

July 23, 2025

Dear North Carolina Community College Presidents:

Session Law 2025-46, Leon's Law, sets forth requirements for community colleges regarding the release of education records to minor students' parents and to the school administrators and school counselors at the school in which the student is dually enrolled. The requirements in Session Law 2025-46 apply to all students under 18 and are their parents' dependents. Leon's Law became effective July 1, 2025, and applies beginning the 2025-2026 academic year.

In response to these changes in State law, our Legal Affairs team and Programs and Student Services staff have collaborated to provide you with this **Leon's Law Implementation Toolkit** ("toolkit"). This resource is designed to assist you in navigating these new legal requirements, and we hope it will be helpful to you.

Included in this toolkit, you will find the following:

- **Page 2: The Current Law** - A copy of Session Law 2025-46, Leon's Law.
- **Page 3-6: General Guidance** - A list of questions and answers about the implementation of Leon's Law and its relation to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- **Page 7: Student Education Records Acknowledgment Form Template:** Session Law 2025-46 directs the State Board of Community Colleges to adopt a policy that requires minor students to complete a form before registering for a community college course. We have provided a sample template of a form that community colleges can use to meet this requirement.
- **Page 8: Parent/Guardian Opt-Out Form:** This template documents a parent or guardian's decision to decline access to their minor child's educational records under Leon's Law. Use of this form is optional for additional due diligence but not required under Leon's Law.
- **Page 9: Parent Certification Form Template:** This sample template can be used to document student dependency status if needed. Use of this form is optional for additional due diligence but not required under Leon's Law.

If you have questions or require further information as you review this toolkit, please feel free to contact Dr. Torrey Reynolds, Associate Vice President of Student Services, reynoldst@nccommunitycolleges.edu, or Aaron Mabe, State Director of Dual Enrollment, mabea@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

Best regards,
Brian S. Merritt, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President, Programs & Student Services

Leon's Law

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2025/Bills/House/PDF/H378v6.pdf>

PART II. LEON'S LAW SECTION

SECTION 2. (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as "Leon's Law."

SECTION 2. (b) Article 1 of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115D-10.80. Education records of minor students.

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Dependent. – As defined in section 152 of the federal Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(2) Education records. – As defined in 34 C.F.R. § 99.3.

(3) FERPA. – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

(4) Minor student. – A student who is under the age of 18 and a dependent of their parent.

(5) Parent. – The parent, guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian of the minor student.

(b) The State Board of Community Colleges shall direct each community college to adopt a policy that requires a minor student to complete a form prior to registration in any course at the community college, acknowledging the following:

(1) To the extent allowed under FERPA, the education records of the minor student shall be provided to the student's parent as long as the parent has not opted out of receiving the education records.

(2) To the extent allowed under FERPA, the education records of the minor student shall be provided to the school administrators and school counselors at the school in which the student is dually enrolled."

SECTION 2.

(c) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year.

Leon's Law Guidance

Leon's Law Provisions

1. What is Leon's Law?

Leon's Law, [SL 2025-46/HB 378](#), is an act requiring the State Board of Community Colleges to direct community colleges to set forth a policy that provides education records of minor students to their parents or legal guardians, regardless of the student's consent, if the student is a dependent. The law applies to all minor students, not just dually-enrolled/CCP students. More background information about why this law was put into place is [available here](#).

2. When must colleges begin complying with Leon's Law?

Leon's Law must be enacted during the 2025-2026 academic year. The State Board of Community Colleges will provide future directives to adopt policy in compliance with Leon's Law. While it may not be possible to fully implement the law before the start of the academic year, colleges must make a good-faith effort to apply the law as quickly as possible. One option for colleges is to start collecting completed forms from all new minor student applicants now and from current minor students who have not yet submitted a form during registration for the next term.

