November 13, 2012

Freedom of Information Office
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Attn: FOIA Request
   Mr. Matt Vanover
   Mr. Mark Wancket

Re: FOIA request for information or documents related to TAP test

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a request for information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140 from the Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (“the Lawyers’ Committee”). The Lawyers’ Committee requests that the following information or documents be provided to us.

All documents or other evidence relating to the purported reliability and validity of the TAP test (and its constituent parts). This includes but is not limited to any information or document that allegedly demonstrates that the TAP test is a valid and reliable measure of ability to be a good teacher or a good student in a teacher preparation program;

All documents or other evidence relating to the purported reliability and validity of the TAP test (and its constituent parts) as a test applied to potential school counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and speech pathologists. This includes but is not limited to any information or document that allegedly demonstrates that the TAP test is a valid and reliable measure of ability to be a good professional employee in these positions, or any of them;

All documents or other evidence relating to the purported reliability and validity of the TAP test (and its constituent parts) as a test applied to potential teachers who will not teach math or language arts (e.g., physical education teachers, foreign language teachers, art teachers, music teachers). This includes but is not limited to any information or document that allegedly demonstrates that the TAP test is a valid and reliable measure of ability to be a good teacher or a good student in a teacher preparation program for these teaching positions;
A list of the scores required on the constituent parts of the TAP test to pass that portion of the test;

All documents related to the development and administration of the TAP test;

All documents related to the development and administration of the cut-off scores for passing that have been used in conjunction with the TAP test;

All documents that explain – or a written narrative explanation that explains – how raw scores on the constituent parts of the TAP test are converted to scaled scores. For instance, if a student scored a 25 on the Reading portion of the exam, how would that be recorded as a scaled score? If a student scored a 22 on the Language Arts portion of the exam, how would that be reported as a scaled score? If a student scored a 16 on the Mathematics portion of the exam, how would that be reported as a scaled score? And if a student scored an 8 on the Writing portion of the exam, how would that be reported as a scaled score?;

Any and all documents or other information that describe passing rates on the TAP test, including but not limited to documents that show the passing rates on the TAP test broken down by the race or national origin of persons taking the test;

All correspondence, e-mails, memos, presentation materials, or other documents received from, sent to, or exchanged with Pearson about any of the topics listed above; and

All correspondence, e-mails, memos, presentation materials, or other documents about any of the topics listed above, received from, sent to, or exchanged with any other person, company, or entity involved in development or application of the TAP test.

We respectfully request that the ISBE waive any fees for production of these materials. The Lawyers' Committee is a not-for-profit corporation devoted to public service. Production of these materials will further the public interest in understanding whether the TAP test, as it is currently applied, is valid and whether a racial disparate impact of the TAP test is justified as an educational necessity.

If the ISBE will not waive fees for production of these materials, we are willing to pay fees for copying costs related to this production up to a maximum of four hundred dollars ($400.00). If you estimate that the copying fees will exceed this limit, please inform me first and provide an estimate of the total copying costs to be incurred, before copying and producing documents.

I look forward to hearing from you in writing within seven working days, as required by the Act, 5 ILCS 140(3). Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.
Sincerely,

Paul Strauss
Co-Director of Litigation