



PPRA - Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

What it is, what it means, and how parents can use it

[The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment](#) (PPRA) is a federal law designed to protect student privacy and help families safeguard their children from invasive surveys or data collection.

Many parents assume that schools can ask students personal questions and that families have no choice but to go along with it. However, that's not the case.

PPRA gives parents the right to be informed about what schools are asking their children — especially on sensitive topics — and, in many situations, the right to opt their child out of those activities.

What PPRA Is

PPRA exists because schools sometimes collect information from students that is:

- Personal
- Intrusive
- Emotional
- Political
- Sexual
- Family-Related
- Psychological

PPRA says that when schools ask students questions about highly sensitive topics, parents have rights to:

- Inspect surveys before students take them
- Control participation in certain surveys and screenings
- Opt their child out in certain situations
- Know what the school is collecting and why

Why PPRA Matters

PPRA is more important today than ever because many schools now use:

- SEL Programs
- Wellness Screeners
- Climate Surveys
- Mental Health Questionnaires

- Social-Emotional Check-Ins
- Third-Party vendors that collect student data

These often look harmless but many include questions about home life, beliefs, emotions, identity, or family dynamics.

PPRA is the law that helps parents say “Show me what you’re asking my child and give me the choice to opt out.”

What Topics Trigger PPRA?

PPRA applies when students are asked about certain sensitive topics especially through surveys, questionnaires, or screening tools.

These include questions about:

- Political beliefs or political affiliation
- Mental or psychological problems
- Sexual behavior or attitudes
- Illegal or self-incriminating behavior
- Critical appraisals of family members
- Privileged relationships (like clergy, doctor, therapist, lawyer)
- Religious practices or beliefs
- Family income (in most cases)

If your child is being asked questions in these categories, PPRA is relevant.

PPRA Is Not Just Official Surveys

PPRA can apply to:

- SEL questionnaires
- Mental health screening tools
- Online student check-ins
- Climate surveys
- Behavior assessments
- Vendor-generated student profile tools
- Lessons that require personal disclosures

If a school is collecting sensitive personal information from students, PPRA is worth asking about.

What PPRA Gives Parents the Right to Do

PPRA helps parents do three big things:

1) Inspect surveys and screening tools: Parents can request to review the exact questions being asked.

2) Get advance notice: Districts are expected to have policies and provide notice when sensitive surveys are being used.

3) Opt out: Parents may opt their child out of certain types of surveys, screenings, and data collection activities.

When Parents Should Use PPRA

Use PPRA if you hear about:

- A “wellness” or “mental health” survey
- An SEL screener
- Questions about emotions, identity, or home environment
- “Anonymous” surveys that still collect data
- Outside vendors running student questionnaires
- Lessons that require students to share personal beliefs or family details

How to Use PPRA

Step 1: Ask to see the survey or tool: you can request the full survey and instructions.

Step 2: Ask if it is required: some surveys are optional, but parents are not always told.

Step 3: Opt out in writing: if you do not want your child participating, you can opt out.

Step 4: Keep a copy: save emails so there is proof.

Template #1 — Request to Inspect a Survey or SEL Tool

Subject: PPRA Request – Review of Survey / SEL Materials

Dear [Principal / School Office],

I am the parent/guardian of [Child's Name], who attends [School Name].

Under PPRA (Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment), I am requesting to inspect the full survey or screening tool connected to:

- [Survey name / SEL program / wellness screening / climate survey]

Please provide:

1. the full survey questions and answer choices
2. instructions given to students
3. whether participation is required or optional

4. how results will be used and who will have access

Please confirm receipt of this request and provide the expected timeline for response.

Thank you,
[Your Name]

Template #2 — Opt-Out Notice

Subject: PPRA Opt-Out – [Child's Name]

Dear [Principal / Teacher / School Office],

I am the parent/guardian of [Child's Name], who attends [School Name].

I am providing written notice that my child is **not permitted to participate** in:

- [Survey / SEL screening / questionnaire / program name]

Please provide an alternate activity during this time.

Please confirm receipt of this opt-out notice in writing.

Thank you,
[Your Name]

What If the School Does Not Comply?

If the school will not share the survey or does not honor opt-out requests:

Step 1: Ask for the district's PPRA policy: "Please provide the district's PPRA policy and explain why access or opt-out is being denied."

Step 2: Document everything: Save emails, write down names and dates, and any other information you think may be pertinent

Step 3: File a federal complaint: Parents may file a PPRA complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if districts violate PPRA.

Filing a Federal Complaint (PPRA)

If a district refuses to let you inspect a survey, does not honor your opt-out request, or collects sensitive student information without proper parental consent you can file a PPRA complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

What this does

A federal complaint is a formal way to report a violation.

It can result in:

- An investigation
- A corrective action plan
- The district being required to change its policies or practices

Remember: It is an administrative complaint process, not a lawsuit.

Before You File:

Parents are most successful when they keep it simple and documented.

Document:

1. Your written request to inspect or opt out
2. The district's response (or proof they ignored you)
3. The name of the district and school
4. Dates (when you requested, when the survey occurred, etc.)
5. The survey name/program/vendor (if you know it)

Attach screenshots or PDF copies of emails.

Keep in mind, Federal complaints often require filing within a reasonable time after the violation. If a district is uncooperative, don't wait to file.

What to Say in the Complaint

Your complaint only needs to answer:

- What happened?
- What did you request?
- How did the district respond?
- What PPRA right was denied?

Sample PPRA Complaint

I am filing a complaint under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).

My child attends [School Name] in [District Name]. On [Date], I requested to inspect the survey/instrument used for [Survey/Program Name] and requested to opt my child out. The district [denied access / refused opt-out / did not respond].

The survey/program asked students questions related to [brief description of the sensitive topic]. I believe the district violated PPRA by failing to provide parent inspection rights and/or failing to honor opt-out protections.

Attached are copies of my written requests and the district's responses (or lack of response).

Where to File

You can file a PPRA complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>

PPRA is about protecting your child from invasive questioning and protecting families from schools collecting sensitive personal data without transparency.

If the school is asking personal questions, you have the right to ask:

“What are you asking, why, and can my child opt out?”