

13TH DISTRICT
SCOTT MARTIN

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ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & ENERGY



Senate of Pennsylvania

August 31, 2022

Dr. John Sanville
Superintendent, Unionville-Chadds Ford School District
740 Unionville Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Jeff Hellrung
School Board President, Unionville-Chadds Ford School District
740 Unionville Road
Kennett Square, PA 19348

Dear Mr. Hellruing and Dr. Sanville,

Thank you for acknowledging my original letter sent and dated on June 16, 2022. I am unsure why the letter I mailed through the U.S. Postal Service did not arrive, but I am glad to know that you received an email copy.

As a state senator and as a Chairman of Senate Education Committee I hear from Pennsylvanians on a variety of issues and topics. Sometimes an issue comes to my attention that I believe deserves the due diligence of my time and resources. Sometimes it may appear to those who have a limited view of the situation, to believe it is one of only a local concern; however, often it may be more far reaching and have legislative implications.

You are correct that as Chairman of a critical standing committee such as education, the policy decisions that come out of the committee directly impact hundreds of public schools, students, parents and teachers. I am incredibly proud of the work our committee has done this session and we have managed to tackle many pressing issues often at the same time.

Since becoming Chairman of the Senate Education committee, we have held over 30 public hearings and voting meetings and advanced dozens of policy issues. Most recently my office was integral in compiling the omnibus school code bill, now Act 55, which included 59 different policies. Some of these policies include addressing topics like the teacher shortage and increasing school funding by \$525 million dollars plus an additional \$225 million dollars to a select 100 school districts. Unionville-Chadds Ford School District alone received an 8 percent increase in state funding for basic and special education as well as over \$315,000 for school safety and mental health grants.

Continued

August 31, 2022
Senator Scott Martin
Re: Questions to be Answered

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As a committee that evaluates numerous policies impacting schools, students and our communities, it is well within the scope of practice for this committee to request and review information that may be relevant towards developing or amending education policy in this Commonwealth. It is important to note that the education committee is quite capable of developing and passing legislation while conducting research and holding hearings on relevant policy at the same time.

If you have followed my legislative record and work over the past few years you would be familiar with my publicly expressed concern as to how governments and school districts reacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. I worked to help maintain transparency during the pandemic while ensuring that government, businesses and schools could operate safely. It is for those and other reasons that I mailed you a letter with questions that were brought before me related to how the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District operated during the pandemic.

Since you took offense to my original questions which were presented from someone who lives within your district and had previously been unanswered, I have decided to re-phrase them into my own. I appreciate the expertise that only you can provide about the Unionville-Chadds Ford District and your cooperation with responding to the enclosed questions.

Sincerely,



Scott F. Martin
Pennsylvania State Senator, 13th Senatorial District

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Questions for Dr. Sanville and Mr. Hellrung.

1. Please provide copies of any written requests submitted to the District from any District resident demanding that the District provide a detailed statement or written opinion of counsel setting forth the source of its legal authority to enforce its pandemic related policies including but not limited to mandatory masking and providing in-person schooling.
2. If the District received any such written requests from a District resident, please provide copies of any written responses from the District to the requesting resident. If the response was discussed in a public meeting, please provide copies of the transcript or minutes from the public meeting.
3. In May 2021, the Unionville school board unanimously adopted amendments to District Policy 203. During the March 2021 work session and board meetings, school board member John Murphy stated on the record that such amendments were directed by "the State" and were necessary for "legal liability reasons." Please provide copies of written communication from "the State" identifying legal liability concerns and/or directing the District's school board to adopt the amendments to Policy 203.
4. Please provide copies of all versions of Policy 203 which have been in effect at any time between May 2021 and the present.
5. Please provide copies of any District reports detailing the aggregate number of suspected child abuse reports made by District employees to ChildLine between March 2020 and March 2022.
6. Please provide copies of any written communication from any Pennsylvania State agency to the District defining or outlining circumstances under which mandatory reporters were not required to make or forward reports of alleged harm under the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) (such as, for example, any instructions that mandated reporters were not required to make or forward complaints that mask-wearing constituted child abuse under the CPSL).
7. Please provide copies of any written communication from the District to any District employee defining or outlining circumstances under which District employees were not required to make or forward reports of alleged harm under the CPSL (such as, for example, any instructions that mandated reporters were not required to make or forward complaints that mask-wearing constituted child abuse under the CPSL).