



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 27, 2010

Mr. Gary A. Scott
Assistant City Attorney
City of Conroe
P.O. Box 3066
Conroe, Texas 77305

OR2010-06005

Dear Mr. Scott:

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# 377353.

The Conroe Police Department (the "department") received a request from an investigator with the Texas Education Agency for all offense, incident, and investigative reports regarding a named individual, including information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body must reasonably explain how and why section 552.108 is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information is related to a pending criminal investigation and prosecution. Based on this representation and our review, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable in this instance. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531

S.W.2d177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).

We note that section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88. The department must release basic information, including a detailed description of the offense, even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. See Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The department may generally withhold the rest of the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1).

Next, we must address whether the requestor has access to the information subject to section 552.108(a)(1). As noted above, the requestor is an investigator for the TEA, which has assumed the duties of the State Board for Educator Certification (the “SBEC”).¹ Section 22.082 of the Education Code provides that the SBEC “may obtain from any law enforcement or criminal justice agency all criminal history record information and all records contained in any closed criminal investigation file that relate to a specific applicant for or holder of a certificate.” Educ. Code § 22.082. Section 411.090 of the Government Code grants a right of access for the SBEC to obtain criminal history record information (“CHRI”) from the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) on persons who have applied to the SBEC. See Gov’t Code § 411.090. Additionally, section 411.0901 of the Government Code specifically provides the TEA with a right of access to obtain CHRI maintained by DPS on certain school employees or applicants for employment. See *id.* § 411.0901. Furthermore, pursuant to section 411.087 of the Government Code, an agency that is entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS is also authorized to “obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state criminal history record information maintained by that [agency].” *Id.* § 411.087(a)(2). CHRI consists of “information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, information, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *Id.* § 411.082(2).

We find that, when read together, section 22.082 of the Education Code and section 411.087 of the Government Code give the TEA a statutory right of access to portions of the submitted information. See *id.*; cf. *Brookshire v. Houston Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 508 S.W.2d 675, 678-79 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1974, no writ) (when legislature defines term in one statute and uses same term in relation to same subject matter in latter statute, later use of term is same as previously defined). Accordingly, we conclude that the department must release information from the submitted documents to this requestor that shows the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention,

¹The 79th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1116, which required the transfer of SBEC’s administrative functions and services to the TEA, effective September 1, 2005.

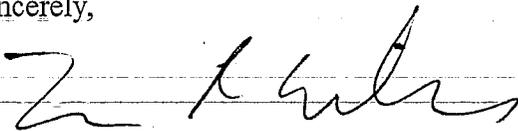
conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions. *See* Open Records Decision No. 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under Act).

In summary, the department must release information from the submitted documents that show the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions, pursuant to section 22.082 of the Education Code. With the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108 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 http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Tamara Wilcox
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TW/dls

Ref: ID# 377353

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)