

**PURPOSE**

This glossary is designed for use in school boards/authorities in the Province of Ontario and draws on nationally and internationally recognized sources of best practice. The glossary is not a comprehensive listing of all terms used in records management. Terms chosen are those used in Ontario school boards/authorities and the definitions reflect this usage.

Access	Authority or permission to consult records or to obtain restricted information.
Access Control	A set of rules or policies that dictate each user's access rights to particular information in an organization.
Active Records	Documents or records required for day-to-day business relating to the administration or function of the organization. Active records are normally referred to more than once per month. Also referred to as current records.
Analogue Record	A record in a non-paper format that is still readable by the human eye without the aid of a computing device.
Application	A collection of one or more related software programs that enables a user to enter, store, view, modify, or extract information from files or databases.
Appraisal of Records	Determination of the value of records before their disposal. This evaluation is based on their current administrative, fiscal, and legal use, and on their value as evidence or as an information source.
Archival Records/Data	Information considered permanently valuable and preserved for reference and research purposes because it reflects significant events or documents the history and development of the organization. <i>See also: Permanent Records</i>
Archival Value	The permanent and continuing worth of records based on their administrative, legal, financial, or historical usefulness. Also called continuing value, enduring value, or historical value. Also referred to as enduring value.
Archive	To make a back up copy of a computer file for security. To store documents (records) for the purpose of later or long-term reference.
Archives	A repository for records with continuing value. <i>See Also: Remote Storage</i>
Authenticate	To verify the identify of a user, user device, or other entity. Authentication is the process of determining whether someone or something is in fact who or what it is declared to be.
Authenticity	Characteristic of a document or record created by the entity represented as its creator, and preserved in its original form without any falsification or tampering. A genuine signature is usually the best proof of authenticity.
Authentic Record/Document	A document or record that actually is what it says it is or is represented to be and is completely free of any addition, deletion, or corruption.



Backup Data	Data that is copied (backed up) onto secondary media for purposes of offline, off-site security storage. The primary purpose of data backup is to provide the capability of recovering critical when a data loss of any kind occurs.
Breach (Privacy Breach)	An infraction or violation.
Business Management Practice	The ongoing management of all business processes for an organization, including the development, alignment, and continuous review of processes in support of the organization's goals.
Canadian Standards Association (CSA)	A not-for-profit, membership-based association serving business, industry, government, and consumers in Canada and the global marketplace to develop standards that address real needs, such as enhancing public safety and health.
Classification	The process of identifying records and information in accordance with a predetermined filing system. This includes determination of the function and/or subject of a record and selection of an appropriate classification for filing.
Classification System	A tool for organizing and filing records and documents based upon function and subject, for the purpose of facilitating filing and retrieval.
Comprehensive Assessment	A detailed analysis/review to assist school boards in determining the effects of a program or service delivery initiative on individual privacy.
Confidential Record	A record containing certain information that requires protection against unauthorized access or disclosure.
Conversion of Records Format	The transfer of recorded information from one physical medium or format to another. Conversion includes changing paper records to electronic format, and conversely, transferring records in electronic format to paper.
Data	Individual facts or values not significant to an organization until analyzed and/or preserved as a record of the organization's transactions and operations. Data on its own has no meaning; only when interpreted by some kind of data processing system does it take on meaning and become information.
Data Holding	An organized collection of information and data, either paper or electronic (e.g., student information system, data warehouse, records room); a "holding" area for information.
Data Warehouse	A repository of an organization's electronically stored data.
Data Warehousing	The linking of all organization databases to a single relational database for the purpose of sharing information.
Date of Birth (DOB)	The hour (and minute), day, month, and year of birth established in order that exact age may be determined in completed years, months, days, and hours (and minutes) of life as required.
Destruction of Records	The various methods of destroying inactive records scheduled for destruction when authorized by shredding, incineration, pulping, or recycling. Methods for secure destruction of electronic records are also covered by this term.



