Oct. 8, 2014

[emailed to: ]

Dear Dr. [Name]

This letter is in response to your request for information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Your request was received on Oct. 1, 2014.

You have requested the following:

Request 1: “The logic or rubric the ISBE used to adopt Common Core Standards (CCS), Please provide any and all primary literature, from unbiased journals written by non-industry authors, that supports and validates the use of common core standards as superior to other more successful systems currently used in Europe (i.e. Scottish, Finnish, Swedish systems to name a few) or to that end any literature that supports the end points defined in the guidelines as such pertaining to any known outcomes of pediatric health makers including, but not limited to, mental health, psychosocial pressures, etc.”

Response 1: The Common Core State Standards establish clear expectations for what students should be learning in English language arts and mathematics at every grade level from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Spearheaded by governors and state education leaders from a consortium of more than 40 states, the Common Core represents a collaborative effort to raise expectations and improve instruction for all students regardless of where they live and to provide students with an equal opportunity to succeed academically. The Common Core sets high, clear and uniform standards to prepare students for college and the workforce. Please see the attached documents (15-103-bijero-Math_Standards.pdf and 15-103-bijero-ELA_Standards.pdf) for a closer look at the standards.

Also, please see the following links to view documents regarding the deliberative process of development, adoption and implementation of Common Core State Standards in Illinois. The documents provide an overview of the standards, facts versus myths concerning the standards, frequently asked questions and a descriptive report regarding the standard development process.

• http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pdf/uscc-video-clairf.pdf

Request 2: “Please provide evidence of developmental appropriateness of the standards for children in pre K-6 grades.”

Response 2: Please see the following document link for information regarding the process of standards development: http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pdf/uscc-video-clairf.pdf.

Request 3: “Please provide evidence that the ISBE have vetted the Federal CCS committee as having not been created with a hidden agenda to foster/support assessment corporation(s), their lobbyists, and or the Bill and Melinda gates foundation.”

Response 3: The federal government was not involved in the development of the Common Core State Standards, and it does not govern the program. Additionally, the Common Core does not amount to a national curriculum for our schools as the standards are not a curriculum. The standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others decide how the standards are to be met.

Request 4: “Please provide me the data ISBE (or any other governmental agency), use (d) to justify the removal of physical activity paradigms from the daily routine of K-8 children in lieu of more classroom time and include any current studies or previous studies that support(s) this move.”

Response 4: As previously mentioned, the Common Core State Standards are benchmarks for English language arts and mathematics only. While the Illinois General Assembly adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010 and the Illinois State Board of Education has been developing supports and resources for schools and teachers to use to implement the Illinois State Standards in English language arts and math, neither the General Assembly nor the Illinois State Board of Education has mandated that any district adopt or implement any specified curriculum, grading approach, schedule, homework policy, etc. In fact, we believe that these decisions are best left at the local level. ISBE’s role is to provide professional development, technical assistance and supports to districts, schools and teachers in the implementation of the standards.

Request 5: “Also, please provide me proof that shorter lunch and physical activity times in K-6 correlate with improved health and educational outcomes (i.e. improved test scores) as evidenced by CPS decision to limit lunch and recess to 40 minutes for K-6. MOST IMPORTANTLY, show me that decreased lunch and physical DO NOT support the developmental of chronic disease like adult onset diabetes in juveniles.”

Response 5: As mentioned above, the Common Core State Standards are only benchmarks for math and English language arts. Curricular and scheduling decisions are made at the local level. ISBE works to support the statewide standards by providing resources to help schools and districts with their implementation.

ISBE values physical education, as we recently adopted Enhanced Physical Education standards and are currently working on implementation. Please see the fact sheet at the following link for more information: http://www.isbe.net/EPE/pdf/reports-webinars/epe-fact-sheet.pdf.
Request 6: “Lastly, please provide real literature that supports the concept that homework, especially in K-3, correlates with improved educational outcomes and please also provide this data for grades 3-14. Also, you must show to the tax payer using public education that assessments in the first 6 years of study are better than NOT assessing children in the first 6 years since, it is a well-known fact that educational systems that use the later are far superior to the US system.”

Response 6: Please see Responses 4 and 5 regarding homework decisions. For additional information regarding the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the only required assessment in Illinois, please see the fact sheet via the following link: http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/parcc/2015/fact-sheet1408.pdf.

If you have questions, please contact Megan Griffin at (217) 782-4648 or mgriffin@isbe.net.

Sincerely,

Matt Vanover
Director of Public Information

Attachments