

Feb. 6, 2015

[emailed to [REDACTED]]

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.

Per your email conversation with ISBE's Megan Griffin, you agreed to receive responses to Parts 1 and 2 of you request. We also have Parts

You have requested the following:

Request 1: "Copies of any/all conference information since 2010 including conferences for 2015 where any past/present ISBE employee presented information related to hiring highly qualified teachers; the requirements necessary for hiring highly qualified teachers; continued employment of teachers that are to hold the proper grade level license/certificate including all required core curriculum and endorsements for general and special education."

Response 1: The attached document (*15-194-lopuszanski-doc1.pdf*) has been provided in response to this portion of your request.

Request 2: "Copies of all presentation materials that Jeff Aranowski and Patrick Murphy from the ISBE provided to participants that attended the ESEA-NCLB 2011 Annual Statewide Conference on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, and a copy of all attendees that signed for the No Child Left Behind and Highly Qualified Educators: Meeting the Requirements session."

Response 2: Please see Response 1. Patrick Murphy is no longer employed at ISBE and we do not have copies of his presentation materials to provide. Our agency does not have the sign-in sheets for the aforementioned conference session. We recommend contacting the entity who runs the conference, the Illinois Resource Center, for those documents.

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, you have agreed to narrow this portion of your request to 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. We are currently working to fulfill this portion of your request.

Request 4: “List of all Illinois school districts that have received sanctions for any/all of the following listed below (a-g) for the last five years beginning in 2010-2011 school year; broken down by district; financial impact of sanctions on school districts; include any forms of communication sent to districts in violation of Highly Qualified Teachers Meeting the Requirements.

Response 4: Our agency does not sanction for not meeting highly qualified requirements. The sanction, if there is one, is that districts must send letters home to parents if their child is being taught by a non-highly qualified teacher for more than twenty consecutive days. Also, Title I funds cannot be utilized for a teacher that is not highly qualified.

There are differences between the criteria for being considered "highly qualified" and some of the Illinois requirements for various assignments. The "highly qualified" status of an individual with respect to an assignment shall not relieve any entity that is required to employ certified staff of the obligation to observe the applicable Illinois requirements for that assignment. Please see the following link for more detailed information, resources and documents: <http://isbe.net/certification/html/part25.htm>.

Request 4a: Failing to hire highly qualified teachers per State and Federal Requirements;

Response 4a: Our agency does not sanction for non-highly qualified teachers.

Request 4b: Failing to hire licensed properly certified teachers at their grade level/subject area;

Response 4b: Please refer to ISBE’s Annual Reports at the following link: <http://www.isbe.net/reports.htm>. There is a section in each annual report that describes the districts that have been sanctioned by a reduction in recognition status and the reasons for that sanction. You will be able to see when a district has been given a recognition reduction due to teachers not meeting state assignment qualifications. For the current Annual Report, it is on page 31.

Request 4c: Failing to hire highly qualified licensed teachers at the time of hire when other teachers were interviewed and available; number of special emergency certificates given to teachers not licensed/qualified for the teaching position hired for.

Response 4c: Our agency does not collect information regarding the first part of this request.

For the second part regarding special emergency certificates, can you please clarify with ISBE’s Megan Griffin whether you are referring to short-term emergency certificates where

no other candidates were available, or emergency certificates dealing directly with highly qualified teachers?

Request 4d: Failing to employ teachers that are highly qualified in core curriculum subject areas that they teach;

Response 4d: We are currently working with staff to determine if we have this data available and to fulfil this portion of your request.

Request 4e: School districts that have given teachers involuntary transfers into positions they were not licensed/qualified to teach in;

Response 4e: Our agency does not collect this information. Therefore, we have no documents to provide.

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

Response 4f: We are currently working with staff to determine if we have this data available and to fulfil this portion of your request.

Request 4g: List of school districts that have received reductions in personnel reimbursement funding broken down by the amount lost per year due to hiring teachers with deficiencies in certification/licensing requirements.”

Response 4g: The attached document (*15-194-lopuzanski-doc2.pdf*) has been determined to be potentially responsive to this portion of your request. Please note the changes and enhanced edits in the data include:

1. For work assignments that require endorsements, the endorsement issue date was used as the approved date rather than the certificate issue date.
2. Additional edits were incorporated to check both the issue and expiration dates of certificates.
3. For work assignments that require certificates and approvals, the most recent issue/approval date was used as the approval date.
4. Carried the certificate expiration forward into the reimbursement calculation so that the number of days reimbursed can be more accurate.

Request 5: “Breakdown of the number of complaints by subject area Marcia Kelly has received broken down by school district since 2010-2011 for last five years. Include notes documenting outcomes and sanctions placed on each district based on the investigations.”

Response 5: The attached document (*15-194-lopuzanski-doc5.xls*) has been provided in response to this portion of your request.

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: We are currently working with staff to gather the data for this portion of your request.

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: Please use the following link to view the document in response to this portion of your request: <http://www.isbe.net/PEAC/pdf/guidance/14-2-recall-rights-hon-disch-teachers.pdf>.

We are currently working with staff to determine if we have data available regarding districts required to hire back teachers that were placed in Group 2.

Request 8: “List all school districts that rent space from a church, religious organization, or non-public entity with ties to established religions for public school special education classes funded by taxpayer dollars paying rent for such facilities and the named locations. List ISBE requirements and Federal guidelines for public school districts to house educational programs for general and/or special education students outside of a public school facility. List the date ISBE approved Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative could house a program within a church in Batavia. Include all internal emails to/from Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative, St. Charles School District 303 and any representative of the ISBE related to securing space within a church for a special education program over available public school facilities and the appearance of a violation of the Establishment Clause.”

Response 8: Our agency does not collect information on occupancy permits. Regional Superintendents issue occupancy permits. We recommend contacting the Regional Office of Education to retrieve the date information you seek. The attached form (*15-194-lopuzanski-doc4.pdf*) is used by ROEs in issuing Certificates of Occupancy for any facility used by public school students.

Additionally, we have no emails responsive to this portion of your request.

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

Sincerely,

Matt Vanover
Director of Public Information