

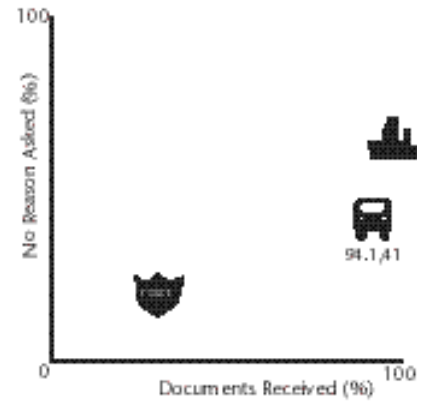
# School Department

The school departments performed almost as well as the city and town clerks did in overall compliance with open records requests. The school departments fulfilled 94.1 percent of the requests, whereas the city and town halls fulfilled 100 percent. The best school departments were Bristol/Warren and Coventry. Both of those departments provided all of the documents requested, both received the highest ratings for courteousness, and both had high-quality minutes and budgets. At the other end of the spectrum, Pawtucket and Charliho each refused more than one request and both were the lowest ratings of any school department for courteousness.

Four of the five documents requested from the school departments were widely available, with only a few isolated exceptions. The results from the request for the school contract settlement were worse. Six departments (out of 34) refused the request. Other departments, however, had copies of the contract settlement nicely bound and readily available for the public.

Although the schools departments fulfilled nearly the same percentage of requests for public documents as the city and town clerks did, there were distinct differences in the ease of obtaining documents from the two departments. In short, it was more difficult to obtain information from the school departments. Almost twice as many follow-up visits were necessary for school department requests than were required for the city and town clerks. School departments were also more likely to require written requests for documents. Five schools districts required written requests for items as mundane as the school committee minutes. Cumberland, East Providence, North Providence, and Pawtucket required this additional step. For the three items requested of city and town clerks, not a single jurisdiction required a written request. The clerks at the school departments were not as courteous as the city clerks, but as with the other comparisons above, the school departments did much better than the police departments.

## Comparison of Departments



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