Dec. 18, 2013

Jim Tarbet

Dear Mr. Tarbet:

This letter is in response to your request for information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Your request was received on Dec. 4, 2013.

On Dec. 11, our agency requested a five-day extension until Dec. 18.

You have requested the following information:

*Request 1: The costs associated with the 5Essentials Survey.*

Response 1: The costs are as follows:

- FY 12: $85,500
- FY 13: $502,962
- FY 14: $10,000
- Total: $598,462

Please note that the contract for the upcoming year has not yet been finalized. However, the attached document, 14-171-tarbet-doc1.pdf, provides details of what the Board has approved on pages 242-247.

*Request 2: The survey itself - the questions and options (if any).*

Response 2: The attached documents, 14-171-tarbet-doc2.pdf and 14-171-tarbet-doc3.pdf, are provided in response to this request.

*Request 3: Summary data for each school district statewide, specifying each by the RCDT code.*

Response 3: Please note that our agency has publicly released data at the school and district levels on illinoisreportcard.com, but only the school-level data has been compiled into an Excel spreadsheet. The attached documents, 14-171-tarbet-doc4.xlsx through 14-171-tarbet-doc6.xlsx, are provided in response to this request.

*Request 4: The conclusions report provided to ISBE.*
Response 4: The attached document, 14-171-tarbet-doc7.pdf, is provided in response to this request. We believe this part of your request is also referring to the 5Essentials reports that take raw data from the survey administration and through a formula, produce a norm-referenced report that provides schools with a ranking. This year was the initial year for this statewide survey and at this point in time, final reports based on the raw data have not yet been produced. We are happy to release the final reports to you once they are produced.

As part of the survey process, preliminary 5Essentials reports were produced, initially using data from a similar survey of the Chicago Public Schools in 2011 as a baseline. However, concerns were raised with the process of using data from a single district survey and trying to extrapolate that data to a universal, statewide survey.

Because the initial reports were preliminary, we changed the policy for the benchmarking normative process and acted to instead use a more representative dataset. The ISBE worked with their consultants to conduct additional analyses and made adjustments to 5Essentials benchmarking, re-running the reports to use the Illinois state average as the benchmark rather than Chicago Public Schools.

The preliminary results of the first administration of the 5Essentials Survey are being withheld pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (f) as “preliminary drafts, notes, recommendations, memoranda and other records in which opinions are expressed, or policies or actions are formulated.”

An appeal of this denial may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General’s Public Access Counselor at 500 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706 or publicaccess@atg.state.il.us. If you choose to submit a request for review, you must do so within 60 days after the date of this response letter. The request for review must be in writing, signed by you and include (i) a copy of your FOIA request and (ii) this office’s response. In addition, you have the right to seek judicial review of this response.

If you have questions, please contact Amanda Simhauser at (217) 782-4648 or asimhaus@isbe.net.

Sincerely,

Marcilene Dutton
Deputy General Counsel

Attachments