Digital Record	<i>See: Electronic Document</i>
Disaster Recovery	The process of regaining access to (paper or electronic), hardware and software necessary to resume critical business operations after a <u>natural</u> or <u>human-caused disaster</u> . A disaster recovery plan (DRP) should also include plans for coping with the unexpected or sudden loss of key personnel responsible for any managed information.
Disposal	The final removal-whether for destruction or formal transfer to another agency, records storage centre or archives-of records that have reached the end of their retention period.
Disposition	Disposition refers to the finalizing activities that inactive records undergo. Includes storage, destruction by deleting an electronic record, and shredding/recycling of paper records.
Document	The smallest unit of filing housed in a filing system. Recorded information that (regardless of medium, form, or characteristics) serves to establish one or several facts and/or can be relied upon as a proof thereof.
Document Imaging	Microfilming or digitization of paper documents for easy storage, retrieval, and distribution.
Document Management Software	Software application used for managing documents that allows users to store, retrieve, and share them with the benefit of security and version control.
Document Management	Coordination and control of the flow (storage, retrieval, processing, printing, routing, and distribution) of electronic and paper documents in a secure and efficient manner in order to ensure that they are accessible to authorized personnel as and when required. <i>See also: Records Management</i>
Education Act	In Ontario, education is governed principally by the Education Act and its regulations. The Education Act and its regulations set out the duties and responsibilities of the Minister of Education and of school boards, school board supervisory officers, principals, teachers, parents, and students.
Electromagnetic Degaussing	Electromagnetic Degaussing A method of erasing or destroying data stored in magnetic media, such as hard drives, floppy disks, and magnetic tape using a strong magnetic field.
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)	Represents the computer-to-computer transfer of information in a structured, predetermined format between two or more partners over a secured network.
Electronic Document	Information recorded in a manner that requires a computer or other electronic device to display, interpret, and process it. <i>See also: Electronic Record</i>
Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDMS)	Software that provides for the management of electronic documents in a variety of forms and formats using computer equipment and software to manage, control, locate, and retrieve information in the system. EDMS systems are designed to capture, route, and organize electronic documents. Many of these systems also provide document collaboration, revision/version control, secure access, and other features.
Electronic Imaging	Technology or process that records documents as digitized images on computer storage media for subsequent retrieval and use.



Electronic Record	Information captured through electronic means, and which may or may not have a paper record to back it up. <i>See also: Electronic Document</i>
Electronic Storage Media	Any device that is used to store or record electronic information, including, but not limited to hard disks, magnetic tapes, compact discs, videotapes, audiotapes, handheld electronic devices, and removable storage devices such as floppy disks and zip disks.
External Agencies	Organizations (other institutions, e.g., non-profit or not-for-profit) with which school boards share operations, information, and services.
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)	The purpose of this Act is to provide the public a right of access to information subject to limited exemptions, and to protect the privacy of individuals with respect to personal information about themselves, as well as to provide individuals with a right of access to that information.
Forms Management	Establishing standards for the research, analysis, design (including format), production, and distribution of all forms used within an organization.
Functional Responsibility (Also called Office of the Record or Originator)	Certain sites are responsible for certain records and they are responsible for keeping those records for the full period of retention. These sites are responsible for the function or process that requires information from the records and/or generates the records.
Guideline	A recommended course of action.
Identity	The collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a person is definitively recognizable or known.
Inactive Records	Documents no longer required in the day to day operations of an organization, but which must be kept for administrative, historical, fiscal, audit, or legal purposes.
Information	Organized data that has been arranged for better comprehension or understanding.
Information Management Standard	The systematic management and control of school board/authority information assets throughout its life cycle, which covers acquisition; receipt; creation; active use; maintenance; off-site storage; inactive use and preservation; and disposition, destruction, and transfer.
Information and Privacy Commissioner	A commissioner that acts independently of government to uphold and promote open government and the protection of personal privacy in Ontario.
Informed Consent	Informed Consent Requires that the person consenting understand the exact nature of the information for which consent is sought, understand the potential consequences of signing the consent form, and be given the right to revoke the consent at any time. Students 16 or older must sign the consent form. If a student is less than 16 years of age, parent or guardian must provide informed consent.
Lifecycle of a Record	The lifespan or time period from the creation or receipt of a record through to its final disposition. The five stages in the life cycle of a record include creation; distribution and use; storage or maintenance; retention and disposition; and archival preservation or ultimate destruction.
Managing Information for Student Achievement (MiSA)	A large-scale provincial initiative to increase provincial, district, and school capacities to work with data and information to support improved student achievement.



Memorabilia	Individual items of historical value such as programs, posters, brochures, clippings, photographs, etc.
Metadata	Data that describes the context, content, and structure of records and their management through time. An integral component of an electronic record, metadata describes (among other attributes) how, when, and by whom the record was collected, created, accessed, modified, formatted, and transferred.
Migration	The transfer of electronic records/data across hardware and software configurations and across subsequent generations of computer technologies, preserving its integrity. Used to ensure continued access to information as systems or media become obsolete overtime.
Ministry Educators Number (MEN)	Ministry Educator Number is assigned to an educator in Ontario. The number, which is unique to every educator, is assigned for life.
Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act (MFIPPA)	The provincial legislation that governs access to information and protection of personal information for municipal entities such as school boards, police services, and cities and towns.
Non-Record	A document such as a draft, worksheet, routine memo, or extra copy created for convenience or distribution, and which has no retention value and no need to be filed.
Office of the Record	The office assigned responsibility for custody and maintenance of specific records. Generally, the office in which they were originally created and filed. <i>See also: Functional Responsibility</i>
Official Record	A significant, vital, or important record having the legally recognized and enforceable quality of establishing a fact, and of continuing value to be protected, managed, and retained according to established retention schedule; often, but not necessarily, an original.
Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)	An organization of professionals that works collaboratively to support learning by developing and promoting excellence in business practices.
Ontario Education Number (OEN)	The OEN is a student identification number that is assigned by the Ministry of Education to elementary and secondary students across the province. The number, which is unique to every student, is used as the key identifier on a student's school records, and follows the student through his or her elementary and secondary education.
Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)	Covers the fees associated with health care services for Ontario residents that have a health card.
Ontario School Information System (OnSIS)	A web-enabled data collection system that was implemented as part of the MISA initiative.
Ontario Student Record (OSR)	The record of a student's educational progress through schools in Ontario.
Original Record	A primary or first-generation record from which copies can be made.
Organizational Taxonomy	A hierarchical structure for documents and information of major and subordinate categories from the most general to the most specific ; can be departmental, organizational, or functional.



