Matt Vanover, Mary Fergus
Illinois State Board of Education
100 N. 1st St.
Springfield, IL  62777

Matt, Mary,

This is a request under Illinois’ Freedom of Information Act.

Recent media coverage of a statewide investigation into possible cheating on ISAT tests stated:

Matt Vanover, a state board spokesman, says Illinois state schools superintendent Christopher Koch ordered the exhaustive analysis last spring, though it wasn’t publicized at the time. Vanover says Koch was being proactive.

“This was basically a natural progression of the process we have for quality control,” Vanover said.

Until now, the state has relied on complaints and “self-reporting” to find cheating. Vanover said four school districts came to the state board this spring after conducting local investigations that found test results had been manipulated in some way. The state is still reviewing those cases, but if it determines cheating occurred, the guilty educators’ teaching certificates could be revoked, Vanover said.

In 2010, three districts came forward to say they’d discovered cheating.

/Re: Vanover said four school districts came to the state board this spring after conducting local investigations that found test results had been manipulated in some way.

Please provide any and all records related to these four districts coming forward, including any and all documents that the districts provided to ISBE and any and all documents generated as a result of the districts coming forward, including ISBE’s review and/or investigation into the allegations and any action taken by ISBE against educators determined to be involved in cheating.

/Re: In 2010, three districts came forward to say they’d discovered cheating.

Please provide any and all records related to these three districts, including any and all documents that the districts provided to ISBE and any and all documents generated as a result of the districts coming
forward, including ISBE’s review and/or investigation into the allegations and any action taken by ISBE against any educator determined to be involved in cheating.

/Re: Matt Vanover, a state board spokesman, says Illinois state schools superintendent Christopher Koch ordered the exhaustive analysis last spring, though it wasn’t publicized at the time. Vanover says Koch was being proactive.

Please provide any and all records related to Koch’s order for this analysis, and any records related to the analysis being performed, thus far.

In addition, please provide any and all records in ISBE’s possession related to any other district that has alleged cheating, beginning with school year 2003-04, and any records relating to ISBE’s response and/or investigation of those allegations, including action taken against any educator determined to be involved in cheating.

I request that you provide documents as soon as they become available. If some documents are ready before others, please send them along. If documents can be scanned and emailed, please do so, as I prefer electronic records.

I request a waiver of all fees for this request. As a member of the media, I believe disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 708-498-4248, or at drado@tribune.com

Thanks,

Diane Rado
Education reporter
Chicago Tribune