

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

In the Matter of a Complaint by

FINAL DECISION

Irene Corea,

Complainant

against

Docket #FIC 2025-0143

Wendy Youngblood, Chair, Brookfield
Board of Education, Brookfield Public
Schools; Brookfield Board of Education,
Brookfield Public Schools; and Brookfield
Public Schools,

Respondents

February 25, 2026

The above-captioned matter was heard as a contested case on July 10, 2025 and September 25, 2025, at which times the complainant and the respondents appeared and presented testimony, exhibits and argument on the complaint.

After consideration of the entire record, the following facts are found and conclusions of law are reached:

1. The respondents are public agencies within the meaning of §1-200(1), G.S.
2. By complaint received and filed on March 3, 2025, the complainant appealed to this Commission alleging that the respondents violated the Freedom of Information (“FOI”) Act during its February 19, 2025, regular meeting when: (i) she was asked by a security guard to leave the building upon the respondents entering executive session, and (ii) the respondents failed to return to the location of the public session at the conclusion of executive session. The complainant also requested that the Commission assess a civil penalty against the respondents.
3. Section 1-225(a), G.S., provides in relevant part that “[t]he meetings of all public agencies, except executive sessions, as defined in subdivision (6) of section 1-200, shall be open to the public.”
4. It is found that, on February 19, 2025, the respondent Board of Education convened its regular meeting at approximately 7:00 pm, in the media center of the Brookfield Public High School.

5. It is found that the respondents conducted the public session of their February 19, 2025 regular meeting, in the media center until they voted to enter executive session at 9:54 pm, at which time they moved to the principal's conference room.

6. It is found that the complainant was in attendance at the respondents' February 19, 2025 regular meeting. It is found that when the respondents left the media center to convene their executive session, the complainant also left the media center, but remained in the hallway.

7. It is found that shortly thereafter, the complainant was approached by a security guard who directed her to leave the building. It is found that the complainant left the building as instructed and waited outside for a period of time before leaving the premises entirely.

8. It is found that after asking the complainant to leave the building, the security guard informed the respondent Chair of the Board of Education ("Chair"), that "a member of the public [i.e., the complainant] was still in the building and that he requested the person leave." It is found that the respondent Chair informed the security guard that the public must be allowed to remain on site during the executive session and be allowed to access the regular meeting "should it resume after executive session."¹

9. Although, as noted in paragraph 8, above, the respondents acknowledged that the security guard erroneously directed the complainant to leave the building, they argue, in their brief that "nothing in the Freedom of Information Act. . . requires that members of the public be permitted to remain inside a school building during executive session, provided that they may re-enter when public session resumes." See R. Br. 3. The respondents cite no authority to support their interpretation of the meetings provision of the FOI Act.² Moreover, the respondents testified, and it is found, that upon concluding executive session, they only checked outside of the principal's conference room to invite the members of the public back into the public session of the meeting. There is no evidence that the respondents ever checked outside of the building to inform anyone waiting that public session had resumed.

10. It is found, therefore, under the facts and circumstances of this case, that by directing the complainant to leave the building, the respondents denied the complainant access to the remainder of the public portion of the February 19, 2025 regular meeting, after the conclusion of the respondents' executive session.

11. It is concluded, therefore, that the respondents violated §1-225(a), G.S., by directing the complainant to leave the building during the executive session portion of the February 19, 2025 regular meeting.

¹ It is found that executive session went into a brief recess during this time. The security guard did not attend any portion of the executive session.

² The Commission notes that such interpretation of the meetings provisions is not consistent with the spirit of the FOI Act and tenets of open government, especially where removing people from the building could result in them waiting in below freezing weather conditions, as was the case here, and not being made aware of when the regular meeting resumed.

12. Next, the complainant alleges that, upon concluding their executive session at the February 19, 2025 regular meeting, the respondents improperly continued the public session of the meeting in the principal's conference room instead of the media center.