Outsourcing	The process of subcontracting to a third party company to complete a task.
Overwriting	A method of sanitation and is used to replace previously stored data on the electronic media with a pattern of meaningless random or non-random information.
Personal Information	Recorded information about an individual that renders that individual identifiable , including: name, address, phone number; race, ethnic origin, or religious or political beliefs or associations; age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status; any identifying number or symbol; fingerprints, blood type, or inheritable characteristics; medical history; educational, financial, criminal, or employment history; personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else; or anyone else's opinion about that individual.
Personal Information Bank	Any collection of personal information that is organized or retrievable by an individual's name, or by any identifying number, symbol, or other identifier assigned to an individual.
Personal Health Information Privacy and Protection Act (PHIPPA)	Ontario legislation created to install governance to support those in the health practice fields to protect the health information of patients which they acquire in the provision of health services.
Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)	Federal legislation for the private sector meant to ensure personal information is collected and used in ways that secure and protect that information.
Policy	A high-level statement of intent.
Privacy	The quality or condition of being secluded from the presence or view of others. The state of being free from unsanctioned intrusion: a person's right to privacy.
Privacy Compliance Checklist	Provides considerations for assessing compliance in a structured format. By responding systematically to the specific questions or statements related to each privacy element, public bodies and trustees are able to review practices and determine what action may be needed to initiate or improve compliance.
Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)	An assessment framework used to identify the actual or potential risks that a proposed or existing information system, technology, or program may have on an individual's privacy.
Privacy Standard	A set of rules, guidelines, and characteristics that helps to foster a culture of privacy regarding the way Ontario school boards/authorities collect, use, disclose, secure, retain, and dispose of personal information. It also ensures the right of individuals to have access to personal information about themselves and, as appropriate, to have it corrected.
Procedure	The approved steps required to accomplish the high-level statement of intent (policy).
Protocol	A code of correct conduct.
Purging	Cleaning out inactive or obsolete records or data from the set of active files (whether physical or computer based) for archiving or destruction (deletion). Also called culling.



Reception Equipment	Refers to the equipment or device used to receive or record the personal information collected through a video surveillance system, including a camera or video monitor or any other video, audio, physical, or other mechanical, electronic, or digital device.
Record	A document, regardless of physical format or characteristics, that memorializes and provides objective evidence of activities performed, events elapsed, results achieved, or statements made in the course of the organization's daily activities.
Record Classification	Process in which records are identified and categorized for filing on the basis of their subject matter and subject category, and are assigned a file number or code for efficient retrieval.
Records Management	Systematic administration of records and documented information for its entire life cycle, from creation/receipt, classification, use, filing, retention, storage, to final disposition. <i>See also: Document Management</i>
Records Control	The administration of documents, files, and records created or received by an organization in order to ensure proper authorization and procedure for having access to or handling of records.
Records Control Centre	A centralized location that is used for organized storage of inactive records retained for administrative or operating purposes, usually for a limited period of time. <i>See also: Remote Storage, Archives</i>
Records Disposition	<i>See: Disposition</i>
Records Inventory	List of all documents, files, and records created/received and maintained by an organization. It describes the title, function, purpose, content, date, format, and recording media, etc., and helps in the development of a record retention schedule.
Records Retention Period	The minimum amount of time to keep a record as determined to be necessary by law or other authority. Original records cannot be destroyed until the retention time has expired. Likewise, records should not be retained longer than the retention time without good reason.
Records Retention Schedule	A tool that describes (1) the length of time each document or record will be retained as an active record, (2) the reason (legal, fiscal, historical) for its retention, and (3) the final disposition (archival or destruction) of the record. Also called a record control schedule, record disposition schedule, or records schedule.
Records Transfer List	A form that tracks the whereabouts and disposition status of inactive records. This form constitutes evidence of authorized and regular disposition of records.
Remote Storage	Off-site storage of records in board-owned or commercial storage facilities. Applies to paper and electronic records.
Repository	Storage for indefinite or permanent placement. By comparison, a depository is storage in which something is placed to be taken out later.
Retrieval	The process of locating and accessing filed records.
Risk Management	The systematic application of management policies, procedures, and practices to the tasks of identifying, analyzing, assessing, treating, and monitoring risk.



