

Full Communications

Reed's FOIA Request (June 1 - June 8)

Reed Sutman sent a FOIA request to Melissa Bradford, citing a quote from a Herald & Review article, seeking the following documents & receiving the noted responses.

1. Any document finding that the district "already knew there were issues"

Response: There is no document responsive to this request

1. Any communications from administrators and staff voicing their concerns.

Response: See the attached document title "Communication between Admins and Others"

1. Any communications with engineers / engineering firms to schedule an examination, including the engineer who did the assessment and any others that were sought.

Response: There is no document responsive to this request.

1. Any documentation showing that the engineer's first opening was Tuesday (*May 30*)

See "Communication between Admins and Others"

1. Any prior assessments of the buildings' structural stability

Response: There is no document responsive to this request.

1. The full content of any communications (including FOIA requests) with media organizations

Response: See attached "Communications with ... FOIA V. Wells 06.07.23"

Valerie Well's FOIA (June 6)

Valerie requested the following information on June 6th:

The report from the structural engineer who inspected the Mosaic and Kaleidoscope campuses of Dennis School on May 30;
The names of that firm and the firm that is doing/has done the second inspection of those buildings;
Emails mentioning Dennis School campuses in regard to concerns about the integrity of both or either building from March 1 to today.

Swarthout & Bridge (June 1)

Bryan Bridge, June 1, 9:38 am

I am just seeking a bit more information on the Dennis Lab School closing and confirming details I've seen in other articles.

Why did the district temporarily close Dennis Lab School?

Any timeline or date that you plan on reopening it?

I've seen something about an infrastructure problem, can you confirm exactly what it was?

If somebody came out to check it, when was that?

Swarthout's response, June 1, 9:54 am

Hi Brayn - here's the information I have to share at the moment, we hope to have more info to share soon.

Out of an abundance of caution, we are temporarily closing the two Dennis Lab School campuses following an analysis from a structural engineer. We are looking to get a second opinion this week, but for the moment we are asking all staff at the two Dennis Lab School campuses to work from home or at an alternate location through Monday, June 5

Swarthout & Ohara (May 31)

Swarthout initiates contact with Scarlett Ohara.

Swarthout, 2:01 pm

Out of an abundance of caution, Decatur Public Schools is temporarily closing the two Dennis Lab School campuses while we further assess structural concerns with the two buildings. We continue to do our due diligence, as we take proactive steps to ensure the safety of students and staff at all DPS schools.

Ohara, 2:33 pm

We'll be in town covering this today. Would you and/or the principal of Dennis Lab School be available for a quick interview? *(she shares her cell #)*

Swarthout, 3:20pm

Hi Scarlett! We're not available for on-camera interviews at this time, the statement is all the information we have to share.

Ohara, 3:22pm

Are you able to clarify what the structural concerns are and how long the campuses will be closed for?

Swarthout, 3:35pm

We are looking to get a second opinion this week, but for the moment we are asking all staff at the two Dennis Lab School campuses to work from home or at an alternate location through Monday.

Ohara, 3:44pm

When was the first opinion sought?

Swarthout, 3:44pm

We requested the analysis from a structural engineer this spring, but yesterday was the first availability on his schedule to come out and do the analysis.

Ohara, 3:48pm

Are you able to share the findings from his analysis?

Swarthout, 3:48pm

No, I don't have those available.

Ohara, 7:41pm

One more question - yesterday was the last day of school, right? So, students won't be affected by the closure at this point?

Swarthout, 8:17pm

Correct.

Ohara, 8:18pm

Is any tutoring scheduled to be held there?

Swarthout, 8:20

It is, and we will communicate with affected families as necessary, pending the second engineering opinion. This email also contained several attachments named: image001.png, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image005.png, image006.png, Outlook-fmmls0ez.png, Outlook-mwywps0l.png

Kent Metzger & Phillip Holthaus, March 23 - May 31

Holthaus, March 23, 6:29am

Holthaus sent the \$19,000 contract proposal to Metzger. The proposal also asked for drawings of the buildings from BLDD Architects.

