



August 5, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Dr. Joseph A. Libby, Superintendent
Sweetwater County School District #1
3550 Foothill Boulevard
Rock Springs, WY 82901
libbyj@sw1.k12.wy.us

Subj: Goldwater Institute Public Records Request for Written Public Comments

Dear Dr. Libby:

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully demand that Sweetwater County School District #1 (“District”) immediately produce all unredacted written public comment records withheld from the Goldwater Institute (“Institute”) following its proper request for those documents under the Wyoming Public Records Act. W.S. § 16-4-201–205.

Background

On April 14, 2026, the Institute submitted a public records request to the District seeking written public comments submitted through the District’s online portal¹ or submission forms² from July 1, 2025, to the date of the request. That request is appended as Attachment 1.

As the District’s “designated public records person,”³ you promptly acknowledged receipt of the request the same day. Attachment 2. The Institute exchanged follow-up emails with you regarding the status of the request on April 23, 2026. Attachment 3 at 6–7. On April 24, 2026, the District’s Chief Information Officer, Stephanie Tolman, provided an additional

¹ The District Board of Trustees’ home webpage has a “Written Public Comment” link which “opens at 7:00 a.m. three days prior to the scheduled Board meeting and closes at 1:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.” “Board of Education,” Sweetwater County School District #1, <https://sweetwater1.community.diligentoneplatform.com/Portal/Default.aspx>.

² The District uses Google Forms to receive written public comment submissions. *See* https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfCQ7wt0ixVycy1p5J9vxS-7lcH_brD453xilnCYzA51r_7Hw/closedform. A link to the submission form was posted on the District’s Facebook page prior to the April 13, 2026 meeting. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DDN8uEKL7/>.

³ *See* W.S. §§ 16-4-201(a)(xii), 16-4-202; SCSD#1 Policy KBA.

acknowledgment and update confirming that there would be “no charge associated with this request.” *Id.* at 5.

On May 4, 2026, Ms. Tolman responded to the Institute’s request by pointing to written public comments published on the District’s website, including “one written public comment submitted on April 13, 2026, [which] was not included in the originally posted agenda materials, as it [allegedly] contained information related to a personnel matter.” *Id.* at 2–3. Ms. Tolman noted, “That comment has since been redacted and added to the April written public comments on the District’s website ...” *Id.* at 3. The redacted comment in question is documented in Attachment 4, and a similarly redacted comment from the December 8, 2025 meeting is noted in Attachment 5.

On May 5, 2026, the Institute requested a written statement of the grounds for the redaction of these and any other redacted comments, per W.S. § 16-4-203(e). Attachment 3 at 1–2.

The following day, Ms. Tolman responded that “[t]he District’s redactions were made pursuant to Wyo. Stat. § 16-4-203(b)(iii) and (xi), [sic⁴]” purportedly because “[t]he redacted portions consisted of allegations regarding an identifiable employee’s performance and conduct, together with requests for reassignment or disciplinary action.” *Id.* at 1. According to Ms. Tolman, “Under Board Policy KD,[⁵] such matters are addressed through confidential personnel and complaint processes rather than public discussion, including executive session as authorized by Wyo. Stat. § 16-4-405(a)(ii).” *Id.*

The Wyoming Public Records Act is construed in favor of disclosure.

As you know, Wyoming law and public policy require open and transparent government. *Powder River Basin Res. Council v. Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Comm’n*, 320 P.3d 222, 231 ¶ 33 (Wyo. 2014) (Wyoming law “requires that disclosure generally prevail over secrecy.”). To that end, Wyoming has broad public records laws favoring disclosure of records made and kept by government agencies. *See, e.g.*, W.S. § 16-4-201(a)(v). As the Wyoming Supreme Court has explained, the Wyoming Public Records Act “creates a presumption that the denial of inspection of a public record is contrary to public policy.” *Gates v. Memorial Hospital of Converse Cnty.*, 533 P.3d 493, 500 ¶ 18 (Wyo. 2023) (citation omitted).

The Wyoming Public Records Act contains a list of limited exceptions to disclosure. The two relied upon by the District cover, respectively, certain “[p]ersonnel files,” and “[r]ecords or

⁴ Although Ms. Tolman cited Subsection (b) of Section 16-4-203, it appears that she meant to cite Subsection (d). Subsection (b)(iii) concerns the “details of bona fide research projects” and Subsection (b)(xi) doesn’t exist, while Subsections (d)(iii) and (xi) line up with the asserted exceptions.