Sanitizing	The removal of information from electronic media or equipment such that data recovery using standard techniques or analysis is prevented.
Sealed Records	Records protected by a court order which cannot be accessed or unsealed without another court order.
Scope Note	The component of a classification system that describes the function, uses, and content of records that are to be classified together.
Security Classification	Security level assigned to a government document, file, or record based on the sensitivity or secrecy of the information. Four common security classifications are: (1) Top secret: Highest degree of protection for information that is paramount in national defense matters and whose unauthorized disclosure may cause extremely grave danger or damage to the nation. (2) Secret: Unauthorized disclosure of which may result in serious damage or danger. (3) Confidential: Unauthorized disclosure of which may undermine defense or government operations.
Service Channel	Identifies the channel through which service/information is available (e.g., telephone, mail, in-person, Internet) and appropriate contact information for each channel.
Social Insurance Number (SIN)	A nine-digit number that one needs in order to work in Canada or to have access to government programs and benefits.
Standard	A set of rules, guidelines, and characteristics for activities or their results provided for common and repeated use. It is typically established by consensus and is usually a collective work created by bringing together the experience and expertise of all interested parties and stakeholders.
Structured Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT perspective: Structured information refers to database-type information, where each field is defined and information entered into a field is always used in consistent ways by the application.• Reports, memos, letters, spreadsheets, etc., are structured by nature. The information within the document remains in a specific location at all times.• Structured information is most typically identified as databases, spreadsheets, and other formalized representations of information. Also included in this category may be forms (whether paper or electronic)-specifically, the information input into the form. Mail merge documents also fall into this category. <p><i>See also: Unstructured Information</i></p>
Sensitive Records	A record containing information considered private or confidential or which allows for identification of an individual. Examples include personnel files, student records, and litigation records. <i>See also: Personal Information Banks</i>
Storage Device	Refers to a video tape, computer disk or drive, CD-ROM, computer chip, or other device used to store the recorded data or visual, audio, or other images captured by a video surveillance system.
Superseded Record	A record is superseded when it is replaced with a new and up-to-date version (e.g., a procedure).



Technical Security Standard for Information Technology (TSSIT)	The RCMP TSSIT specifies security standards for information technology including media sanitization requirements. Media may be sanitized by using a software application that overwrites the media a minimum of three times by using a degausser or by physically destroying the media. <i>See also : Electromagnetic Degaussing, Sanitizing</i>
Third Party	A person or group who is not a party to a contract but who may become involved in an indirect way or be affected by it.
Third Party Personal	Refers to personal information about an individual that appears in conjunction with the personal information about one or more other individuals.
Third Party Service Provider	An external company or organization a school board/authority will “hire” to provide services, such as the warehousing of data.
Threat-Risk Assessment	An analysis that examines the different “threats” to an organization and identifies and corrects the most immediate and obvious security concerns.
Transitory Record	Routine correspondence and documents that have temporary usefulness and short term value and which are not incorporated into standard records control or filing systems.
Unified Messaging	A communication technology used for integrating voice mail into an organization’s larger messaging environment (email) and computing infrastructure. This technology represents the convergence between voice and data communication systems in which email, voice mail, instant messaging, and other communications systems are integrated. The records/information management significance of this technology is that digitized voice mail messages require management as organizational records under retention and other organizational rules and policies.
Unstructured Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT perspective: Unstructured information is more free-form and does not provide guidance as to how to find a certain type of information within the document. • Unstructured information includes most types of documents and records that do not fall into the category of structured information, including audio and video recordings, word processing documents, PowerPoint presentations, graphics, etc.
Video Surveillance System	A video, physical , or mechanical, electronic or digital surveillance system or device that enables continuous or periodic video recording, observing, or monitoring of individuals in school buildings and on school premises (per IPC Video Surveillance Guidelines). Within the board, the surveillance system includes hand-held, portable digital devices used by principals and vice-principals to record school incidents for investigative purposes. Additional components of the surveillance system include portable video cameras that are used to record incidents on designated school buses from time to time as required.
Vital Records	A document, file, or record in any form or format, containing information that is (1) essential to the operations and/or survival of the organization, (2) necessary to recreate the organization’s legal and financial position, and (3) necessary to preserve its claims and rights and those of its stakeholders. Also referred to as essential records.
Workflow	The documented flow of information in a business processes; the act of tracking work procedures through a fully documented process.