



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 3, 2017

Ms. Kristen Lee  
Assistant County Attorney  
Harris County  
1019 Congress, 15th Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2017-09463

Dear Ms. Lee:

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# 656224 (Ref. No. 17PIA0102).

The Harris County Constable, Precinct Five (the "constable's office") received a request from an investigator with the Texas Education Agency (the "TEA") for information pertaining to a specified incident involving a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

In this instance, the requestor is an investigator for the TEA, which has assumed the duties of the State Board for Educator Certification (the "SBEC").<sup>1</sup> The TEA is conducting an investigation of the named individual, who either has applied for or currently holds educator credentials. Section 22.082 of the Education Code provides the SBEC "may obtain from any law enforcement or criminal justice agency all criminal history record information and all records contained in any closed criminal investigation file that relate to a specific applicant for or holder of a certificate." Educ. Code § 22.082. In this instance, you inform us the submitted information pertains to a concluded criminal investigation. Therefore, the TEA may obtain "all records contained" in the closed investigation file under section 22.082 of

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<sup>1</sup>The 79th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1116, which required the transfer of SBEC's administrative functions and services to the TEA, effective September 1, 2005.

the Education Code. Accordingly, we find section 22.082 of the Education Code gives the TEA a statutory right of access to the submitted information. Although you seek to withhold this information under section 552.108 of the Government Code, we note a statutory right of access generally prevails over the exceptions to public disclosure under the Act. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exception to disclosure under the Act). Thus, we conclude the constable's office must generally release the submitted information to this requestor.

We note, however, some of the submitted information is subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code, which provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release.<sup>2</sup> *See* Gov't Code § 552.130. Section 552.130 specifically protects motor vehicle record information and contains its own access provisions. Therefore, we find section 552.130 is not a general exception under the Act. Accordingly, the motor vehicle record information we have marked is generally confidential under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Because section 22.082 of the Education Code authorizes the requestor to obtain the submitted information in its entirety and section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure portions of the submitted information, we find section 22.082 of the Education Code is in conflict with section 552.130 of the Government Code. Where information falls within both a general and specific provision of law, the specific provision prevails over the general. *See Horizon/CMS Healthcare Corp. v. Auld*, 34 S.W.3d 887, 901 (Tex. 2000) ("more specific statute controls over the more general"); *Cuellar v. State*, 521 S.W.2d 277 (Tex. Crim. App. 1975) (under well-established rule of statutory construction, specific statutory provisions prevail over general ones); ORD 451. Although section 22.082 of the Education Code generally allows a TEA investigator access to files of a closed criminal investigation, section 552.130 of the Government Code specifically protects motor vehicle record information. This section specifically permits release to certain parties and in circumstances that do not include the TEA representative's request in this instance. Therefore, we conclude, notwithstanding section 22.082 of the Education Code, the constable's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

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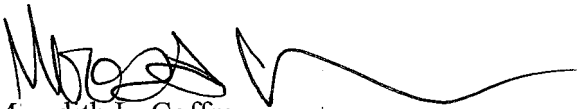
<sup>2</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

In summary, the constable's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The constable's office must release the remaining information to this requestor pursuant to section 22.082 of the Education Code.<sup>3</sup>

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](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,



Meredith L. Coffman  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MLC/bw

Ref: ID# 656224

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>3</sup>Because the TEA has a right of access to certain information in the submitted documents that otherwise would be excepted from release under the Act, the constable's office must again seek a decision from this office if it receives a request for this information from a different requestor without such a right of access.