⁵ Policy KD, as updated last fall, is included as Attachment 6. The substantive deficiencies with Policy KD’s recent revisions and enforcement are addressed in a separate letter to the Board Chairman Cole Wright.

information compiled *solely* for purposes of investigating violations of, and enforcing, internal personnel rules or personnel policies the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” W.S. § 16-4-203(d)(iii), (xi) (emphasis added).

Exceptions to disclosure are construed narrowly—a point repeatedly affirmed by the Wyoming Supreme Court. *See Sheridan Newspapers, Inc. v. City of Sheridan*, 660 P.2d 785, 794 (Wyo. 1983); *Wyoming Dep’t of Transp. v. Int’l Union of Operating Eng’rs Local Union 800*, 908 P.2d 970, 973 (Wyo. 1995); *Allsop v. Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc.*, 39 P.3d 1092, 1095 ¶ 10 (Wyo. 2002); *Sheaffer v. State ex rel. Univ. of Wyo.*, 139 P.3d 468, 471, 473 ¶¶ 6, 13 (Wyo. 2006); *Powder River*, 320 P.3d at 231, 233 ¶¶ 33, 41.

Written public comments are not “[p]ersonnel files.”

Section 16-4-203(d)(iii) protects personnel files, but the comments at issue were not submitted as internal employment records or as materials generated for an employee’s personnel file. They were submitted by members of the public through the District’s public-comment process for consideration in connection with Board business. The District cannot convert an otherwise public communication into a personnel-file record merely by characterizing its subject as personnel-related or by later placing it in a personnel file.

To read “[p]ersonnel files” so broadly as to encompass any type of record—including written public comments—that might eventually end up in an individual employee’s personnel file would expand the statutory exception well beyond its plain language. Courts disfavor such interpretations. *City of Evanston v. Robinson*, 702 P.2d 1283, 1289 n.4 (Wyo. 1985) (“Words used in a statute must be given their plain and ordinary meaning unless otherwise indicated.”). *See also Sublette Cnty. Sch. Dist. Number Nine v. McBride*, 198 P.3d 1079, 1085 n.5 (Wyo. 2008) (government entities cannot attempt to reinterpret statutes after the fact in ways that run contrary to clear and unambiguous language). Wyoming’s Public Records Act cannot be evaded simply by placing an otherwise disclosable public record into someone’s personnel file. Such a practice would eviscerate the recognized presumption of openness and undermine the very purpose of the public records laws. *Wyoming Dep’t of Transp., supra; Gates, supra*.

Although the statute does not expressly define “[p]ersonnel files,” it does provide some examples, including “[a]pplications, performance ratings and scholastic achievement data.” W.S. § 16-4-203(d)(iii). Conversely, “[e]mployment contracts, working agreements or other documents setting forth the terms and conditions of employment of public officials and employees are not considered part of a personnel file and shall be available for public inspection.” *Id.* That dichotomy suggests that personal information submitted to a government entity by a job applicant, as well as *internal* performance records, can be withheld, but that records regarding the terms and conditions of public employment are not. A public comment to public officials regarding the public performance of a public employee falls much closer to the latter category than the former. If it’s a close call in any particular case, the presumption favoring disclosure controls because the burden of proof rests upon the public records custodian—not the requester—to show that withholding does not run afoul of statutory limitations. *Sheridan Newspapers*, 660 P.2d at 796.

Both the U.S. and Wyoming Constitutions support this view. The Wyoming Supreme Court has recognized that access to public records is a constitutionally protected right that cannot be denied absent a compelling state interest. *Houghton v. Franscell*, 870 P.2d 1050, 1053, 1056 (Wyo. 1994). Additionally, written public comments are forms of citizen speech and petition. U.S. Const. amends. I, XIV; Wyo. Const. art. I §§ 20–21. A broad interpretation of “[p]ersonnel files” that would result in making such public communication effectively private would burden these constitutionally protected rights. *See, e.g., Operation Save Am. v. City of Jackson*, 275 P.3d 438, 458 ¶ 65 (Wyo. 2012) (“Speech on public issues or matters of public concern are classic forms of speech that lie at the heart of the First Amendment.” (cleaned up)); *McGarvey v. Key Prop. Mgmt. LLC*, 211 P.3d 503, 507 ¶ 16 (Wyo. 2009) (recognizing that the Wyoming Constitution is worded differently and may protect more speech than the First Amendment).

Written public comments are not “compiled solely” for investigatory purposes and do not categorically “constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy” when they critique a public employee by name regarding performance of public duties.

