

**River Forest
Public Schools**

Administration Building

7776 Lake Street
River Forest, IL 60305
Phone: 708-771-8282
Fax: 708-771-8291

May 18, 2022

VIA E-MAIL TO
s_lefko@hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Lefko:

On May 11, 2022, the School District received your request for records, as follows:

I'm asking for copies of all receipts for all expenditures related to English language arts curricula and instruction, the training of teachers in any area connected to English language arts, consultants hired in any capacity and related in any way to English language arts instruction in District 90, this includes all receipts between January 1, 2015 and May 11, 2022.

While the School District attempts to process all such requests as expeditiously as possible, we anticipate a delay in processing your request for the reason or reasons checked below:

- ☒ The requested records are stored in whole or in part at locations other than the office having charge of the records.
- ☒ The request requires the collection of a substantial number of specified records.
- ☐ The request is couched in categorical terms and requires an extensive search for the requested records.
- ☐ The requested records have not been located in the course of routine search and additional efforts are being made to locate them.
- ☐ The requested records require examination and evaluation by personnel having the necessary competence and discretion to determine if they are exempt from disclosure or should be revealed only with appropriate deletions.
- ☒ The request for records cannot be complied with by the District within the time limits set forth in the Illinois Freedom of Information Act without unduly burdening or interfering with the operations of the District.
- ☒ There is a need for consultation, which will be conducted with all practicable speed, with another public body or among two or more components of a public body having a substantial interest in the determination or in the subject matter of the request.


This extends the response deadline by five (5) business days, to May 25, 2022. If you have any questions regarding the content of this correspondence, please contact the School District's Administrative Office for assistance.

Sincerely,

RIVER FOREST SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 90

By: _____

Edward J. Condon, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools and
Freedom of Information Act Officer

From: Steve Lefko s_lefko@Hotmail.com 
Subject: a simpler FOIA request or River Forest District 90
Date: May 11, 2022 at 12:51 PM
To: Ed Condon condone@district90.org, Barb Hickey hickeyb@district90.org, Alison Hawley (HawleyA@district90.org)
HawleyA@district90.org, cozzia cozzia@district90.org
Cc: F. Amanda Tugade fatugade@gmail.com, sschering@pioneerlocal.com, PR@westcooknews.com, HQ Account
info@defendinged.org, James McQuaid jmcquaid@libertyjusticecenter.org, cookcountyrecord@gmail.com, Steve Lefko
s_lefko@hotmail.com



Barb, Ed, Alison and Anthony,

I want to come back again to trying to learn about River Forest D90 curriculum changes attached to your equity-based curriculum and instructional changes of 2016. I'm asking an even narrower question on English language arts. I'm sorry if you believe continued questions are unreasonable. The changes to curriculum and instruction seem to be hurting most, and some of the worst losses are among low-income students. See attached chart of data taken from ISBE D90 report cards – pre remote learning.

This is an extremely narrow Freedom of Information request based on ordinary documents maintained in standard record keeping – receipts of purchases. I'm asking for copies of all receipts for all expenditures related to English language arts curricula and instruction, the training of teachers in any area connected to English language arts, consultants hired in any capacity and related in any way to English language arts instruction in District 90, this includes all receipts between January 1, 2015 and May 11, 2022. From these receipts, I'll attempt to rebuild the names and characteristics of a D90 ELA curriculum map since 2015. A tenuous approach, but education is a worthwhile endeavor. I'll send you a copy of the rebuilding for review, any corrections, edits etc.

I wish different ways to ask the same question could be avoided. It's surprising the job of a curriculum director does not include maintaining a record of past and present curriculum names, if for no other reason, than keeping track of what worked and what didn't so the district can better serve the students. You've denied previous requests to share curriculum names before and after the switch. You've found a way to interpret FOIA such that "records don't exist", and you've violated the open meetings act exacerbating the lack of D90 transparency. I'll keep asking because parents deserve to know, if for no other reason, than to understand why the decline and how best to augment a D90 education.

I'm including all I think are relevant: Ed because he's the Superintendent, Barb because Ed works for the school board, Alison because she's the curriculum director, Anthony because he is finance director and likely to have access to receipts etc.

I'm copying media contacts too because these are public schools and there's been almost no reporting on the sudden declines that began in River Forest around 2016, prior to remote learning. I wrote about it here <https://www.oakpark.com/2021/03/17/stumbling-in-the-curricular-crosswalk/> and here <https://www.oakpark.com/2021/04/06/a-crooked-district-90-crosswalk/>. The topic needs much more light and I'm hoping these contacts see the benefit that might come to children and families by helping explore these changes.

Much thanks
steve lefko