Feb. 10, 2015

Patti Lopuszanski

Dear Ms. Lopuszanski:

This letter is in response to your request for information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Your request was received on Jan. 20, 2015.

On Jan. 27, our agency requested a five-day extension until Feb. 3, 2015. On Feb. 3, our agency requested an additional five-day extension until Feb. 10, 2015. On Feb. 6, our agency provided you with responses to parts 1-2, 5 and 8, as well as a partial response to part 4.

You have requested the following:

Request 3: “Copies of ISBE Internal emails related to highly qualified educator requirements; improper hiring of uncertified/unlicensed teachers within grade level and/or subject areas; addressing the involuntary transfer of teachers into grade levels and subject areas they are not highly qualified and educated to teach in for the last five years, beginning 2010-2011.”

Response 3: Per your email conversation with ISBE’s Megan Griffin on Feb. 6, you agreed to narrow this portion of your request to 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. After having our Information Technology division perform a search for emails from 2011 through 2014 containing the term “highly qualified,” 4,151 emails resulted as being potentially responsive. In order to determine responsiveness, each email would have to be reviewed by staff for responsiveness and again for potential exemptions and redactions. The 4,151 emails are only potentially responsive to the first portion of your request regarding highly qualified educator requirements, this does not include potentially responsive emails for improper hiring of uncertified/unlicensed teachers within grade level and/or subject areas. Therefore, an additional number of emails would have to be reviewed in conjunction with the 4,151.

Would you be willing to further narrow your request to any emails (both internal and external) sent to/from Jeffrey Aranowski regarding highly qualified educator requirements and improper hiring of uncertified/unlicensed teachers within grade level and/or subject areas for the year 2014?

Once again, this does not mean you cannot follow-up with a later request for more specific correspondence, but this will allow us to perform a reasonable search without burdening staff or agency operations at this time. If you are unable to narrow this portion of your request further, we will have to deny this portion as it falls within the category “unduly burdensome” as that term is applied under FOIA 5 ILCS 140/3(g).

Furthermore, we have no responsive emails addressing the involuntary transfer of teachers into grade levels and subject areas they are not highly qualified and educated to teach in for the last five years as “highly qualified” is not related to being assigned to a position.
Request 4d: “Failing to employ teachers that are highly qualified in core curriculum subject areas that they teach.”

Response 4d: After consulting the appropriate staff, we have determined that our agency does not collect or maintain the requested information.

Request 4f: “School districts that have hired teachers that were/are lacking being highly qualified in core curriculum subjects; missing required endorsements.”

Response 4f: After consulting the appropriate staff, we have determined that our agency does not collect or maintain the requested information.

Request 6: “List the number of teachers that were released listed by the following: based on PERA evaluations, enrollment, reduction in force for the 2012-2013; 2013-2014 school year reported to the ISBE broken down by school district and special education cooperatives.”

Response 6: A summary of Reduction in Force data can be viewed at the following link: http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/teacher_reduction.htm. Please note Chicago has not reported RIF data since 2009. The 2013-2014 RIF data is still being collected; therefore, it is not yet available.


The attached document (15-194-lopuszanski-doc3.xls) reflects Race to the Top districts in which our agency collected data based on our inquiry for the “number of teachers who were removed for being rated ‘Unsatisfactory’.” This is also self-reported district data. The districts may have gotten their data based on PERA evaluations or other evaluations. This is the only data ISBE has on educators/administrators that were released based on unsatisfactory performance.

Request 7: “Based on changes made to Public Act 98-0648 Recall Rights of Honorably Dismissed Teachers there is a gap for teachers Honorably Dismissed in June 2013 that were placed in Group 2 and not allowed to remedy. What guidance information has the ISBE provided teachers that have been dismissed in 2013 and based on PERA initiated in fall 2012? Identify ISBE resources for teachers that have been dismissed based on enrollment when their classes remained intact with students and staff at the same location the following school year and replaced by a non-tenured teacher. List all districts required to hire back teachers that were placed in Group 2 honorably dismissed since June 2013.”

Response 7: After consulting the appropriate staff, we have determined that we do not collect data regarding districts required to hire back teachers that were placed in Group 2.

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

Sincerely,

Matt Vanover

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Director of Public Information

Attachments