Aug. 27, 2014

Dear Ms.:

This letter is in response to your request for information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Your request was received on Aug. 20, 2014.

You have requested the following:

Request 1: “List of all school districts that applied for Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) broken down by year since it became available to school districts in Illinois to today’s date identifying if ALOP initial application/ALOP continuum application. Please note the date that the ISBE initiated ALOP.”

Response 1: The attached document (15-044- -doc.pdf) has been provided in response to this portion of your request. Beginning in 2012, program staff began filing and securing applications using a new system which includes recording the names of districts in the program. Therefore, our agency only has lists maintained from 2012 to 2015. Please note 2015 applications are pending approval at this point in time.

Please see the below reference to the Illinois School Code regarding the date ALOP became effective. The effective date was January 1, 2002.

105 ILCS 5/Art. 13B heading)

ARTICLE 13B. ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

(105 ILCS 5/13B-1)

Sec. 13B-1. Short title. This Article may be cited as the Alternative Learning Opportunities Law.

(Source: P.A. 92-42, eff. 1-1-02.)

Request 2: “List of all school districts that have been approved for ALOP broken down by year since initiated by the ISBE to today’s date.”

Response 2: Please see response one. All districts that applied for ALOP were approved. If information is lacking or if there are questions when districts send in applications, then
our agency sends the inquiries back to the programs and awaits clarifications/revisions. Once all concerns are worked through, then the programs are approved.

Request 3: "Copies of all ALOP initial applications and ALOP continuum applications received by the ISBE since initiated to today's date identifying date approved and those that were not approved and why. FOIA request made due to no data collection or record keeping by ISBE employees as to funding and enrollment of ALOP as previously requested in July 2014 and avoiding Attorney General review process."

Response 3: On Aug. 26, ISBE’s Megan Griffin contacted you via email asking you to narrow this portion of your request to more manageable parameters. Upon initial review, the applications since the inception of ALOP in 2002 consist of approximately 18,000 pages. Due to the vast amount of pages and the fact that they are only in hard copy, it would take staff an estimated two weeks of nothing but compiling, preparing, copying/scanning and processing in order to provide the requested documents in either electronic or hard copy format.

Therefore upon further review, our staff has determined that this portion of your request for records falls within the category “unduly burdensome” as that term is applied under FOIA 5 ILCS 140/3(g). To the extent that you are able to revise and narrow this portion of your FOIA request so that it is not unduly burdensome, we invite you to contact ISBE’s Megan Griffin at mgriffin@isbe.net or 217-782-4648.

Request 4: “List of school districts that ISBE has investigated for ALOP compliance issues broken down by year since ALOP was initiated by ISBE to today’s date; list of school districts that ISBE has removed from ALOP and did not approve their applications.”

Response 4: St. Charles CUSD 303 is the only district that has been investigated for ALOP compliance. The investigation took place in May 2014. Once again, our agency has not denied any ALOP applications.

Request 5: “List of school districts the ISBE has audited all Student Success Plans and IEPs related to ALOP broken down by date of visit and outcome since 2009. List of school districts that ISBE did a partial audit of Student Success Plans and IEPs related to ALOP and why.”

Response 5: Our agency has no documents to provide in response to this portion of your request as we are not required nor do we conduct this type of audit.

Request 6: “Name of person at the ISBE that monitors the spending of ALOP funds once the ISBE approves an ALOP application and the procedures put into place to account for the line item spending of funds received by school districts.”

Response 6: Verification of GSA attendance and submitted claims is monitored by the Division of Federal and State Monitoring; Mark Ribelin is the Division Administrator. The annual financial audits for all Regional Offices of Education are performed by the Auditor General’s office.

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

Matt Vanover
Director of Public Information

Attachment