Metzger, April 4, 2:05pm

I am in the process of getting you a Purchase Order number. I will sign and return your proposal with issuance of the PO. Please schedule the site visit for your earliest convenience.

Holthaus, April 4, 2:26pm

Kent, thank you for the update. I will look at our upcoming schedule and get back in touch with you.

Metzger, April 11, 1:08pm

Any idea about when?

Holthaus, April 11, 2:15pm

We have discussing timing of our inspections and wanted your opinion. We can see advantages of inspecting at least the inside of these schools when they are not occupied with students in order to stay out of the way of day-to-day activities and ensure we can visually get our eyes on all walls & floors, etc. I assume that you might still require us to have an escort or at least someone to have doors unlocked during our investigation and re-locked when we are done. Does this sound like a good option to you? If so, are there any early-out days or school holidays coming up that we could make out visit on those days?

Metzger, April 11, 2:17pm

The afternoon of April 19th works well for us

Holthaus, April 27, 2:47pm

Are there any other dates that work well for you coming up so we can get this on our calendar?

Metzger, April 27, 2:51pm

We probably need to do the work sooner than later. Can we schedule the work for an afternoon next week? If you need to look into an area which may disturb the occupants, it can be done after dismissal for the day.

Holthaus, May 8, 7:10am

I would like to make a site visit tomorrow (Tuesday May 9") is that works for your schedule. It would be very helpful to have any existing drawings of the building whether original or a later renovation that at least shows the floor plan so we can use that for reference when completing our report. If you do not have access to the drawings, let me know if I should contact BLDD to see if they have any assuming they might have provided services at these school in the past. My goal would be to at least get through one school tomorrow. If tomorrow works, do you have a preference as to which one I could visit first?

Holthaus, May 15, 4:04am

This looks to be a new email thread

Holthaus CC'd Anna Marie Ignacio and Heath Pederson

While you were out of the office last week, I did get in contact with BLDD and get some floor plans of the two schools to aid in our inspections and reports. If we can get something scheduled this week, I am at a conference Monday through Wednesday and currently unavailalbe on Thursday, but Anna Marie and Heath might be available to make a site visit during those days if needed. I am rather open the following week. Let me know what works best for you and we will try to get something coordinated this week or next.

Metzger, May 15, 7:25am

Can we do 5/30 and/or 5/31?

Holthaus, May 15, 7:25AM AUTO-Reply

I will be out of the office Monday May 15th through Wednesday May 17th for Strategic Planning Conferences. Email responses will be delayed. If you need immediate assistance, please call the office at (217)530-4283

Holthaus, May 16, 9:09am

We will hold both of those days for these two school inspections so if we don't get finished up on the 30th, we can do so on the 31st. Am I correct that students will not be present on these days?

Metzger, May 17 11:44 am

The kids will be present for a very short time on 5/30 and completely gone on 5/31

Holthaus, May 17, 11:48am

Great. Thank you.

Holthaus, May 26, 3:25pm

This is a new email thread

Holthaus CC'd Anna Marie Ignacio, amignacio@bfwengineers.com

Kent, Do you have a preference for which school we start at Tuesday morning? How early can we get started? Can I have your cell number if needed? If you not be present when we start, how will be check in at the first school?

Metzger, May 26, 4:04 pm

Let's start at the Mosaic campus. We start at 6:00 so anytime after that. I'll have someone escort you. My maintenance foreman and mason are knowledgeable about some structural issues so they can meet too. Let me know what works for you.

My cell is (217) 413-3586

Holthaus, May 26, 4:05pm AUTO-Reply

I will be out of the office Friday May 26th. Email responses will be delayed. If you need immediate assistance, please call the office at (217)530-4283

Holthaus, May 30, 6:21am

Kent, I will be at the Mosaic School at 7:15am. Where should I park? Should I call your cell when I arrive?

Metzger, May 30, 6:46am

Ok. We will meet you there. Park wherever you find a spot

Holthaus, May 30, 6:54am

Okay, thank you