

TRANSPARENCY PROPOSAL

TESTIMONIALS:

**West Aurora Unit School District 129,
Superintendent, Dr. James Rydland, (630) 301-5033:**

"We have posted our register online as part of our policy of open communication with our community. I'm pleased to see other districts doing the same! Open communication results in better decision making for us all."

**Coal City Community Unit School District 1,
Superintendent Kent A. Bugg Ph.D., (815) 634-2287:**

"Posting our monthly bills payable list online is just another step in our Board of Education's commitment to conducting business in an open and transparent manner. I believe it has actually decreased the number of inquiries my office receives regarding our accounts payable, because everything is readily available on our website. The public we serve has been very complimentary of our efforts."

**Mahomet-Seymour Community Unit School District 3,
Director of Business Services Pam Lindsey, (217) 586-4995:**

"More times than not if you don't have financial information up there, people talk and create rumors and assumptions that are not true. Transparency in spending helps eliminate false opinions by providing the financial facts. We have been posting for 3 years and have the history to show as well. We don't get many questions, because it's self explanatory. Our check registry and financial reports are easy to see and easy to print. We post on a regular basis and post the board packet with our bills payable before the board meetings. Our experience has been that we have not been bombarded with questions. In fact, posting the information has eliminated the bombardment of FOIA requests."

**Township High School District 113-Highland Park,
Director of Communications and Grants Carol Votsmier, (224) 765-1000:**

"We pride ourselves on being good stewards of our taxpayers' money. Posting our check registry online is another way we can demonstrate to our communities how their support benefits the students we serve in our district. The registry is a report we generate monthly for board meetings and putting it in a PDF file to post on our website does not cost anything."

College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Trustee David Carlin, (630) 747-3989:

"In the internet age, taxpayers shouldn't have to file Freedom of Information Act requests to get information that should be made readily available to them online."

Elmhurst School District 205, Superintendent Lynn Krzic, (630) 834-4530:

"After you had contacted me in May on behalf of your organization, For the Good of Illinois, I had met with the Assistant Superintendent of Finance with regard to having our check registry posted as a supporting document on our Board agenda. After a discussion, we both believed that this additional information could further assist us in achieving our communication goal with our community"

Oak Park Elementary District 97, Superintendent Dr. Constance Collins, (708) 524-3000:

"Posting our check register has been standard operating procedure in our district for many years. It has not caused an increase of public inquiries, and provides an easily accessible record of expenditures."

**Community Unit School District 300- Carpentersville
Communication Supervisor Allison Smith, (847) 426-1300 ext. 304:**

"While there have been occasional questions about items listed in our bills payable for Board approval, the questions have certainly not been overwhelming. If anything, by proactively posting this information, it generally enables us to keep our taxpayers and media to feel more comfortable about D300's business practices. We also put all of our FOIA responses online, as well. We're really trying to use the Internet to open things up and engage our community in ways that weren't possible in the past."

Huntley School District 158, Superintendent John Burkey, (847) 659-6158:

"Posting promotes transparency about what we're spending taxpayers' money on, and we have had absolutely no problems with public inquiries."

**Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200,
Superintendent Attila J. Weninger, PhD:**

"OPRFHS/District 200 does post its check register information online and has not experienced increased public inquiries or added District work as a result of this transparency."

ADVANTAGES:

- ***Very minimal cost:*** The check register (check number, vendor name, amount) is already part of the monthly board packet. Posting the check register requires no additional equipment or supplies, and only a limited amount of employee time. In less than five minutes, a PDF document can be made and posted to the existing website.
- ***Public information:*** Under the Freedom of Information Act, the information is already public. Posting the register online creates a much easier path to access. Any questions generated become an opportunity to solve perception issues early.
- ***Dialogue:*** The Entire Community wins. The School Board will win because the on-line check register will exhibit costs associated with education. It is very easy for non-involved parties to forget about simple overhead items, like fuel costs. The Citizens win because they get to know exactly how their tax dollar is spent by the district. The Children win because there is no longer “the district” and “the citizens”. **If there is ever a time when the District needs to increase revenue, the citizens will be ready to help because they know exactly where every dollar is spent.**
- ***Continues the Board’s current transparency plans:*** Since the district already prints in local newspapers any vendor who receives over \$2500 in annual payments, the monthly posting of the check register is more timely, much more user friendly, and is fully transparent with the small amounts (under \$2500) as well.
- ***Publicity:*** By posting the check register online, the school district will achieve a significant public relations victory with the community! The citizens of the community appreciate the Board’s commitment to making them part of the educational process. Furthermore, newspapers across the state favorably cover this unique story as well.