



November 16, 2022

**VIA EMAIL**

Rebecca S. Askew  
Virginia Department of Education  
Policy Office  
P.O. Box 2120  
Richmond, VA 23218  
[foia@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:foia@doe.virginia.gov)

**Re: Virginia Freedom of Information Act Request**

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Va. Code Ann. § 2.2-3700, I, Heather Sawyer, a resident of Virginia, make the following request for records.

**Requested Records**

I request that your office produce the following records within five working days:

1. All email communications (including any email messages, attachments, or calendar invitations) sent by any of the Virginia Department of Education individuals below to any individual outside of the Department of Education containing any of the following key terms, also listed below:

Virginia Department of Education Individuals:

- a) Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow
- b) Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction Elizabeth Schultz
- c) Chief of Staff Richard Shanor
- d) Senior Advisor to the Superintendent Jon Russell
- e) Office of Policy Director Dr. Leslie Sale
- f) Senior Administrative Assistant Laura Jennings
- g) Special Projects Coordinator Lorraine Venesky

Key terms:

1. "model policy"
2. transgender
3. dysphoria
4. "biological sex"
5. "gender transition"
6. "gender identity"
7. sterilize

8. "puberty suppression"
9. "puberty blocking"
10. "puberty-blocking"
11. "sex change"
12. "sex-change"
13. "hormone therapy"
14. "social transition"

Please provide all responsive records from September 1, 2022, through the date the search is conducted.

In an effort to accommodate your office and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, I have limited my request to emails sent by the listed individuals. To be clear, however, I still request that complete email chains be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that Office of Policy Director Dr. Leslie Sale's response to an email with a responsive key term and the initial received message are both responsive to this request and should be produced.

2. All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, calendar invitations, text messages, and any attachments) between (A) the Virginia Department of Education individuals listed in Column A, below, and (B) individuals communicating on behalf of the external organizations listed in Column B, below (including, but not limited to, anyone communicating from an email address ending in the listed domain(s)).

<b>Column A: Virginia Department of Education Individuals</b>	<b>Column B: External Organizations</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow</li> <li>2. Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction Elizabeth Schultz</li> <li>3. Chief of Staff Richard Shanor</li> <li>4. Senior Advisor to the Superintendent Jon Russell</li> <li>5. Office of Policy Director Dr. Leslie Sale</li> <li>6. Senior Administrative Assistant Jennings, Laura</li> <li>7. Special Projects Coordinator Lorraine Venesky</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Alliance Defending Freedom (adflegal.org)</li> <li>b) Family Research Council (frc.org)</li> <li>c) Family Research Council Action (fraction.org)</li> <li>d) Family Policy Alliance (familypolicyalliance.com)</li> <li>e) American College of Pediatricians (acpeds.org)</li> <li>f) Child and Parental Rights Campaign (childparentrights.org)</li> <li>g) America First Legal (aflegal.org)</li> <li>h) American Family Association (afa.net)</li> <li>i) Concerned Women for America (concernedwomen.org or cwfa.org)</li> <li>j) Heritage Foundation (Heritage.org and heritageaction.com)</li> </ol>

	<p>k) Jesse Singal (<a href="mailto:jesse.r.singal@gmail.com">jesse.r.singal@gmail.com</a>)</p> <p>l) Genspect (Genspect.org)</p> <p>m) Catholic Medical Association (cathmed.org)</p> <p>n) Moms for Liberty (momsforliberty.org)</p> <p>o) Fight for Schools (fightforschools.com)</p> <p>p) America First Legal (alflegal.org. and athospr.com)</p>
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Please provide all responsive records from September 1, 2022, 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.

**Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records**

In connection with its request for records, I provide the following guidance regarding the scope of the records sought and the search and processing of records:

- Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. For instance, if the request seeks “communications,” please search all locations likely to contain communications, including relevant hard-copy files, correspondence files, appropriate locations on hard drives and shared drives, emails, text messages or other direct messaging systems (such as iMessage, WhatsApp, Signal, or Twitter direct messages), voicemail messages, instant messaging systems such as Lync or ICQ, and shared messages systems such as Slack.
- In conducting your search, please understand the terms “record,” “document,” and “information” in their broadest sense, to include any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind. I seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs, as well as letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions.
- My request for records includes any attachments to those records or other materials enclosed with those records when they were previously transmitted. To the extent that an email is responsive to this request, this request includes all prior messages sent or received in that email chain, as well as any attachments to the email.

- Please search all relevant records or systems containing records regarding agency business. Do not exclude records regarding agency business contained in files, email accounts, or devices in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts or text messages.
- 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 a request is denied in whole, please state specifically why 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 the agency 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.

If you have any questions regarding how to construe this request for records or believe that further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production of records of interest to me, please do not hesitate to reach out to my representative at the contact information listed below to discuss this request. We welcome an opportunity to discuss this request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, we can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in an electronic format by email to the address listed below. Alternatively, please provide responsive material in native format or in PDF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to Heather Sawyer, c/o American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

### **Conclusion**

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. I look forward to working with your agency on this request. If you do not understand any part of this request, please contact my representative Rachel Baron at [records@americanoversight.org](mailto:records@americanoversight.org) or (202) 897-2465.

Sincerely,

*/s/ /Heather Sawyer*  
/Heather Sawyer