The second claimed exception—for information gathered *solely* for investigating violations of personnel rules and policies and the disclosure of which would clearly cause an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, W.S. § 16-4-203(d)(xi)—is unavailable to the District under binding Wyoming Supreme Court precedent. To invoke this exception, the District must establish both statutory requirements as to each withheld record or redaction: first, that the information was gathered solely for investigating violations of personnel rules or policies, and second, that disclosure would clearly constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. A generalized assertion that the records concern personnel matters is insufficient.

In *Sheaffer v. State ex rel. University of Wyoming*, 139 P.3d 468, 473 ¶ 14 (Wyo. 2006), the Court held that this exception cannot be used to withhold records that predate an internal personnel investigation. That’s in part because “[i]n this context, the word ‘solely’ is equivalent to ‘exclusively.’” *Id.* So, even if someone’s public comment sparked a personnel investigation, it cannot be withheld where it “preexisted the investigation” or “was not compiled ‘solely’ or ‘exclusively’ for purposes of [an] investigation.” *Id.* That makes sense here because public comments are not offered to or collected by the District *solely* or *exclusively* for investigating policy violations. They can be offered for many other reasons, such as informing the Board as to happenings within the District, seeking immediate corrective action, or requesting that employee contracts not be renewed—regardless of whether an investigation occurred or results.

Additionally, not every personnel matter will implicate an employee’s personal privacy or involve an unwarranted invasion thereof. Public employees work for the public. Some degree of personal privacy is given up in public employment situations because public employees conduct, or at least are supposed to conduct, the public’s business. In other words, in many aspects of public employment, there is no reasonable expectation of privacy. *See, e.g., Laramie Cnty. Sch. Dist. No. One v. Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc.*, 250 P.3d 522, 525 (Wyo. 2011) (disclosure of public employee compensation is “one burden of public employment”); *Sheridan Newspapers*, 660 P.2d at 792 (“With some necessary exceptions, recognized by Wyoming’s records and meetings acts, state agencies must act in a fishbowl.” (citation omitted)).

Moreover, the Wyoming Supreme Court has specified that for purposes of exempting records from disclosure under the public records act, an “unwarranted invasion of privacy” is narrowly defined as “unwarranted publicity, unwarranted appropriation or exploitation of one’s personality, or the publicizing of one’s private affairs with which the public ha[s] no legitimate concern.” *Houghton*, 870 P.2d at 1055. None of those are present here because “[m]embers of the public have a legitimate interest in the operation” of the District. *Id.* at 1056. *See also* Wyo. A.G. Op. 98-004 (discussing *Houghton* and related cases in the context of the personnel file exception).

Suffice it to say that public comments written by concerned citizens to their elected officials for consideration at public meetings, especially when those comments relate to properly agendized items and other public business, are quintessentially public communications. Withholding such comments from other members of the public cannot be justified under the narrow, inapplicable exceptions asserted by the District.

Based on the foregoing, we believe the District’s withholding or full redaction⁶ of written public comments violate the Wyoming Public Records Act.

Accordingly, the Institute respectfully demands that the District immediately produce the *unredacted* written public comments that have been improperly withheld, including the April 13, 2026 and December 8, 2025 comments. If the District contends that any portion of a responsive comment may lawfully be withheld, it must provide the balance of the comment and a written, record-specific statement identifying the withheld portion, the exemption asserted, and the factual basis for withholding it.

The original statutory period for release has expired. Continued failure to produce the requested records or provide a legally sufficient, record-specific justification could result in litigation. Should the District fail to provide the complete and unredacted records responsive to our original request (or less-redacted versions with an adequate, particularized basis for any continuing withholding) by **August 14, 2026**, the Institute will pursue its right to compel production of those records by seeking judicial relief in district court pursuant to W.S. §§ 16-4-202(c)(v) and 16-4-203(f)(i).

⁶ Even if the District identifies discrete information in a written public comment that might warrant redaction, it may not withhold an entire written public comment based on a generalized personnel rationale. Wyoming law requires particularized consideration of the records and permits redaction only to protect genuinely exempt information while preserving public access to the balance. *See, e.g., Allsop v. Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc.*, 39 P.3d 1092, 1101 ¶ 30 (Wyo. 2002); *Gates, supra*. The District should therefore produce each comment in unredacted form or, if there is a bona fide connection to either of the asserted exceptions, identify the specific portions withheld, which statutory exemption applies to which portion, and the factual basis for treating that language as exempt.

