



KEN PAXTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 26, 2022

Ms. Haley Turner  
Mr. David Holmes  
Counsel for the Forney Independent School District  
Walsh, Gallegos, Treviño, Kyle & Robinson, P.C.  
P.O. Box 2156  
Austin, Texas 78768

OR2022-21935

Dear Ms. Turner and Mr. Holmes:

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# 962370.

The Forney Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.151 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

We must address the district's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301. Pursuant to section 552.301(b), a governmental body must ask for a decision from this office and state the exceptions that apply within ten business days of receiving the written request. *See id.* § 552.301(b). Further, 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 id.* § 552.301(e). The district received the request for information on May 3, 2022. You do not inform us the district was closed for any business days between May 3, 2022, and May 24, 2022. This office does not count the date the request was received or holidays for purposes of calculating a governmental body's deadlines under the Act. Accordingly, the district was required to provide the information required by section 552.301(b) by May 17, 2022. Moreover, the district was required to

provide the information required by section 552.301(e) by May 24, 2022. However, the envelope in which you provided the information required by section 552.301(b) was postmarked May 18, 2022. *See id.* § 552.308(a)(1) (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail, common or contract carrier, or interagency mail). As of this date, you have not submitted to this office written comments stating the reasons why your claimed exceptions apply, or a copy or representative sample of the information requested. Consequently, we conclude the district failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code.

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 you raise exceptions to disclosure, because you have 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 released pursuant to section 552.302. If you believe the information may not lawfully be released, the district must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 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,

Gerald A. Arismendez  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

GAA/jxd

Ref: ID# 962370

c: Requestor