



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 30, 2016

Mr. Nick Maddox
Counsel for Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District
O'Hanlon, McCollom & Demerath
808 West Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2016-26465

Dear Mr. Maddox:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 636004 (ECISD-16-111).

The Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for all contracts, agreements, and paper correspondence relating to two specified individuals and a specified business. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Springboards to Education, Inc. ("Springboards"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Springboards of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from Springboards explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore,

we have no basis to conclude Springboards has a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the district may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Springboards may have in the information.

We note the submitted information contains district account numbers that are subject to section 552.136 of the Government Code.¹ Section 552.136 states “[n]otwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential.” *Id.* § 552.136(b); *see also id.* § 552.136(a) (defining “access device”). Accordingly, the district must withhold the account numbers in the submitted information under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The district must release the remaining information.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Gerald A. Arismendez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

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¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

Ref: ID# 636004

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party
(w/o enclosures)