3. What are colleges required to do because of Leon's Law?

- a. Every college should require minor students to complete a form, prior to registration, acknowledging the conditions of Leon's Law and their rights under FERPA. We have provided a [template](#) to assist each college in developing a form. The form must include at least the following:
 - a. To the extent allowed under FERPA, and unless the parent opts out of receiving education records, colleges must provide parents with access to a minor student's education records. (See also [Leon's Law definition of a parent](#) and [FERPA exception](#).)
 - b. To the extent allowed under FERPA, colleges must provide access to a minor student's education records to school administrators and school counselors at the school in which the student is dually enrolled.

4. What is considered an education record under Leon's Law.

Leon's Law adopts the FERPA definition of education records. [34 C.F.R. § 99.3](#)

5. How long must colleges keep the form required by Leon's Law?

The documents must be retained in compliance with the NCCCS [records and retention policies](#).

6. What happens when a student turns 18?

Leon's Law only applies to minor dependent students. When a student turns 18, they can choose to update their consent in accordance with college policy. Students over 18 who are dually enrolled are still subject to information-sharing agreements between the college and the LEA.

FERPA Regulations in Relation to Leon's Law

7. Does Leon's Law Conflict with FERPA?

Leon's Law does not conflict with FERPA. FERPA contains an exception that states colleges *may*, but are not required to, disclose education records to parents, without the consent of the eligible student, if the student is a "dependent student" as that term is defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code. [34 CFR §99.31\(a\)\(8\)](#), [20 U.S.C. § 1232g\(b\)\(1\)\(H\)](#), [26 U.S. Code § 152](#).

Leon's Law mandates that colleges apply the FERPA exception for minor dependent students, thereby requiring disclosure of education records to parents without student consent unless the parent opts out of receiving the records.

8. What happens if a minor student does not consent (or withdraws consent) to release their post-secondary education records?

Leon's Law mandates the disclosure of education records to parents even without student consent if the FERPA dependent student exception applies.

9. What if the minor student is estranged or emancipated from the parent, or the parent does not have physical custody of the minor student?

- a) Colleges must apply the FERPA dependent student exception if the student is claimed as a dependent on the parent's federal income tax return.
- b) Leon's Law does not apply to students under 18 who are not claimed as a dependent on their parent's federal income tax return.

10. Who qualifies as the parent of a minor student for purposes of the FERPA dependent student exception?

Generally, if the parent has claimed the student as a dependent on the parent's most recent income tax return, a school may disclose the student's education records to the parent without the eligible student's consent. [34 CFR §99.31\(a\)\(8\)](#), [20 U.S.C. § 1232g\(b\)\(1\)\(H\)](#), [26 U.S. Code § 152](#)

Parent Interactions

11. Which parents can access a minor student's education record under Leon's Law?

- a. Leon's Law and FERPA defines a parent as the parent, guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian of the minor student.
- b. Under FERPA, if the child provides written consent to release education records to the parent, colleges can use the consent to share information with parents.
- c. If the child has not provided written consent to release education records to the parent, the college shall nevertheless provide the records under Leon's Law *if* the [FERPA dependent student exception](#) definitions apply.

12. How should colleges confirm parental identity?

Colleges should use their local policy to verify the identity of individuals requesting access to education records/personally identifiable information.

13. How should colleges confirm who has claimed a minor student as an IRS dependent when exercising the FERPA dependent student exception?

This is a local decision. However, colleges are encouraged to adopt best practices and provide a straightforward implementation workflow. Colleges may use the provided Parent(s) Certification of Student's Dependent Status form template to collect IRS dependency information. Use of this form is optional for additional due diligence but not required under Leon's Law.

14. Who should parents contact at the college to access their minor students' post-secondary records?

This is a local decision driven by the college's policy and procedure and in compliance with FERPA. However, the process must be clear to parents and students.

To streamline communication with parents of dually enrolled/CCP students, it may be prudent to develop a process where parents seeking access to their minor child's post-secondary record contact the CCP liaison.

