

Subject: Update: AFL-CIO Mailer

From: Linda Savastano <lsavastano@sksd-ri.net>
Date: May 3, 2021 at 8:09:42 PM EDT
To:
Subject: Update: AFL-CIO Mailer
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AFL-CIO Mailing: School Committee and Superintendent Joint Statement

May 3, 2021

We understand the concerns among parents about a political mailer sent to the homes of some South Kingstown families, including some addressed directly to students. Although we know members of the community would like immediate answers to questions about the mailer, the matter is still under investigation by the Town Solicitor, and we do not yet have much of the critical information that residents rightfully expect and deserve. School district officials are cooperating fully with the investigation and taking steps to learn more about the origins of the mailer.

There are a few key facts that we can share with the community at this point:

- The mailer was not produced or distributed by the school district. It was a political mailing initiated and funded by one or more external groups, including the Rhode Island AFL-CIO.
- Based on the information currently available, the mailing list was not provided by an employee of the school district nor were the addresses acquired through any data breach.
- The school district attorney contacted the AFL-CIO to ask how the lists were acquired. The attorney was informed that the AFL-CIO agreed to the mailing at the request of a political consulting firm but was never in possession of the list itself. In cooperation with Town officials, we are continuing to pursue the trail of the lists that were used in order to determine how they were acquired and from whom.
- The South Kingstown School District has policies and procedures in place for external organizations to request “directory information” as a public records request, including student names and addresses. Each of these requests is carefully reviewed by the school district’s attorney. Names and addresses, except for those families who have opted out, are provided as public records only for legitimate reasons outlined in the School Committee policy.
- The District does not permit the release of names and addresses for any political mailing or other political purposes, and any request of that nature would be denied. The school district has received no such request from any individual or organization for political purposes in the past year. The school district approved only two requests for directory information over the past 12 months, and each of these was determined to be for legitimate outreach to families.
- The School Committee has begun a revision of the existing policies and procedures for directory information public records requests to ensure that they do not compromise the

privacy, safety, or security of any student, parent, or staff member. The Committee will make immediate revisions to the policies and procedures as needed.

Parents have every right to be concerned about any unauthorized use of their students' private information. We take very seriously our responsibility to protect the privacy of students, families, and staff. We will continue to investigate this matter as thoroughly and swiftly as possible, and we will keep the community informed about our findings and next steps. Thank you for your continued patience.

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