



August 3, 2021

Michelle Kline

VIA EMAIL – mysmellgoods@yahoo.com

Re: FOIA request dated 7/19/21 & received 7/19/21

Subject: Provide any and all communications between Dr. Sparlin, any and all BOE members and/or Andrew Gothelf, Elizabeth Palatine, Kerri Soumar or any other rep for the OEA teachers union for dates between 7/1/20 and 8/31/20. Clarification for reps of the OEA: only the Executive Board. The search of emails was over 1,900. On 7/28/21 via email, the narrowed search was for any/all communications between Andrew Gothelf and/or any others listed as originally stated.

This letter will serve as Oswego Community Unit School District 308's response to your FOIA request received on July 19, 2021 under the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.), in which you asked for the above referenced information. The information regarding your request is attached. Redactions/exemptions were made due to the following under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act as follows:

Section 7(1)(a) – Information specifically prohibited from disclosure by federal or State law or rules and regulations implementing federal or State law.

Section 7(1)(c) - Personal information contained within public records, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, unless the disclosure is consented to in writing by the individual subjects of the information.

The decision to withhold the redacted information was made by me consulting with our District legal counsel. You have a right to have the denial of your request reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Illinois 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, IL 62706

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

To promote district transparency and assist others who may have a similar question, this responsive document will be posted online on the district's website. To access it, go to www.sd308.org and select *Our District > Freedom of Information Act Request > FOIA Request Responses > FOIA Requests Responses -2021 > then select FOIA ID #21-45*.

Please be advised that to comply with your FOIA request, the district incurred an expense that comprised of the cost of labor and resources used to search for records responsive to your request. Let me know if you have additional questions. Thank you.

Carrie Szambelan

Carrie Szambelan

Freedom of Information Officer

SUBJECT: Letter from the OEA to the Board of Education
FROM: Elizabeth Palatine <epalatine@sd308.org>
TO: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>
CC: Andrew Gothelf <agothelf@sd308.org>
DATE: 07/21/2020 14:45
ATTACHMENTS (20200721-144522-0000161): ["BOE letter 7_21_2020.pdf"](#)

Good afternoon,

Please share the attached letter with the BOE before this evening's meeting. This letter states the OEA's position on the safe return to school,

Elizabeth

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Elizabeth Palatine
Long Beach Elementary
630-636-3369

Kindergarten AM
Co-President Oswego Education Association

PRIVACY NOTICE: The content of this communication is CONFIDENTIAL and may include student information that is protected by federal law under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient of this communication, please notify the sender immediately and delete the material without opening any attachments. Unauthorized use, disclosure, copying, or distribution is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful.

Dear Board of Education,

The world has changed dramatically over the past several months, with an endless series of changes and challenges. Solutions that satisfy all of our needs to these new obstacles are very difficult to find. Things continue to change each day, and even since the Board was presented with a face to face reopening plan just last week, additional worries concerning the safety of our students and staff continue to develop.

This weekend, the OEA conducted a survey of members to see where the teachers stand on a District reopening plan. The results were clear, as more than 3 out of 4 teachers want the Association to “recommend to the Board of Education that the 2020-21 school year begin with remote learning that includes a transition plan to in-person learning when health conditions allow”. Each early childhood, elementary, pathways, junior high, and high school professional brings a slightly different perspective, worry, and hope. No one wants to be back in the classroom more than teachers, and returning is the ultimate goal, but we must do so when we can protect the basic human need of safety for our students, staff, and community.

Nearly full class sizes without the ability to safely/consistently social distance, lunch on campus, the need for classroom alterations (windows/ventilation/HEPA filters), protocols for staff and students exhibiting symptoms or testing positive, and the need for additional custodial/maintenance staff are just some of the highest concerns that impede a confident and safe reopening of schools. These concerns need to be addressed prior to returning to in-person learning, and may include a full hybrid of in-person and remote learning.

It is important that all our students get the best education possible, even during these trying times. The OEA looks forward to continuing the work with the District to refine and implement an online learning plan/in-person reopening plan that will meet the needs of all students, as well as a transition plan to fully return students to the classroom when health conditions allow. Even as our communities continue to face a changing reality, the teachers will still provide students the guidance they need, encourage our children to believe in themselves, engage in social and emotional learning and development, teach the skills and content, and provide each student the community support and stability they require.

Oswego Education Association

7/28/2021

SUBJECT: Re: Remote Learning Policy
FROM: Andrew Gothelf <agothelf@sd308.org>
TO: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>
DATE: 08/25/2020 16:01

Thanks, and I got them out right on time today!

Andrew

On Aug 25, 2020, at 10:14 AM, John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org> wrote:

Good morning Andrew,

I'm just sharing an email I just responded to. I think it is good for you to see emails such as this one because I've received a number of emails like this one and for you to see my response. I hope you are having a good day and don't forget to let your students out on time ☺.

