956-3482, or via e-mail at BDavis@effwa.org. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brett Davis
Economic Policy Center Analyst
Transparency in Government Project