



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 7, 2022

Mr. Michael Roseberry
General Counsel
Austin Independent School District
4000 South IH 35 Frontage Road
Austin, Texas 78704

OR2022-30943

Dear Mr. Roseberry:

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# 977162.

The Austin Independent School District (the "district") received a request for contracts, invoices, sales documents, and notifications involving a specified third party; requests for proposals involving specified keywords; a specified list of terms used with specified software; and records and communications related to specified types of incidents. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note you have not submitted information responsive to all the categories of information to which the requestor seeks access. To the extent any additional information responsive to the request existed on the date the district received the request, we assume you have released it. If you have not released any such information, you must do so at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't

Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. As part of the Texas Homeland Security Act (the “HSA”), sections 418.176 through 418.182 were added to chapter 418 of the Government Code. Section 418.177 of the Government Code provides information is confidential if it:

(1) is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental entity for the purpose of preventing, detecting, or investigating an act of terrorism or related criminal activity; and

(2) relates to an assessment by or for a governmental entity, or an assessment that is maintained by a governmental entity, of the risk or vulnerability of persons or property, including critical infrastructure, to an act of terrorism or related criminal activity.

Id. § 418.177. The fact that information may relate to a governmental body’s security concerns does not make the information *per se* confidential under the HSA. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 at 3 (1996) (language of confidentiality provision controls scope of its protection). Furthermore, the mere recitation by a governmental body of a statute’s key terms is not sufficient to demonstrate the applicability of a claimed provision. As with any exception to disclosure, a governmental body asserting one of the confidentiality provisions of the HSA must adequately explain how the responsive records fall within the scope of the claimed provision. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must explain how claimed exception to disclosure applies).

You inform us the submitted information consists of a list of words security software used by the district searches for in online content to monitor potential threats. You further state the release of the information at issue could impact district security by allowing individuals to “adapt the words they use to avoid detection, thus rendering [the software’s] monitoring capabilities useless.” Based upon these representations and our review, we find the submitted information was collected, assembled, or maintained by or for the district for the purpose of preventing, detecting, or investigating an act of terrorism or related criminal activity and relate to assessments of the risk or vulnerability of persons and property to an act of terrorism or related criminal activity. Accordingly, the district must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 418.177 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,

Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/pt

Ref: ID# 977162

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)