Dr. Joseph A. Libby
August 5, 2026
Page 6 of 6

I look forward to working with you to quickly resolve this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Parker Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Parker Jackson
Staff Attorney
Scharf-Norton Center for
Constitutional Litigation at the
Goldwater Institute

cc:

Kelly Murray
Executive Secretary
murrayk@sw1.k12.wy.us

Stephanie Tolman
Chief Information Officer
tolmans@sw1.k12.wy.us
tolmans@sweetwater1.org



April 14, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL AND ONLINE PORTAL

Dr. Joseph A. Libby, Superintendent
Sweetwater County School District #1
3550 Foothill Boulevard
Rock Springs, WY 82901
libbyj@sw1.k12.wy.us

Subj: Public Records Request – Written Public Comment Submissions

Dear Dr. Libby:

Wyoming law and public policy require open and transparent government.¹ To that end, Wyoming has broad public records laws favoring disclosure of records made and kept by government agencies. *See, e.g.*, W.S. § 16-4-201(a)(v).

Pursuant to Wyoming’s Public Records Act, W.S. § 16-4-201 *et seq.*, we respectfully request the following public records in your custody as the district’s “designated public records person”²:

- (1) All written public comments submitted to Sweetwater County School District #1 through the district’s online “Written Public Comment” portal or “Public Comment Submission Form[s],” from July 1, 2025, to the date of this request.**

Electronic production of records and information is preferable and acceptable. *See* W.S. § 16-4-202(d).

We request your response as soon as possible. If responsive records cannot be produced within seven (7) business days, please contact us with your progress and expected completion date. *See* W.S. § 16-4-202(b)–(c); SCSD#1 Policy KBA.

¹ *Powder River Basin Res. Council v. Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Comm’n*, 320 P.3d 222, 231 ¶ 33 (Wyo. 2014) (Wyoming law “requires that disclosure generally prevail over secrecy.”).

² *See* W.S. §§ 16-4-201(a)(xii), 16-4-202; SCSD#1 Policy KBA.

Dr. Joseph A. Libby
April 14, 2026
Page 2 of 2

Additionally, if some records are available prior to the production of other records, please provide them on a rolling or continuing basis as the records are available.

We are willing to pay up to \$100.00 for copies of the public records requested. Please note, however, that fees may not be charged as a condition of making a public record available for inspection. W.S. § 16-4-204(a).

Should you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org or by calling our main office at 602-462-5000.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Parker Jackson
Staff Attorney
Scharf-Norton Center for
Constitutional Litigation at the
Goldwater Institute

cc:

Kelly Murray
Executive Secretary
murrayk@sw1.k12.wy.us

Parker Jackson

From: Joseph Libby <libbyj@sw1.k12.wy.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 2:08 PM
To: Sophia Lepore
Cc: Parker Jackson; murrayk@sw1.k12.wy.us
Subject: Re: Public Records Request

Thank you, this has been received and sent on for review.

Respectfully, Dr. Libby

On Tue, Apr 14, 2026 at 12:21 PM Sophia Lepore <slepore@goldwaterinstitute.org> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Dr. Libby and Ms. Murray,

Please see the attached public records request on behalf of the Goldwater Institute. We have also submitted this request via your online portal. Please confirm that you received this request.

Best,

Sophia Lepore

Legal Administrative Assistant

Goldwater Institute | www.GoldwaterInstitute.org | 602.633.8972

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Dr. Joseph A. Libby
Superintendent of Schools
Sweetwater County School District #1
Website: [Sweetwater County School District #1](http://SweetwaterCountySchoolDistrict#1)
Showcase a Superstar from Sweetwater#1

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Parker Jackson

From: Stephanie Tolman <tolmans@sw1.k12.wy.us>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 12:06 PM
To: Parker Jackson
Cc: Joseph Libby
Subject: Re: Public Records Request Status and Cost Estimate

Hello Parker,

The District's redactions were made pursuant to Wyo. Stat. § 16-4-203(b)(iii) and (xi). The redacted portions consisted of allegations regarding an identifiable employee's performance and conduct, together with requests for reassignment or disciplinary action. Under Board Policy KD, such matters are addressed through confidential personnel and complaint processes rather than public discussion, including executive session as authorized by Wyo. Stat. § 16-4-405(a)(ii).

Thank you,
Stephanie



**SWEETWATER COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT #1**

STEPHANIE TOLMAN

Chief Information Officer

Showcase a Superstar from Sweetwater#1

Sweetwater County School District #1

3550 Foothill Blvd., Rock Springs, WY 82901

Phone: 307-352-3460 ext 1111

Fax: 888-316-9265

Email: tolmans@sweetwater1.org

Web: sweetwater1.org

Inspiring all Students to Academic Excellence

On Tue, May 5, 2026 at 3:29 PM Parker Jackson <pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Stephanie,

Thank you for the response.

