



MONROE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS
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March 27, 2025

VIA EMAIL: opra+request-73808-6e5c6880@requests.opramachine.com

V Stone

Re: OPRA Request dated March 19, 2025

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of the Monroe Township Board of Education ("Board" and/or "District"), I am writing this letter in response to your request for records pursuant to the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA") submitted and received via email on Wednesday, March 19, 2025. As such, the seven (7) business day deadline within which the Board is to respond to your request is Friday, March 28, 2025.

More specifically, the Board's response to your requests is set forth below:

"1) Any emails from Parents to Dr Orsolina Cetta with the words Bus, School bus or Schoolbus mentioned in them. I would like emails for the entire period of her employment as principal at Woodland Elementary School.

2) Any emails sent to Dr Chari Chanley from Dr Cetta referring to incidents on the school buses involving Woodland students for the entire period of Dr Cetta's employment as principal at Woodland Elementary School.

3) Any emails sent to Dr Chari Chanley from parents referring to incidents on the school buses involving Woodland students for the entire period of Dr Cetta's employment as principal at Woodland Elementary School."

As a preliminary matter, please be advised, your request seeks copies of student records and/or student information, as explained in more detail below. There are long-standing regulations governing the confidentiality of student records and limiting access to those records to a select few. See N.J.A.C. 6A:32-2.1; and -7.1

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et seq. These regulations are specifically authorized by N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19 and are a corollary to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.

More specifically, N.J.A.C. 6A:32-2.1 defines “student records” as “information related to an individual student gathered within or outside the school district and maintained within the school district, regardless of the physical form in which it is maintained.” Student records can only be provided to individuals and organizations specifically authorized by regulation to access those records. See N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.1 and -7.5.

Accordingly, in view of the aforementioned, your request for copies of emails related to incidents on the school bus involving students is a request for student records and/or student information, to the extent any records exist, which the Board is legally prohibited from providing pursuant to N.J.S.A. 41:1A-1, N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.1, et seq., the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (“FERPA”) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), and L.R. v. Camden City Pub. Sch. Dist., 238 N.J. 547 (2019).

In addition, your request for copies of emails that contain the terms/words “Bus”, “School bus”, or “Schoolbus” are overly broad in that the requests fail to include a narrowly construed subject or content and thus do not identify specific requested records. See Elcavage v. West Milford Twp. (Passaic), GRC Complaint No. 2009-07 (April 2010); Doss v. Borough of Paramus (Bergen), GRC Complaint No. 2014-149 (Interim Order dated January 30, 2015); Gannett New Jersey Partners L.P. v. County of Middlesex, 379 N.J. Super. 205, 211-12, 877 A.2d 330 (App. Div. 2005); New Jersey Builders Association v. New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing, 390 N.J. Super. 166, 178 (App. Div.), certifi. Denied, 190 N.J. 394 (2007); Bent v. Stafford Police Dep’t, 381 N.J. Super. 30, 40 (App. Div. 2005); NJ Builders Assoc. v. NJ Council on Affordable Housing, 390 N.J. Super. 166, 180 (App. Div. 2007); Burke v. Brandes, 429 N.J. Super. 169, 172, 176 (App. Div. 2012). Under OPRA, one cannot submit “wholesale requests for general information to be analyzed, collated and compiled by the responding government entity.” MAG Entertainment, LLC v. Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 375 N.J. Super. 534, 868 A.2d 1067 (App. Div. 2005). (The Court found a request for “all books, records, [and] documents” related to a specific project to be improper.)

Your request contains generic keywords that can easily appear in a vast quantity of records without any specific meaning. There is no requirement pursuant to OPRA which requires the Board to attempt to locate responsive correspondence containing a single word of generic meaning without any context. See Elcavage v. West Milford Twp. (Passaic), GRC Complaint No. 2009-07 (April 2010); Burke v. Brandes, 429 N.J. Super. 169, 172, 176 (App. Div. 2012). Further, requiring a custodian to locate responsive correspondence based on a single generic keyword is clearly not consistent with the establishment of “subject or content” as one of the criteria for a valid correspondence search. See Sandoval v. NJ State Parole Board,

GRC Complaint No. 2006-167 (October 2008), and Schuler v. Borough of Bloomsbury, GRC Complaint No. 2007-151 (February 2009). Most importantly, using generic keywords is analogous to the type of overly broad request that the MAG and NJ Builder Association Courts determined to be invalid.

Further, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-5, a custodian is not required to fulfill a request for emails “if the request does not identify a specific job title or accounts to be searched, a specific subject matter, and is not confined to a reasonable time period”.

Accordingly, as submitted, your requests do not include all of the required criteria, are invalid pursuant to the OPRA, and are thus denied as overbroad.

If you choose to submit a clarified request more specifically identifying the records you are seeking, such as by including all of the required criteria and naming the exact documents requested, we will review and respond to same as a new OPRA request.

This correspondence and the foregoing information constitute the Board’s full and complete response to your OPRA request and therefore, your OPRA request is closed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Goldstein". The script is cursive and fluid.

Lisa Goldstein
OPRA Secretary/Custodian of Records