



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 8, 2022

Mr. S. Anthony Safi  
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OR2022-03304

Dear Mr. Safi:

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# 929513 (ORR# W003494).

The El Paso Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received two requests from the same requestor for specified disciplinary information.<sup>1</sup> The district claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 21.355 of the Education Code, which provides, in relevant part, "[a] document evaluating the performance of a teacher or administrator is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under [the Act]." Educ. Code § 21.355(a). This office has interpreted section 21.355 to apply to any document that evaluates, as that term is commonly understood, the performance of a teacher or administrator. *See* Open Records Decision No. 643 (1996).

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<sup>1</sup>The district sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222 (if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also* *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (if governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification of unclear or over-broad request, ten-day period to request attorney general ruling is measured from date request is clarified).

Additionally, the Third Court of Appeals has concluded a written reprimand constitutes an evaluation for purposes of section 21.355, as it “reflects the principal’s judgment regarding [a teacher’s] actions, gives corrective direction, and provides for further review.” *Abbott v. North East Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 212 S.W.3d 364 (Tex. App.—Austin 2006, no pet.). In Open Records Decision No. 643, we determined for purposes of section 21.355, the word “teacher” means a person who is required to and does in fact hold a teaching certificate under subchapter B of chapter 21 of the Education Code and who is in the process of teaching, as that term is commonly defined, at the time of the evaluation. *See id.* at 4. We also determined for purposes of section 21.355, an “administrator” means a person who is required to, and does in fact, hold an administrator’s certificate under subchapter B of chapter 21 of the Education Code, and is performing the functions as an administrator, as that term is commonly defined, at the time of the evaluation. *Id.* We note section 21.355 does not apply to evaluations relating to an individual’s duties as a coach. *See* Educ. Code § 21.353 (teachers shall be appraised only on basis of classroom teaching performance and not in connection with extracurricular activities).

The district asserts the submitted information consists of evaluations of the performance of an administrator or teacher. The district also states each administrator or teacher at issue holds the appropriate certificate for purposes of section 21.355 and was acting as an administrator or teacher at the time of the evaluations. Upon review, we find the district must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 21.355 of the Education Code. However, we find the district has failed to demonstrate the remaining information at issue consists of “[a] document evaluating the performance of a teacher or administrator” as contemplated by section 21.355. Therefore, the district may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 21.355. Accordingly, 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

James L. Coggeshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLC/jm

Ref: ID# 929513

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)