



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 20, 2022

Mr. D. Craig Wood
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Walsh, Anderson, Gallegos, Green and Trevino, P.C.
P.O. Box 460606
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OR2022-21167

Dear Mr. Wood:

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# 959255 (Ref. No. 29995-195).

The White Settlement Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to alleged educator misconduct.¹ You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.160 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions.

We must address the procedural obligations of the district under section 552.301 of the Government Code regarding the requested information. Section 552.301 prescribes the procedures that a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). The district received the request for information on April 29, 2022. However, as of the date of this letter, the district has not submitted arguments explaining why the stated exceptions apply, a copy of the written

¹ As you have not submitted a copy of the request for information, we take our description from your brief.

request for information, or a copy or representative sample of the requested information. Therefore, the district failed to comply with the procedural requirements mandated by section 552.301(e).

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ). Although the district raises exceptions to disclosure, because it has not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the information excepted from disclosure. Thus, we have no choice but to order the requested information be released pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code.

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,

Sarah E. Reese
Attorney
Open Records Division

SER/jm

Ref: ID# 959255

c: Requestor