Dear Ms. Koehler:

This letter is in response to your request for information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Your request was received on Mar. 4, 2014.

On Mar. 1, our agency requested a five-day extension until Mar. 18, 2014.

You have requested the following:

Request 1: "Any documentation pertaining to ISAT irregularities in District 150, Peoria, Illinois, from January 1, 2010 until present (excluding any current investigations), including, but not limited to, documents regarding: Veralee Smith, Principal at Harrison; Debra Jackson - Teacher at Lincoln School; Anna Alvarez (Rose) - Interventionist at Harrison."

On Mar. 12, you amended this portion of your request to "include any current investigations other than Charter Oak." You also requested information regarding a possible ISAT irregularity investigation at Mark Bills Middle School.

Response 1: The attached documents (14-262-koehler-doc1.pdf through 14-262-koehler-doc5.pdf) have been provided in response to this portion of your request. The first two documents (14-262-koehler-doc1.pdf and 14-262-koehler-doc2.pdf) contain information regarding Veralee Smith, Debra Jackson and Anna Alvarez.

Please note that student names and identifying information have been redacted pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (a). Pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (a), our agency redacts student group sizes of less than 10 students. Even in the absence of disclosing student names, small group sizes could reveal student identities. This includes instances where less than 10 students had their test scores suppressed. Additionally, signatures have been redacted as unique personal identifiers pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (b).

ISBE is not currently investigating any ISAT irregularities in Peoria District 150 other than Charter Oak. The only investigation from January 1, 2010 to present we have on record regarding Mark Bills Middle School took place in 2011, see 14-262-koehler-doc4.pdf.
Request 2: “Please indicate the number of students who tests scores were suppressed at Harrison and Lincoln as a result of the infractions.”

Response 2: Pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (a), our agency redacts student group sizes of less than 10 students. Even in the absence of disclosing student names, small group sizes could reveal student identities. Therefore, we are unable to disclose the exact number of scores suppressed at Harrison. No results were suppressed at Lincoln.

Request 3: “Please provide documentation or specifics on the IBSE statement in the Testing Practices for Educator (ISAT), Section 5 stating that, ‘ISBE’s usual policy is to leave sanctions for school or district staff involved in testing irregularities to the local district. Districts must therefore have in place a local testing policy that includes sanctions and disciplinary measures that will be used if testing irregularities occur.’ Is this a requirement, or only guidance as suggested in the attached document from District 150?”

Response 3: The local districts act as the disciplinary body when dealing with their employees. ISBE takes action if licensure action is warranted. It is considered best practice for districts to have guidelines in place for dealing with testing irregularities and disciplinary measures. Districts must report known irregularities directly to ISBE.

If you feel you have been denied your access to public records, you may file an appeal with 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 Megan Griffin at (217) 782-4648 or mgriffin@isbe.net.

Sincerely,

Marcilene Dutton
Deputy General Counsel

Attachments