



February 22, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Florida Department of Education
Attn.: Public Records
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1544
Tallahassee, FL 32399
PRR@fldoe.org

Re: Public Records Request

Dear Public Records Officer(s):

Pursuant to Article I, section 24(a), of the Florida Constitution, and Florida's public records laws, as codified at Fla. Stat. Chapter 119, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that the Florida Department of Education promptly produce the following:

All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, calendar invitations, or any attachments thereto) between (a) any of the State Board of Education members listed below, or anyone communicating on their behalf, such as an assistant, secretary, or scheduler, and (b) any individual or anyone communicating on behalf of an external entity listed below, including, but not limited to, anyone communicating from the listed email address(es) or an email address ending in the listed domain(s).

Florida State Board of Education Members:

- a. Chair of the State Board of Education Ben Gibson
- b. Vice Chair of the State Board of Education Ryan Petty
- c. State Board of Education Member Monesia Brown
- d. State Board of Education Member Esther Byrd
- e. State Board of Education Member Grazie Christie
- f. State Board of Education Member Kelly Garcia
- g. State Board of Education Member MaryLynn Magar

External Entities and Individuals:

1. Alliance Defending Freedom (adflegal.org)
2. America First Legal (aflegal.org and athospr.com)
3. American Enterprise Institute (aei.org)
4. American Family Association (afa.net)
5. Americans for Prosperity (americansforprosperity.org and americansforprosperityfoundation.org)



6. American Principles Project (americanprinciplesproject.org)
7. Center for Renewing America (americarenewing.com)
8. Christopher Rufo (ajt@christopherrufo.com, chrisrufo@protonmail.com, and crufu@manhattan-institute.org)
9. Claremont Institute (claremont.org)
10. Concerned Women for America (concernedwomen.org and cwfa.org)
11. Council on Public University Reform
12. Convention of States, including Patty Meckler and Mark Meckler (mmeckler@cosaction.com, conventionofstates.com, and cosaction.com)
13. Eagle Forum (eagleforum.org)
14. Family Policy Alliance (familypolicyalliance.com)
15. Family Research Council (frc.org or frcaction.org)
16. Fight for Schools (fightforschools.com)
17. Goldwater Institute (goldwaterinstitute.org)
18. Heritage Foundation (heritage.org and heritageaction.com)
19. Hillsdale College (hillsdale.edu)
20. Independent Women's Forum (iwf.org)
21. James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal (jamesgmartin.center)
22. Liberty Council (LC.org)
23. Liberty Institute (liberty.edu)
24. Manhattan Institute (manhattan.institute or manhattan-institute.org)
25. Moms for Liberty (momsforliberty.org)
26. New College of Florida (ncf.edu)
27. No Left Turn in Education (noleftturn.us)
28. Parents Defending Education (defendinged.org)
29. PragerU (prageruniversity.com and prageru.com)
30. Vermilion Education (vermilioneducation.com)
31. 1776 Project PAC (1776projectpac.com)

Please note that American Oversight does not seek, and that this request specifically excludes, the initial mailing of news clips or other mass-distribution emails. However, subsequent communications forwarding such emails are responsive to this request. For example, if Chair of the State Board of Education Ben Gibson received a mass-distribution news clip email from Alliance Defending Freedom (adflegal.org), that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if Chair Gibson forwarded that email to another individual with his own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

Please provide all responsive records January 1, 2024, through the date the search is conducted.

Please notify American Oversight of any anticipated fees or costs in excess of \$100 prior to incurring such costs or fee.

Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records regarding official business. **You may not exclude searches of files or emails in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts.** Emails or texts

conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the government official constitutes a record for purposes of Florida's public records laws.¹

In addition, American Oversight insists that your agency use the most up-to-date technologies to search for responsive information and take steps to ensure that the most complete repositories of information are searched. American Oversight is available to work with you to craft appropriate search terms. **However, custodian searches are still required; your office may not have direct access to files stored in .PST files, outside of network drives, in paper format, or in personal email accounts.**

In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically that it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

Please take appropriate steps to ensure that records responsive to this request are not deleted by your office before the completion of processing for this request. If records potentially responsive to this request are likely to be located on systems where they are subject to potential deletion, including on a scheduled basis, please take steps to prevent that deletion, including, as appropriate, by instituting a litigation hold on those records.

To ensure that this request is properly construed, that searches are conducted in an adequate but efficient manner, and that extraneous costs are not incurred, American Oversight welcomes an opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, American Oversight and your agency can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in electronic format by email or in PDF or TIF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records to American Oversight, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

Section 119.12 Notice

This document provides written notice identifying American Oversight's public records request to your agency's custodian of public records in compliance with Section 119.12(1)(b) of the Florida Statutes. Should your agency fail to comply with its obligations under Florida's public records laws, American Oversight may be prepared to file suit to enforce the provisions of Fla. Stat. Chapter 119.

¹ *Cf. State v. City of Clearwater*, 863 So. 2d 149, 154 (Fla. 2003) ("The determining factor is the nature of the record, not its physical location.").

Conclusion

American Oversight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to promote transparency in government, to educate the public about government activities, and to ensure the accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media. American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.com.²

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with your agency on this request. If you do not understand any part of this request, have any questions, or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please contact Taylor Stoneman at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 848-1319.

Sincerely,

/s/ Taylor Stoneman
Taylor Stoneman
on behalf of
American Oversight

² American Oversight currently has approximately 16,000 followers on Facebook and 111,400 followers on Twitter.com. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2024); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter.com, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Feb. 13, 2024).