Pursuant to W.S. § 16-4-203(e), please provide a written statement of the grounds for the redaction of the April 13 comment—and any other redacted comments (see [Dec. 8, 2025 public comments](#))—including a citation to the law or regulation under which the redaction is made.

Best,

Parker Jackson

Staff Attorney

Goldwater Institute | www.GoldwaterInstitute.org | 602.633.8997

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From: Stephanie Tolman <tolmans@sw1.k12.wy.us>

Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 1:39 PM

To: Parker Jackson <pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org>

Cc: Joseph Libby <libbyj@sw1.k12.wy.us>; Sophia Lepore <slepore@goldwaterinstitute.org>

Subject: Re: Public Records Request Status and Cost Estimate

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I am writing in response to your public records request dated April 14, 2026, seeking all written public comments submitted to Sweetwater County School District #1 through the District's online

Written Public Comment portal or Public Comment Submission Form(s) from July 1, 2025, through April 14, 2026.

Written public comments submitted to the District are published on the District's website as part of the board meeting agendas. All written public comments responsive to your request are available at: <https://sweetwater1.community.diligentoneplatform.com/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx>.

Please note that one written public comment submitted on April 13, 2026, was not included in the originally posted agenda materials, as it contained information related to a personnel matter. That comment has since been redacted and added to the April written public comments on the District's website at the link above.

Although your request did not seek in-person public comments, the District's board meetings are broadcast and archived on the District's YouTube channel as a matter of public transparency. Those recordings are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/@ITSCSD1/streams>.

We trust that the records available through the above resources fully satisfy your request. Should you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Tolman



**SWEETWATER COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT #1**

STEPHANIE TOLMAN

Chief Information Officer

**Showcase a Superstar from
Sweetwater#1**

Sweetwater County School District #1

3550 Foothill Blvd., Rock Springs, WY 82901

Phone: 307-352-3460 ext 1111

Fax: 888-316-9265

Email: tolmans@sweetwater1.org

Web: sweetwater1.org

On Fri, Apr 24, 2026 at 11:04 AM Parker Jackson <pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org> wrote:

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Thank you for the update, Stephanie. Much appreciated.

Have a great weekend,

Parker Jackson

Staff Attorney

Goldwater Institute | www.GoldwaterInstitute.org | 602.633.8997

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From: Stephanie Tolman <tolmans@sw1.k12.wy.us>

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 8:36 AM

To: Parker Jackson <pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org>

Cc: Joseph Libby <libbyj@sw1.k12.wy.us>; murrayk@sw1.k12.wy.us; Sophia Lepore <slepore@goldwaterinstitute.org>

Subject: Re: Public Records Request Status and Cost Estimate

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your public records request dated April 14, 2026, submitted on behalf of the Goldwater Institute, seeking all written public comments submitted to Sweetwater County School District #1 through the District's online Written Public Comment portal or Public Comment Submission Form(s) from July 1, 2025, through April 14, 2026.

I apologize for the delay in responding. Please be advised that there will be no charge associated with this request. The District is actively working to fulfill your request and will provide the responsive records as promptly as possible. We appreciate your patience.

Should you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Tolman



**SWEETWATER COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT #1**

STEPHANIE TOLMAN

Chief Information Officer

**Showcase a Superstar from
Sweetwater#1**

Sweetwater County School District #1

3550 Foothill Blvd., Rock Springs, WY 82901

Phone: 307-352-3460 ext 1111

Fax: 888-316-9265

Email: tolmans@sweetwater1.org

Web: sweetwater1.org

On Thu, Apr 23, 2026 at 3:58 PM Parker Jackson <pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good afternoon, Dr. Libby,

We appreciate that you have notified us that the request has been forwarded, presumably to the records "custodian or authorized person having personal control and custody of the public records," as mentioned in [Policy KBA](#). See also W.S. § 16-4-202(c)(i).

However, please note that today is the seventh business day since the submission of the request. Another section of the policy, labeled "III. Time for Release," requires you as the Designated Public Records Person to "provide an estimate of the cost and, when applicable, of the amount of time required to comply with the request ... within seven (7) business days of receiving the request." Additionally, both district policy and the Wyoming Public Records Act require notification within seven business days if any requested records are not in the custody or control of the district. *Id.*; W.S. § 16-4-202(b).

Please advise as to these items as soon as possible. In particular, the cost estimate will allow us to determine the nature of any anticipated fees, whether we would like copies of the records or merely to inspect them, and whether the scope of our request is appropriate or if it should be narrowed.