Take care,
John

From: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 10:13 AM
To: [REDACTED] >
Subject: FW: Remote Learning Policy

Good morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your concern. I appreciate you sharing your opinion with me. Our current position in regards to where a teacher is working from is to allow them the choice to either work from the school or alternate location. We have shared our expectations with staff and they should be adhered to. They are listed on our website but I wanted to share them with you here as well:

- **Teacher Expectations**

- Required to use Google classroom as the remote learning platform for their classes
- Create engaging activities for students posted on Google Classroom aligned to District Curriculum including scope and sequence to drive instruction and focus on the standards of learning
- Collaborate weekly with colleagues to ensure an equitable student experience in learning, alignment of pacing, content, and assessment
- Post a learning outline for the week in Google Classroom on Monday by 8:00 am for all classes
- Host a minimum of four Go Live! sessions per week on Google Hangouts Meet during school hours for each class taught. This is designed as in person instructional time, not as a check-in or video.
- Create their own videos, use videos created by their content area or grade level teams, or upload videos already created by a reputable source. Teachers should view the video prior to posting if they did not create and ensure copyright.
- Hold student support time at the end of the day. Teachers will be available for students' questions for guided instruction, re-teaching, or support. Teachers should schedule meetings by appointment.
- Respond to parent and student emails within 24 hours during school days
- During Remote Learning for All, teachers will share information with students and parents about communication including:
 - Provide a welcome email to families
 - School email address
 - How to access Google Classroom
 - How to access the primary resources used in the class
 - Attendance expectations
 - Expectations of learning
 - How to engage in student support times with the teacher
 - Grading guidelines including specific grading rules and calculations
 - Provide weekly feedback to students on assignments
 - Collaborate with the special education case manager and/or related service

Wherever they teach from the following needs to be in place:

- Environment needs to be free of distractions and interruptions (neutral backgrounds and limited noise).
- Bandwidth needs to be sufficient to conduct live streaming.
- All necessary teaching materials need to be available.
- Attire needs to be typical of a regular work day.

As you stated below, the teacher had connectivity issues from home. If that happens again I would send that principal an email informing them of the issue and the teacher will be required to report to the school during remote learning if the issue isn't rectified. The opportunity afforded the teachers to teach remote learning from a remote location has nothing to do with childcare issues. You stated that "they should not be at home supervising their own kids saving money on child care while doing their work." I agree with you and that is one reason we agreed to the expectations that I just shared. When we first started down the path of possibly going remote I was of the mindset that everyone should be working from their work location, that opinion changed after speaking with many of my peers. Some districts are requiring their staff to report to the buildings while more are giving the teachers the flexibility to choose. A good teacher who is teaching remotely is going to be a good teacher whether they are in front of a camera in their classroom or in front of a camera working from their work space at home. With that said, we have no problem requiring people to come in if the expectations mentioned above are not being met. If the expectations are not being met I would ask that you reach out to the building administration just as you would if the kids were physically present in school.

Sincerely,

John Sparlin

Dr. John W. Sparlin

Superintendent of Schools

Oswego Community Unit School District 308

4175 Route 71

Oswego, IL. 60543

From: 308 Superintendent <superintendent@sd308.org>

Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 7:49 AM

To: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>

Subject: Fwd: Remote Learning Policy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 9:51 PM

Subject: Remote Learning Policy

To: <superintendent@sd308.org>

Greetings Sir,

I have been given numerous instructions, emails, and a boatload of information to confront this challenge of remote learning we are all faced with. But I never heard the district policy about where the teachers will be teaching from (home or school)? I voted for full in person learning, so clearly I am not a fan of the current situation. This is mainly due to child care which causes all kinds of problems for not only us parents, but for your staff and teachers that have children. Well, today my kid logged in for his first go live session and his teachers WiFi went down at home, and

the school's WiFi went down. He sent an email to the parents and admitted this was possibly the worst way to start the school year and apologized (rightfully so)! Why, because he should have been at school doing his instruction in the first place, and not from home. I'm not the only one with this opinion. A lot of us have child care issues that are valid and concerning due to this situation, which is a struggle. I'm sure your staff and teachers have the same or similar struggles now with their own child care. But they should be, and "need" to be, in the same boat with all us parents.

They should not be at home supervising their own kids saving money on child care while doing their work. Especially since we can't! Teachers have always had my upmost respect, but this advantage is not deserved. This doesn't make any sense to me why this would be allowed. If this is the current district policy I hope it ends very soon. Can you please have your school principals send out an email to all the parents and let us know where the teachers are obstructing from, and why? And please provide specifics, like the ones with children are allowed to instruct from home due to the child care burden placed on them? It would be much appreciated. This will stand the test of backlash if it is not in line with the opinions of people like myself. I'm not the one to make waves, but I want my child's teacher at school doing their job. If not, then I propose I drop my child off at his house so he can watch and teach him in his personal residence with his own offspring. I may be hasty in this email, but I was enraged when I checked in on my kids first class and he said his teacher had to run to Hunt Club because his connection failed.

Respectfully,