

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

Micheline Welch

RE: RESPONSE TO FOIA REQUEST

Dear Ms. Welch:

Thank you for writing to Central Community Unit School District No. 301 with your request for information pursuant to the Illinois *Freedom of Information Act* (“FOIA”), 5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*, received on January 21, 2025. The District previously notified you of the need for an extension of time, and we now provide the District’s timely response to your request.

Your request is restated below:

-All communications, regardless of format (email, text message, phone note, etc.) from April 1, 2023, through October 31, 2023, between Esther Mongan and Steve Larson of Larson & Darby Architects.

Your request is granted in part and denied in part. See enclosed documentation. Pursuant to FOIA Section 7(1)(f), we removed communications based on FOIA’s exemption for preliminary drafts, notes, recommendations, memoranda, and other records or information in which opinions are expressed, or policies or actions are formulated. 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(f). This exemption protects predecisional, deliberative communications that inform an agency’s decision-making process. *Harwood v. McDonough*, 344 Ill.App.3d 242, 248 (1st Dist. 2003). Additionally, pursuant to FOIA Section 7(1)(k), we removed architects’ plans and construction related documents whose disclosure would compromise security. 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(k). Further, pursuant to FOIA Section 7(1)(c), we redacted personal information regarding family members and private citizens who contacted the Board to express their opinions. 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(c); *see Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety v. City of Chicago*, 348 Ill. App. 3d 188, 209, 211 (1st Dist. 2004) (“[T]he core purpose of the FOIA is to expose what the government is doing, not what its private citizens are up to.”). Last, pursuant to FOIA Sections 7(1)(b) and 7(1)(c), the District redacted private information, including a home address, personal phone number, a personal email address and passwords/access codes. 5 ILCS 140/2(c-5); 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(b), 7(1)(c).

You have a right to have the District’s FOIA response reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Attorney General. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). You can file your Request for Review with the PAC by writing to:

Public Access Counselor
Office of the Attorney General
500 South 2nd Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706
Fax: 217-782-1396
Email: public.access@ilag.gov

If you choose to file a Request for Review with the PAC, you must do so within 60 days of the date of this letter. 5 ILCS 140/9/5(a). Please note that you must include a copy of your original FOIA request and this letter when filing a Request for Review with the PAC. You also have the right to seek judicial review of any denial by filing a lawsuit in the State circuit court. 5 ILCS 140/11.

As the District's FOIA Officer, I am responsible for the District's response to your request. This letter and enclosures are intended to be fully responsive to your specific requests. If I have misunderstood or misinterpreted your request in any way, please clarify your request in writing to me.

Sincerely,

Graydon Engle
FOIA Officer
Director of Grants