Thank you,

Parker Jackson

Staff Attorney

Goldwater Institute | www.GoldwaterInstitute.org | 602.633.8997

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From: Joseph Libby <libbyj@sw1.k12.wy.us>

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2026 2:26 PM

To: Sophia Lepore <slepore@goldwaterinstitute.org>; Stephanie Tolman <tolmans@sw1.k12.wy.us>

Cc: Parker Jackson <pjackson@goldwaterinstitute.org>; murrayk@sw1.k12.wy.us

Subject: Re: Public Records Request Status and Cost Estimate

Good afternoon Sophie

\

On Thu, Apr 23, 2026 at 1:38 PM Sophia Lepore <slepore@goldwaterinstitute.org> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello, I wanted to follow up on the public records request that was submitted on 4/14/26. I have attached the request for reference. Can you please provide an estimate of when we can expect production of those records, and also a cost estimate for production of the records requested. If you have any questions about the request, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best,

Sophia Lepore

Legal Administrative Assistant

Goldwater Institute | www.GoldwaterInstitute.org | 602.633.8972

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Dr. Joseph A. Libby

Superintendent of Schools

Sweetwater County School District #1

Website: [Sweetwater County School District #1](#)

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SWEETWATER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

Sweetwater County School District #1
Board Meeting
April 13, 2026
Public Comment

Name Cherell O'Driscoll

Entity Parent

Public Comment

This public comment has been redacted because it requests disciplinary action regarding an individual employee. Concerns involving confidential personnel matters are redirected to the appropriate channels for review and follow-up.

Name Rachel Seppie

Entity Parent

Public Comment

I am asking for clarification on the role and or/contract our district currently holds with KSB Law. KSB Law has been presented as a third party independent contractor used by the district when a neutral party is needed for investigative purposes. It has come to my attention that the District is regularly hiring KSB Law for other legal representation as well. I was recently served papers from district Court showing KSB Law was representing the district's interests in civil proceedings against me. In addition when my husband FOIA requested the results of a retaliation investigation he was involved in he was denied access to these records and the stated reason was "attorney client privilege". I would like to know how KSB Law can in fact be a neutral third party but can also be regularly hired by the district to represent their interests in legal matters. It makes person question the legitimacy and fairness of investigations conducted when the district is using their personal counsel. Clarification on the use of KSB Law as well as the definition of what a neutral 3rd party investigator is considered by the board. Also who makes the selection of the 3rd party investigator in instances where neutrality is required.



SWEETWATER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

Sweetwater County School District #1
Board Meeting
December 8, 2025
Public Comment

Name:	Kari Cochran
Entity:	Parent
Public Comment	What is happening in these posts should alarm every parent, educator, and community member. The fact that a bracelet with phrases like "Follow Policy + FAFO + GFY" is not only circulating but reportedly being worn by a school leader is deeply disturbing. This is not humor. This is not leadership. This is a culture of intimidation and it has absolutely no place in a school district responsible for the well-being of children and staff. When educators are reporting fear, pressure, and retaliation instead of support and guidance, something is profoundly wrong. When staff feel mocked instead of mentored, threatened instead of encouraged, that is a systemic failure. A district that allows this kind of behavior to go unchecked sends a clear message about what it values and it is not professionalism, integrity, or student safety. The community should not have to rely on anonymous posts for the truth to surface. The district should be investigating immediately, publicly, and thoroughly. Accountability is not optional here. Our teachers, our students, and our families deserve leadership that builds others up—not leadership that weaponizes authority or uses vulgar slogans as a "model" for how to treat people. The fact that this bracelet even exists is shocking. The fact that it was allegedly created and distributed is unacceptable. The fact that the district has not already acted is inexcusable