13. Section 1-228, G.S., provides that:

The public agency may adjourn any regular or special meeting to a time and place specified in the order of adjournment. Less than a quorum may so adjourn from time to time. If all members are absent from any regular meeting the clerk or the secretary of such body may declare the meeting adjourned to a stated time and place and shall cause a written notice of the adjournment to be given in the same manner as provided in section 1-225, for special meetings, unless such notice is waived as provided for special meetings. ***A copy of the order or notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously posted on or near the door of the place where the regular or special meeting was held and on the Internet web site of the public agency, if applicable, within twenty-four hours after the time of the adjournment.*** When an order of adjournment of any meeting fails to state the hour at which the adjourned meeting is to be held, it shall be held at the hour specified for regular meetings, by ordinance, resolution, by law or other rule.

(Emphasis added).

14. The Commission takes administrative notice of the agenda for the February 19, 2025, regular meeting. It is found that such agenda specifically lists the location of such meeting as the Brookfield High School Media Center.

15. As noted in paragraph 5, above, the respondents convened their executive session in the principal's conference room. The respondents testified, and it is found, that after voting to exit executive session, they remained in the principal's conference room instead of returning to the media center.

16. It is found that by resuming public session in the principal's conference room, instead of the media center (as indicated on the agenda), the respondents "adjourned" the meeting within the meaning of §1-228, G.S.

17. It is found that the respondents did not notice the adjournment as required by §1-228, G.S.

18. Accordingly, it is concluded that the respondents violated the notice requirements of §1-228, G.S., by failing to provide adequate notice that they would be adjourning the February 19, 2025, meeting to the principal's conference room at the conclusion of the executive session.

19. With respect to the complainant's request for the imposition of a civil penalty, §1-206(b)(2), G.S., provides, in relevant part:

upon a finding that a denial of any right created by the Freedom of Information Act was without reasonable grounds and after the custodian or other official directly responsible for the denial has been given an opportunity to be heard at the hearing conducted in accordance with sections 4-176e to 4-184, inclusive, the commission may, in its discretion, impose against the custodian or other official a civil penalty of not less than twenty dollars nor more than five thousand dollars.

20. With respect to the complainant being directed by a security guard to leave the building after the respondents convened in executive session, it is found that such direction was an error of the individual security guard, and does not reflect a policy or practice of the respondents.

21. With respect to the respondents' improper adjournment after executive session, the respondents testified, and it is found, that they have implemented various measures to prevent similar violations from occurring in the future, including specifying in the agenda the location where public session will reconvene after executive session.

22. Moreover, Commission records do not indicate that the respondents have ever been found by this Commission to be in violation of the public meeting requirements of the FOI Act.³

23. Accordingly, it is concluded that the imposition of a civil penalty is not warranted in this case and the Commission, therefore, declines to impose one.

The following order by the Commission is hereby recommended on the basis of the record concerning the above-captioned complaint:

1. Within fourteen (14) days of the Notice of Final Decision in this matter, the respondents shall contact the Commission's public education officer to schedule training regarding the meeting requirements of the FOI Act. Such training shall be mandatory for each member of the Board of Education, and the respondents shall request that any security personnel who provides security services for the respondents during public meetings attend such training.

2. Henceforth, the respondents shall strictly comply with the requirements of §§1-225(a) and 1-228, G.S.

³ The undersigned Hearing Officer identified one other meetings case involving the respondents in the Commission's records, Docket #FIC 2014-253, Bivona v. Brookfield Public Schools (February 4, 2015). The Commission dismissed the complaint in that matter.

Approved by Order of the Freedom of Information Commission at its regular meeting of February 25, 2026.




Molly Steffes
Acting Clerk of the Commission

PURSUANT TO SECTION 4-180(c), G.S., THE FOLLOWING ARE THE NAMES OF EACH PARTY AND THE MOST RECENT MAILING ADDRESS, PROVIDED TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION, OF THE PARTIES OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE.

THE PARTIES TO THIS CONTESTED CASE ARE:

IRENE COREA, 45 West Whisconier Road, Brookfield, CT 06804

WENDY YOUNGBLOOD, CHAIR, BROOKFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION, BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS; BROOKFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION, BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS; AND BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS, c/o Attorney Sarah Gleason, Shipman & Goodwin LLP, 400 Atlantic Street, 4th Floor, Stamford, CT 06901


Molly Steffes
Acting Clerk of the Commission