15. Does Leon's Law mean parents can contact instructors directly?

No, parents should follow the college's established process to access their minor child's education record.

16. Does Leon's Law mean parents can have immediate/on-demand access to in-progress course activity (i.e., attendance, assignment submission, real-time course grade, etc.)?

Leon's Law does not explicitly mandate *automatic* disclosures; however, it is considered best practice for colleges to:

- Make available easily accessible and readily available information (e.g., final course grades or overall GPA).

- Notify parents or high school officials when a minor student may benefit from academic or support services.
- Where available, activate available tools that offer parents on-demand or more “automatic” information (e.g., Self-Service proxy access, IntelliBoard reports, or early-alert systems).

17. How long do colleges have to respond to parents with the requested information?

Leon’s Law does not specify a specific response time, but colleges should respond as quickly as possible in accordance with your local policy and procedures. Under FERPA, a school or State educational agency (SEA) must provide students and eligible parents an opportunity to inspect and review their education records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than 45 calendar days following the receipt of a request.

18. How should colleges share information with parents?

This is a local decision. However, colleges are encouraged to adopt best practices and provide a clear implementation workflow. The methodology will also depend on the type of information requested.

Student Form Template

Student Education Records Acknowledgement Form

Student's First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name
----------------------	----------------	-----------

Street Address	City	State	Zip Code
----------------	------	-------	----------

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and Leon's Law, SL 2025-46, the **[Postsecondary Institution]** is permitted to disclose information from your education records to your parent(s)/legal guardian(s), without consent, if they claim you as a dependent for federal tax purposes.

I, [Student Name], acknowledge, to the extent allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Leon's Law,

- (1) My education records will be provided to my parent(s)/legal guardian(s) as long as the parent/legal guardian has not opted out of receiving the education records.
- (2) My education records will be provided to the school administrators and school counselors at the school in which I am dually enrolled.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Provide Contact Information for parent(s)/legal guardian(s):

Parent/Guardian 1 Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Parent/Guardian Opt-Out Form (optional)

Leon's Law Parent/Guardian Opt-Out Form

Student Information

Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Student ID (if known): _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Full Name: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Opt-Out Declaration

Under Leon's Law (SL 2025-46), parents or legal guardians of minor students (under age 18) who are dependents for tax purposes are automatically granted access to their child's educational records at North Carolina community colleges.

By signing this form, I hereby opt out of receiving access to my minor child's education records. I understand that:

- This opt-out applies only to education records covered under Leon's Law.
- My child will still be required to acknowledge parental access under Leon's Law.
- This opt-out may be revoked at any time by submitting a written request to the college's registrar.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

For College Use Only

Date Received: _____

Processed By: _____

Notes: _____

Parent/Guardian Certification Form Template (optional)

Parent/Guardians(s) Certification of Student's Dependent Status for Federal Income Tax Purposes

(For Parental/Guardian Access to Dependent Student's Education Records Without a Release from the Student)

According to federal law, once a student enrolls in an institution of higher education, whether the student is over age 18 or not, the student's parents/guardians no longer have automatic access to the student's education records. However, if the parents/guardians claim the student as a dependent on their federal income tax return, they may have access to the student's **[Postsecondary Institution]** education records without the student's prior written consent. **Because tax dependency can change yearly, parents/guardians wishing to establish eligibility to receive information from their students' education records must furnish the following information each year.**

Please Note: If you have more than one child enrolled at [Postsecondary Institution], please submit a completed form and attachments for each child individually.

Student's Name

Student's ID Number

I/we certify that the above-named student is my/our child and that I/we claimed him/her as a dependent on a federal income tax return for Tax Year _____. Attached is a copy of my/our federal income tax return for that year. I/we also certify that we intend to claim the above-named student as a dependent on a federal income tax return for the current tax year.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) and Address(es) (please print)

After completing this form, please attach a copy of your federal income tax return for the tax year in question and mail to: XXXXX

Valid Until: _____(To be completed by Registrar)