OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL · STATE OF TEXAS
JOHN CORNYN

June 20, 2001

Mr. Edward W. Dunbar
General Counsel
El Paso County Community College District
Law Offices of Dunbar, Armendariz, Crowley & Hegeman, L.L.P.
4726 Transmountian Drive
El Paso, Texas 79924

OR2001-2622

Dear Mr. Dunbar:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 150270.

The El Paso Community College District (the "district") received a request for the copies of applications and resumes of the college president candidates who are being interviewed. You inform this office that we previously ruled on a request for information about all college president candidates. In Open Records Letter No. 2001-2229 (2001), we allowed the district to withhold the identifying information of the college president candidates under section 552.123 of the Government Code.

Pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001), a governmental body may rely on a ruling as a "previous determination" if (1) the records or information at issue are precisely the same records or information that were previously submitted to this office pursuant to section 552.301(e)(1)(D) of the Government Code; (2) the governmental body which received the request for the records or information is the same governmental body that previously requested and received a ruling from the attorney general; (3) the attorney general's prior ruling concluded that the precise records or information are or are not excepted from disclosure under the Act; and (4) the law, facts, and circumstances on which the prior attorney general ruling was based have not changed since the issuance of the ruling. Because the requested information concerning the candidates for college president is precisely the same information that we determined could be withheld in Open Records Letter

No. 2001-2229 and the law, facts, and circumstances have not changed, we conclude that you may rely on Open Records Letter No. 2001-2229 as a "previous determination" as to this requested information. Therefore, you may withhold the requested information in accordance with Open Records Letter No. 2001-2229.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bialek

Jennifer Bialek
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JHB/sdk

Ref: ID# 150270

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Jodi Garber
Reporter
El Paso Times
P.O. Box 20
El Paso, Texas 79901
(w/o enclosures)