Name:	Kari Cochran
Entity:	Parent
Public Comment:	Members of the Board, The audit findings this year represent a serious breakdown in the district's internal controls—one that simply cannot be minimized or brushed aside. For two years in a row—2023 and 2024—this district received perfect audits. No material weaknesses. No significant deficiencies. No compliance issues. Nothing. This year, that changed dramatically. The 2025 audit documented three significant deficiencies and a federal compliance violation, all centered on failures in basic procurement procedures. The auditors found that: • Required bidding did not occur, • Required suspension and debarment checks were not done, and • These errors were so significant that they rose to the level of an internal control failure that must be addressed by governance. Let's be clear: When auditors label something as a significant deficiency, they are telling you that the district's controls were not functioning. This is not a small clerical oversight. It is a failure of the system that is supposed to protect taxpayer dollars and ensure fairness and transparency. And here is the unavoidable reality: If controls failed in the IDEA procurement process, there is NO basis to assume they were followed correctly in other bid processes. This is not speculation, it's about internal control. When a control is broken in one area, you must question whether it is broken elsewhere. That is your responsibility as a board. It is not enough to accept corrective actions for one program while ignoring the possibility of broader issues. The public deserves to know whether: • Other contracts bypassed competitive bidding, • Other vendors were not checked for debarment, • Other procurement processes failed to follow policy or federal law. This matters because procurement is one of the highest-risk areas in any public institution, and the auditors just signaled that the district's controls are not reliable. So today I am strongly urging the Board to take action—not symbolic action, not a statement of confidence, but actual oversight. What you should be requesting: 1. A full review of procurement processes districtwide for the past year. 2. Verification that all bid processes followed policy and federal requirements. 3. Confirmation that suspension and debarment checks were completed for every federally funded vendor. 4. A public presentation of the findings, not buried in back channels or internal memos. This is not personal. This is not political. This is about safeguarding public funds, maintaining community trust, and ensuring that the failures documented in this audit are not happening across other contracts. The audit findings this year were not normal. They were not minor. And they cannot be ignored. Your obligation as a governing body is to respond with seriousness and transparency. Nothing less will restore confidence.

Name:	Kari Cochran
Entity:	Parent
Public Comment:	There is now a clear and widening gap between what this board says publicly and how it operates in practice. The community deserves that gap to be acknowledged —and corrected. Chair Cole Wright's recent public statement emphasized transparency, honesty, open communication, and the idea that every voice matters. He stated that the board welcomes dialogue, is committed to listening, and works best when it works together. He made statements about district investigations and retaliation. But the district's actions tell a different story. Board meeting notices have been removed from ParentSquare. Public comment minutes no longer list who spoke or what concerns were raised. Public comment features have been shut off across social media. District emails are not provided on the website. Families receive no acknowledgement that their messages are read. And although board emails are publicly listed, only one trustee the Chair ever responds, effectively filtering communication through a single person and preventing the board from functioning as a true representative body. Investigations don't appear to use due process or seem to be handled properly. They immediately removed Dr. Seppie from the website but haven't added the new trustee or contact even after it was approved. Why was the new trustee process placed in executive session ? These actions do not align with the stated values of transparency, communication, or shared leadership. They also undermine the purpose of a school board: To ensure that multiple elected voices represent the community, not just one. With the board's required annual reorganization approaching, this is an appropriate time for trustees to reflect on whether current leadership is honoring the board's commitments and responsibilities. Leadership should earn trust not centralize control. We respectfully urge this board to take seriously its duty to the public and consider electing a new Board Chair who will restore transparency, support full-board communication, and ensure that community voices are welcomed rather than restricted. The public is watching, and our students, families, and staff deserve a board whose actions match its words.

Name:	Kari Cochran
Entity:	Parent
Public Comment:	Earlier this year Dr. Cole Seppie raised concerns about the district's promise that all RSHS students would receive instruction from certified math teachers and the growing instability within the math department. Since then, the situation has only intensified. Trustee's do you think these questions are important ? This semester alone, we have lost our second math teacher, and there are currently three open math teaching positions at the high school. This level of turnover and vacancy is not normal, and it is not sustainable. It directly undermines instructional consistency and places our students at a significant academic disadvantage. When nearly an entire department is understaffed or in flux, students simply cannot receive the stable, high-quality instruction they were promised. This instability is reflected in student outcomes. Our math scores are not great, and families can clearly see why. Constant staffing changes, reliance on temporary or uncertified educators, and repeated disruptions make it almost impossible for students to build the strong mathematical foundation they need. We are going to request that the district publicly report: • How many students required math credit recovery or credit recapture last semester and during the first quarter, and • What percentage of all math-enrolled students this represents, especially given that only half of the student body takes math each semester. Credit recovery rates are not merely statistics—they are indicators. If large numbers of students are retaking math courses, it tells us that instruction is not effective the first time around and that staffing instability is having real consequences for student learning. Parents were promised certified teachers, consistent instruction, and stable classrooms. Instead, we are seeing vacancies, resignations, and declining academic performance. This is not acceptable, and it is not what our students deserve. We are asking the board and district leadership to address the following: 1. Why have we lost two math teachers this semester, and what is being done to prevent further turnover? 2. What is the plan to fill the three open math positions with qualified, effective teachers? 3. What are the current math credit recovery/recapture numbers and percentages? 4. What immediate steps will be taken to stabilize the math department and improve student outcomes? Our students' education cannot wait. They need stability, qualified teachers, and a district that follows through on its commitments.

Name:	Margaret LaPorte
Entity:	Parent
Public Comment:	This public comment has been redacted because it requests disciplinary action regarding an individual employee. Concerns involving confidential personnel matters are redirected to the appropriate channels for review and follow-up.

