Greetings and THANK YOU for accepting this request for ISBE records filed under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and all applicable public records statutes.

This FOIA requests aggregated student attendance data from SY2010-2011, the most recent year-end district attendance data submitted to ISBE. It asks ISBE to provide certain data by Chicago/statewide, grade, and six disability categories.

THE REQUEST:

For SY2010-2011, the most recent complete school year
for Chicago, and statewide
for each grade from K through 12
for each of the following six special education disability categories (or their nearest equivalent in ISBE records): Autism; Emotional Disturbance or Emotional Disability or Behavioral Emotional Disorder; Intellectual Disability (or significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning); Learning Disability or Specific Learning Disability; Speech/Language Impairment; Cognitive Disorder (if listed as such in your records)

Please provide attendance data showing the total number of:

- pupils with each of those disabilities, by grade
- truant pupils with each disability by grade
- chronic truants with each disability by grade
- drop-outs with each disability by grade
- expelled pupils with each disability by grade

* We stand ready to work with ISBE staff to minimize the burden this FOIA request may place on the agency and to expedite release of salient public data, and so would consider tailoring this request if any part of it places a special or time-consuming burden on ISBE staff.

* The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) enables ISBE to disclose information in aggregate, as long as the released data does not include a list of personal characteristics or other information that would make a student's identity easily traceable. "Other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable" may exist in the small cell sizes in aggregated or statistical information from education records. Accordingly, we ask that ISBE only provide data in which any given cell has 10 or more individual pupils represented. We ask that ISBE notify us about any cell-size or other FERPA problem so that we can modify the request.

* We hereby affirm and stipulate that we will not use any data provided by ISBE in response to this FOIA as a basis to search for or to identify individual students, in both our newsgathering or in publication.

* We ask that, if at all possible, you provide the requested data in electronic format, ideally as an Excel spreadsheet.

This request is in the public interest and we are grateful for anything you can do to expedite it. Please contact me immediately if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance in any way.
Sincerely,

David Jackson
reporter
The Chicago Tribune
312-222-5569
dyjackson@tribune.com
435 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago IL 60614