



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2003 Wisconsin Act 292 [2003 Assembly Bill 709]	Confidentiality of Pupil Records & Exchange of Information
2003 Acts: www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/acts/	Act Memos: www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/act_memo/act_memo.htm

2003 Wisconsin Act 292 relates to the confidentiality of pupil records and the exchange of information between a pupil's school, the juvenile justice system, and law enforcement agencies.

Generally, under *current law*, law enforcement officers' records of juveniles are confidential and may only be disclosed in limited situations as provided in the statutes. A person who is denied access to juvenile records under those statutes may petition the court to order disclosure of the records. Upon receipt of a petition, the court must notify the juvenile, the juvenile's attorney, the juvenile's parents, and appropriate law enforcement agencies of the petition. If a notified person objects to the disclosure, the court may hold a hearing to take evidence relating to the petitioner's need for disclosure. Current law requires a court to inspect the juvenile's records. If the court determines that the information sought is for good cause and that it cannot be obtained with reasonable effort from other sources, the court must then determine whether the petitioner's need for the information outweighs society's interest in protecting the information's confidentiality. In making this determination, the court is required to balance the following private and social interests:

1. The petitioner's interest in recovering for the injury, damage, or loss he or she has suffered against the juvenile's interest in rehabilitation and in avoiding the stigma that might result from disclosure.
2. The public's interest in the redress of private wrongs through private litigation against the public's interest in protecting the integrity of the juvenile justice system.

If the court determines that disclosure is warranted, it must order the disclosure of only as much information as is necessary to meet the petitioner's need for information. The court must record the reasons for its decision to disclose or not disclose the juvenile's records. Records relating to such a decision are confidential.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents.

Generally, the above procedure applies to, among others, school officials who are denied access to juvenile law enforcement records under the statutes.

2003 Wisconsin Act 292 establishes an alternative procedure to that described above applicable to school officials seeking information in a juvenile's law enforcement records relating to the use, possession, or distribution of alcohol or drugs by the juvenile; the illegal possession of a dangerous weapon by the juvenile; whether the juvenile was taken into custody upon the belief that the juvenile was committing or committed a violation of state or federal criminal law; or acts for which a juvenile was adjudged delinquent. Under the Act, when school officials are denied access to such records, they may file a petition with the court, and the court must, ***without notice or hearing***, inspect the record and make a determination on whether the record should be released. In making the determination, the court must use the balancing test required under current law but must also consider one other balancing consideration. Under the Act, when school officials are seeking the above-described information about a juvenile, the court must balance the petitioner's legitimate educational interests, including safety interests, in the information against society's interests in protecting its confidentiality. If the court determines that disclosure is warranted, the Act requires the court to order disclosure. The Act then requires the petitioner to provide a copy of the disclosure order to the law enforcement agency that denied access to the record, the juvenile, the juvenile's counsel, and the juvenile's parents. Any of those persons may obtain a hearing on the court's determination by filing a motion to set aside the disclosure within 10 days after receipt of the order. If no motion is filed within those 10 days or if, after hearing, the court determines that no good cause has been shown for setting aside the order, the law enforcement agency must disclose the juvenile's records as ordered.

Effective Date: The effective date of 2003 Wisconsin Act 292 is May 5, 2004.

Prepared by: Philip G. Cardis, Staff Attorney

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