Name:	Kari Cochran
Entity:	Parent
Public Comment:	As the board enters its reorganization, I want to remind each trustee of the responsibility you hold. This moment is not just procedural—it is a reflection of your values and your commitment to the people you serve. The community is watching. We continue to hear that this board values transparency and that all voices matter. Yet the actions taken under current leadership tell a different story. Public access has been reduced, communication channels have been removed, and only one trustee routinely responds to constituents. A seven-member board cannot function as a one-voice gatekeeper. That is not representation; that is consolidation. Even something as simple as updating the district website to include the newly seated trustee has not been done. Accurate public information is the bare minimum standard for transparency, and when that standard isn't met, it raises larger questions about how seriously this board views public accountability. These concerns lead to a broader issue: Is this a leadership problem, or a compliance problem? If trustees are being discouraged from engaging with the public, that is an issue with the board's direction. If trustees are simply choosing not to engage, that is an issue with individual commitment. Either way, the result is the same—the community is not being represented. You all went through board governance training that emphasized communication, accessibility, and independent decision-making. But based on current behavior, it is fair to ask: Do you remember that training? Are you applying it? Because the disconnect between what the board says and what the board does continues to widen. And once again, there has been no trustee evaluation. Every leadership role in this district is evaluated—except the board. Without an evaluation process, how do you measure effectiveness? How does the public know whether trustees are meeting expectations? Accountability cannot be something you demand of others but refuse to apply to yourselves. As you reorganize, I urge each of you to consider what is right—not just what is convenient or expected. You do not have to vote together to appear unified. In fact, true governance requires independent thinking and the willingness to stand alone when it serves students, staff, and the community. That is what representation actually looks like. People are watching. And we expect our trustees to demonstrate integrity, transparency, and genuine public service—not simply in words, but in actions. Representation matters. Accountability matters. And each of you has a choice to show the community that the board is committed to both.



Policy: KD

Section: Section K - School Community Relations

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the Board shall be open to the public except for executive sessions which may be convened as provided for by law. Because the Board desires to hear the viewpoints of citizens throughout the district, it shall offer suitable time at all meetings for citizens to be heard.

Recognizing its responsibility for proper governance of the schools and therefore the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner, the Board shall schedule a period during each meeting for public participation. At times, it shall set a time limit on the length of this period and/or a time limit for individual speakers. The Board shall also set reasonable limits on content for public comment and discussion.

Speakers may make comments on school operations, school programs or other matters that relate directly to the school district. The Chairman shall limit public comment to matters related to the Board's business, including policy, programming, operations, and other issues of current relevance, such as items on the agenda or follow-up to prior Board discussions. To ensure an orderly and productive meeting, the Board Chairman may ask for clarification or redirect comments that are personal in nature or fall outside the scope of Board business.

Comments regarding the performance or employment of individual district employees will not be permitted. Matters involving confidential personnel issues such as appointment, evaluation, reassignment, discipline, or dismissal will be redirected by the Board Chairman to the appropriate process, such as those outlined in Policy KLD (*Complaints about School Personnel*) or Policy GBM (*Staff Complaints and Grievances*).

Comments regarding matters involving individual students will also not be permitted. Concerns relating to individual students will be referred to the appropriate internal, administrative, or complaint process set forth in policy.

To achieve orderly meetings, the Board may regulate the conduct of the public, and if any meeting is willfully disrupted by a person or group of persons, the Board may order the removal of such person or group from the meeting room and continue in session, or it may recess the meeting and reconvene at another location.

The Board Chairman shall be responsible for recognizing all speakers, who shall properly identify themselves; for maintaining proper order; and for adherence to any content or time limits set. Questions asked by the public shall, when possible, be answered immediately by the chairman or referred to staff members present for reply; questions requiring investigation shall be referred to the Board or administrative staff for consideration and later response.

Members of the public will not be recognized by the chairman as the Board conducts its official business except when the Board schedules in advance an interim public discussion period on a particular agenda item.

Legal	W.S. 16-4-401, etc. seq. (Wyoming's Public Meetings Law)
	20 U.S.C. 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99 (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)
	Wyoming Education Policies Reference Manual, code BD
Cross References	BDDC - Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
	KD - Public Participation at Board Meetings
	KLD - Public Complaints Made To The Board Of Trustees Regarding School Personnel
	KLD-E – Complaints Made To The Board Of Trustees Regarding School Personnel (Form)
	GBM – Staff Complaints and Grievances
	JO- Student Records
	GBL – Personnel Records
