

Summary: Attempted to retrieve emails from a CCSD employee who had recently resigned. CCSD claimed that because the employee resigned, his emails no longer existed. CCSD was unable/unwilling to explain why the emails could not be retrieved from the other side of the communication (ie recipients of his emails). CCSD was also unable/unwilling to provide the written statutes or codes which allowed records to be destroyed following the employee's departure. CCSD also sent messages using encryption with the banner that the messages were not allowed to be shared, despite the content being public information and communications being public records.

https://ccboe-ga.nextrequest.com/requests/22-102


PUBLIC RECORD REQUESTS  
COLUMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MAKE REQUEST ALL REQUESTS DOCUMENTS

## Request 22-102 Closed ✉

### Dates

Received  
June 26, 2022 via web

### Requester

 Katie Allen

### Staff Assigned

Departments  
*No departments assigned*

Point of contact  
James Van Meter

### Request

Pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50.18.70 et seq), I am requesting following records.

All email communications (to include attachments AND/OR presentation slides AND/OR presentation notes) from 01AUG2021 to 31MAY2022 AND sent or received by tevin.middleton@ccboe.net that contain anywhere in the "Subject" OR text the words OR phrases, without regards to capitalization, the following:

"condom" OR "birth control" OR "contraception" OR "reproductive health"

If this request is denied in whole or in part, I ask that you cite in writing the specific statutory exemption upon which you have relied, as required by law. I also ask that you release all separate portions of otherwise exempt material. Additionally, I request that redactions are not made with the exception of those required by law. Please waive any costs associated with this request, or first inform me of such costs as required by Georgia law. If there is a cost associated with this request, please include all logs and documents accounting for the title of the employee and time spent fulfilling this request.

[Show less](#)

### Timeline Documents

**Request Closed** ^ Public

The record you asked for does not exist.

June 26, 2022, 10:36am by James Van Meter

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Columbia County School District Public Records Request DO-NOT-REPLY** <support@nextrequest.com>  
Date: Sun, Jun 26, 2022, 10:36  
Subject: [External Message Added] Columbia County School District public records request #22-102  
To: [REDACTED]@gmail.com>

-- Attach a non-image file and/or reply ABOVE THIS LINE with a message, and it will be sent to staff on this request. --

**A message was sent to you regarding  
record request #22-102:**

Good morning Mrs. Allen,  
Unfortunately Mr. Middleton resigned his position as an employee  
of the Columbia County School System. Once an employee  
resigns, the accounts, to include email, are deleted. Mr.  
Middleton's email no longer exists on our systems.

[View Request 22-102](#)

<https://ccboc-ga.nextrequest.com/requests/22-102>



Katie Allen [redacted]@gmail.com>

**Columbia County School District public records request #22-102**

**Katie Allen** <[redacted]@gmail.com>  
To: "Van Meter, James" <james.vanmeter@ccboc.net>

Wed, Jul 6, 2022 at 9:59 AM

James,

Following up one more time on this.

Thanks,

Katie

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Katie Allen** <[redacted]@gmail.com>  
Date: Thu, Jun 30, 2022, 01:19  
Subject: Re: [External Message Added] Columbia County School District public records request #22-102  
To: Van Meter, James <james.vanmeter@ccboc.net>

James,

Just following up on this. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Katie

On Sun, Jun 26, 2022 at 11:17 AM Katie Allen <[redacted]@gmail.com> wrote:

James,

Do school employees not fall under government workers and therefore government document retention laws? Please advise, and please direct me to the retention laws that are being used to determine that it is legal to erase records of a government employee immediately upon termination of employment.

Katie



Van Meter, James <james.vanmeter@ccboe.net>  
Mon 7/11, 5:00 PM  
Katie Allen ██████████@gmail.com > ↕

Reply all | ▾

Do Not Forward: Recipients can't forward, print, or copy content.

Show all 0 attachments

Katie,  
The answer is not cut and dry. The archive requirement on Education (both k12 and higher ed) is not the same as others entities, matter of fact, most state and local retention requirements differ between business units. In education, email must be classified for retention based on the content. Almost all searches will tell you that it is the content of the email that determines the retention policy.



**James Van Meter**  
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Information Technology Department  
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4395 River Watch Pkwy, Evans, GA 30809

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Katie Allen ██████████@gmail.com >

**Columbia County School District public records request #22-102**

Katie Allen ██████████@gmail.com >  
To: "Van Meter, James" <james.vanmeter@ccboe.net>

Tue, Jul 12, 2022 at 4:52 AM

James,

Could you please send me the applicable regulations that determine retention that are being used? I want to see the source that deems it acceptable to immediately remove content just because an employee is no longer with the government. I'm just not following the logic of how that meets the intent of Open Records Laws for transparent government if records can immediately be removed once an individual has left the government. I'm not doubting you, I would just understand it better to read the regulations being applied in this case since they are drastically different than the retention schedules I'm familiar with.

Additionally, are Tevin Middleton's emails not still available by searching through recipients?

Lastly, why was that last message sent with a banner prohibiting recipients from sharing content? There is nothing sensitive or private about a discussion over retention schedules and regulations. Again, I'm just trying to understand, since I can't imagine a legal statute that would prohibit public knowledge of Open Records Request discussions, where the purpose is to increase public knowledge.

Thanks as always,

Katie  
[Quoted text hidden]