



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 9, 2019

Ms. Julissa M. Herrera  
Counsel for the San Antonio Independent School District  
Escamilla & Poneck, LLP  
700 North St. Mary's Street, Suite 850  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

OR2019-09513

Dear Ms. Herrera:

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# 758605.

The San Antonio Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received two requests from different requestors for a specified investigative report. You state you will redact information pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.102, 552.103, and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note you claim the submitted information is subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(a). *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.026 (incorporating FERPA into the Act), .114 (excepting from disclosure "student records"); Open Records Decision No. 539 (1990) (determining the same analysis applies under section 552.114 of the Government Code and FERPA). The United States Department of Education Family Policy Compliance Office has informed this office FERPA does not permit state and local educational authorities to disclose to this office, without parental or an adult student's consent, unredacted, personally identifiable information contained in education records for

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<sup>1</sup>Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e).

the purpose of our review in the open records ruling process under the Act.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, state and local educational authorities that receive a request for education records from a member of the public under the Act must not submit education records to this office in unredacted form, that is, in a form in which “personally identifiable information” is disclosed. *See* 34 C.F.R. § 99.3 (defining “personally identifiable information”). However, FERPA is not applicable to records that were created by a law enforcement unit of an educational agency or institution for a law enforcement purpose and that are maintained by the law enforcement unit. *See* 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(a)(4)(B)(ii); 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.3, .8. We note the submitted information consists of law enforcement records created by the district’s police department (the “department”) for a law enforcement purpose. These records are not subject to FERPA and no portion of these records may be withheld on that basis. Accordingly, we will address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

Next, we understand you have redacted information subject to section 552.117 of the Government Code pursuant to section 552.024 of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup> Section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code exempts from disclosure the home address and telephone number, emergency contact information, social security number, and family member information of current or former officials or employees of a governmental body who request this information be kept confidential under section 552.024 of the Government Code. Gov’t Code § 552.117(a). However, section 552.117 applies only to information held in an employment context. As noted above, the submitted information consists of law enforcement records created by the department and is not held in an employment context. Accordingly, the district may not withhold the information you have redacted under section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code exempts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” *Id.* § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

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<sup>2</sup>A copy of this letter may be found on the Office of the Attorney General’s website at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/divisions/open-government/20060725-USDOE-FERPA.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>Section 552.024 of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to withhold information subject to section 552.117(a)(1) without requesting a decision from this office if the current or former employee or official chooses not to allow public access to the information. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.024(c).

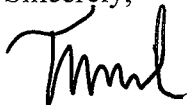
(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). We note the district is not an agency authorized to conduct an investigation under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 261.103 (listing agencies that may conduct child abuse investigations). However, the department is such an agency. The submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect conducted by the department. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). You do not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, the district must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. <sup>4</sup> *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

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,



Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

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<sup>4</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 758605

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requesters  
(w/o enclosures)